

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 8 February 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor Brunton (Chair), Councillors Dryden, C Hobson, J Hobson, Ismail, Junier (as substitute for Councillor Cole), Kerr, Khan, Mawston, Purvis, J A Walker and Williams.

OFFICERS: J Bennington, C Breheny, P Clark, A Crawford, J Ord, N Sayer and S Wright.

**** PRESENT BY INVITATION:** The Mayor (Ray Mallon).

**** ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Budd (Deputy Mayor).

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cole and Sanderson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

MINUTES – MATTERS ARISING - LOCALISM BILL – END OF LIFE CARE FINAL REPORT OF THE HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11 and 13 January 2011 were submitted.

It was confirmed that arrangements had been made for a Members' Briefing to be held on 23 February 2011 in respect of the Localism Bill.

Reference was made to the Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel in respect of End of Life Care, which had recently been considered by the NHS Tees Primary Care Trust Board. The Board was advised of comments from the PCT which may impact on the Panel's recommendations which had subsequently been endorsed by the Board at its meeting held on 11 January 2011.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11 and 13 January 2011 be approved as a correct record.
2. That the information provided be noted.
3. That should it prove necessary to amend the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel's Final Report in respect of End of Life of Care in the light of comments from the Primary Care Trust the Chair and Vice of the Board be consulted as appropriate prior to the submission of the report to the Executive.

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

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

NOTED

MAYOR

The Chair welcomed the Mayor to the meeting who responded to Members' questions and focussed on the representations being made to the Department of Communities and Local Government in seeking a fairer budget settlement given the likely impact of the significant reductions on Middlesbrough as one of the more deprived areas in the UK. Members were keen to ascertain as to what could be done if such representations proved unsuccessful. An assurance was given that efforts to raise the attention of the Government to problems facing Middlesbrough would continue including an invitation to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to visit the Town.

In his opening remarks the Mayor gave an indication of the significant supported evidence which had been made available to the Government and highlighted in recent media coverage which outlined the extent of social deprivation within the Town. Specific reference was made to the recent Independent Research and Academic paper of Professor John Tomaney from the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies which had concluded that the spending cuts were regressive and would impact greater on the more deprived areas of the UK. The Mayor indicated that whilst it was understood that there was an urgent need to address the budget deficit and that Middlesbrough had to play its part in helping to rectify the situation, the proposed budget cuts were considered to be too severe in such a short space of time.

Concerns had been expressed regarding the Working Neighbourhood Fund of £8.9 million per year which would cease at the end of March 2011 which inevitably would curtail the ability to tackle the causes of deprivation and impact upon the work which had already been achieved.

In describing some of the likely consequences of what was regarded as social recession reference was made to concerns which had been expressed to the Mayor during recent discussions.

The importance of the Youth Agenda was stressed and examples given of concerns which had been expressed by 18 year old apprentices as to their extremely difficult task of securing a job when their apprenticeship had been completed.

As part of the continuing efforts to raise awareness to the strong feelings of residents of Middlesbrough an indication was given of proposed demonstrations against cuts in public services to take place in Centre Square on 13 February 2011.

In commenting on the ways of raising awareness to the specific problems facing Middlesbrough it was acknowledged that the option of taking part in local demonstrations would not necessarily be fully supported by all members of the public. The Mayor indicated that whilst accepting the need to highlight to the Government what had and could be achieved attending public meetings formed part of his civic responsibilities. The Mayor had been invited to attend the proposed rally organised by the Northern Public Services Alliance on 13 February to receive a petition against the cuts facing Middlesbrough Council. It was considered that the current situation had not previously been experienced and that there was a need to safeguard what had already been achieved and a need to strive to lessen the impact on what was considered to be very severe cuts in one of the most deprived areas in the UK.

ORDERED that the Mayor be thanked for the information provided.

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK – ALLOTMENTS STRATEGY – PEST CONTROL SERVICES

As part of the scrutiny process and in a report of the Executive Office Manager it was reported that the Executive had considered the findings of the Environment Scrutiny Panel in respect of the following Final Reports: -

- (a) Allotments Strategy,
- (b) Pest Control Service.

The Executive and the Corporate Management Team had considered and supported the Service Responses.

NOTED

WEED CONTROL IN MIDDLESBROUGH – FINAL REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation on the topic of weed control in Middlesbrough.

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

- (i) That steps are taken to raise awareness and make the public and all Middlesbrough Councillors aware of the process of weed control, in particular, why areas may appear to suffer from an increased level of weeds in recent years.
- (ii) That steps are taken to encourage the public to take greater ownership of their local area, such as the frontage of their properties, and to work in partnership with the Council on areas such as weed control. The Scrutiny Panel suggests that this could be undertaken as part of a wider campaign by Streetscene to highlight general environmental issues and raise environmental awareness.
- (iii) That, as far as possible given current and future budget constraints, existing high standards of weed control, and weed-free environments, are maintained at key sites such as the Cenotaph and Town Centre areas.
- (iv) Following (iii) above, the use of Community Payback labour should continue to be used wherever and whenever appropriate to assist in taking a pro-active approach to weed control wherever possible.

In commenting on difficulties experienced regarding previous operational arrangements it was confirmed that it was intended for the Council to undertake future weed spraying in-house and was currently examining available options including the possible use of appropriate quad bikes.

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

NOISE COMPLAINTS – ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation on the topic of noise complaints in Middlesbrough.

