

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 19 April 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor Brunton (Chair), Councillors Kerr, Purvis, Sanderson, J A Walker and Williams.

OFFICERS: J Bennington, C Breheny, P Clark, A Crawford and P Stephens.

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

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 5 April 2011 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2011/2012 – SCRUTINY PANELS – NEXT STEPS

The Corporate Performance Team Leader presented a report which provided an update on recent discussions with Scrutiny Panels on the development of the Council's 2011/2012 Strategic Plan and outlined the next steps of the overall process.

The Board was reminded that since May 2010, the Coalition Government had implemented a radical overhaul of the national performance framework for local government in line with the principles of localism and reducing bureaucracy resulting in changes which included:-

- the abolition of Local Area Agreements;
- the abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment;
- the introduction of the 'transparency' agenda which required the publication of certain corporate and service information to make local authority's more accountable;
- the replacement of the current National Indicator Set with a Single Data List which identified all Central Governments' information requirements of local government.

Members were advised that alongside the development of a Single Data List the Government was also consulting on major policy changes such as on health, education and safeguarding which was likely to have a significant influence on such activities and associated performance measures. An indication was given that 68 of the National Indicators which had been measured for the previous year would continue to be measured and a number of new indicators would be introduced as a result of the above policy changes.

The Council was considering the future delivery of services in the light of the reduction in finance and funding as a result of the recent Local Government Finance Settlement. Against such a background the Council was currently developing its Corporate Performance Framework for 2011/12 and beyond the key elements of which included:-

- a revised Sustainable Community Strategy with streamlined priorities and key outcome indicators;
- a revised more concise Strategic Plan for 2011/12 which would be disaggregated by service rather than themes and focussing on frontline service performance