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

- (i) That discussions are undertaken with Middlesbrough Police to clarify their role in dealing with reports of noise nuisance, particularly whether there is an opportunity to ensure that action can be taken against perpetrators outside of the Council's operational hours.
- (ii) That, subject to the outcome of the discussions at (i) above, steps are taken to ensure that the public are aware of action that they can take on noise complaints outside of the Council's out of hours service operational times-for example via a Council answerphone providing them with police contact details.
- (iii) That proposals to:
 - (a) increase the powers of Middlesbrough Council's Street Wardens to enable them to assist in addressing noise complaints; and

(b) undertake a review of the structure and staffing of the out of hours noise complaints service;

are supported by the Scrutiny Panel and are progressed at the earliest opportunity.

- (iv) That, in cases where more than one team in Community Protection investigates a noise complaint – and in order to avoid any perception of lack of co-ordination or of service duplication – each Officer dealing with noise investigations ensures that complainants are made fully aware of the process and the officer's role in it.
- (v) That progress made in respect of the issues highlighted above is reported to the Environment Scrutiny Panel before the end of 2011.

Members sought clarification on a number of areas. It was noted that whilst the Environmental Protection Act 1990 empowered local authorities to deal with noise nuisance the Police also had the power to act and intervene in the case of noise nuisance.

Members commented on the noise mapping process in particular the One First Priority location identified around the junction of the A1085 Trunk Road and Cargo Fleet Lane. It was agreed that the information provided in the Final Report in this regard would be clarified prior to submission to the Executive.

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

TELECARE

The Chair of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation to examine the current level of take-up of Telecare in Middlesbrough and to investigate the reasons as to why take up may not be as high as desired and to explore what action could be taken on this issue.

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

- (i) The Panel recommends that an updated vision for the service be developed, which contains a clear trajectory detailing the scale and scope of what the Council is aiming to achieve through the provision of Carelink and Telecare in Middlesbrough. The strategy should also detail how the Council can ensure that those people who could benefit for Telecare, particularly as part of a preventative approach, can access the service and pay for it privately and how the service will be financed over the next three year period.
- (ii) It has been stated that despite the importance of developing an evidence base to inform decision-making, the future reality is that the development and survival of local telehealth and Telecare innovation will rely as much on local 'champions' (such as medical directors and councillors who have the power to earmark commissioning resources). The Panel recommends that the Executive Member for Social Care and Executive Member for Public Health and Sport champion and promote the development of Telecare in Middlesbrough within both the local authority and the health sector, with a view to increasing the current level of financial investment in Telecare by both bodies.
- (iii) To enable more people to benefit from Carelink and Telecare the cost of the service must be affordable. The Panel recommends that a joint piece of work be undertaken between the Department of Social Care and Strategic Finance to establish the optimum pricing strategy for increasing take up of the Carelink service and Telecare by an additional 1500-2000 service users over the next two to three year period, whilst ensuring the service is delivered cost effectively. The merits of introducing a single tier pricing structure versus a stepped pricing structure to also be explored.

- (iv) Following agreement on the new pricing structure the Panel recommends that a marketing campaign be developed and promoted within the Town. Investment will need to be made in the campaign to generate an income return and marketing expertise within the Council will need to be maximised to develop the campaign. A Targeted campaign that promotes the benefits of Carelink/Telecare to those with low and medium level needs will be an important aspect and the Love Middlesbrough branding could be used to promote a 'Love Life', 'Love Independence', 'Love Carelink/Telecare ' campaign. Within the marketing and promotion campaign renewed efforts also to be undertaken to increase the public's general awareness of the facilities on offer at the Independent Living Centre.
- (v) The Panel recommends that the Social Care Department seek to secure continuing investment from the Primary Care Trust and that the Primary Care Trust supports the Council in developing a preventative model of Telecare. The Panel is mindful of the joint work undertaken in Sunderland between the Council and the Primary Care Trust to develop a bespoke training programme for Health and Social Care Assistants, who are trained to NVQ Level 3 standard, and provide the response service for Telecare. The Panel recommends that the Council and the Primary Care Trust invest in developing a similar training programme in Middlesbrough.

Specific reference was made to confirmation which was still awaited from Sunderland City Council as to whether or not they were able to provide a breakdown of information regarding the number of service users within each FACS band who were in receipt of the lifeline/pendant service and Telecare in Sunderland. It was agreed that should this information be forthcoming it be included within the Final Report prior to submission to the Executive.

Confirmation was given that comparative evidence had been considered from Officers responsible for the delivery of telecare in similar authorities as to Middlesbrough.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive subject to the reference in the first line of paragraph 32 to 'Health Scrutiny Panel' being replaced with 'Dementia Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel'.

SCRUTINY REVIEW – RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTED

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

The Board was advised of 30 recommendations that had passed their target date for completion since the last report to the Board. Members were advised of 26, which were partially complete, and four, which had not been implemented, as outlined in Appendix A of the report submitted.

It was confirmed that there were no areas of concern and that since the circulation of the report further actions had been completed.

Appendix B of the report gave an update in relation to the Health Scrutiny Action Plan, all of which had met the target.

AGREED that the information provided be 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

SCRUTINY PANELS – PROGRESS REPORTS – MIDDLESBROUGH GOLF CENTRE – PUBLIC HEALTH WHITE PAPER SEMINAR – REGIONAL HEALTH SCRUTINY

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

It was noted that the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel had agreed that an update on the implementation of the Action Plan in respect of the Middlesbrough Golf Centre should be submitted to the Panel after six months.

Specific reference was made to the Members' briefing, which had been arranged for 3 March 2011 in respect of the Public Health White Paper. It was acknowledged that health overview and scrutiny would be given a strengthened role with increased powers to hold to account any agency in receipt of NHS funds for the provision of NHS services.

Members' attention was also drawn to regional health scrutiny work relating to the physical health, mental health and social economic needs of the Ex-Service Community, which had been the subject of recent publicity.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted.

CALL IN REQUESTS

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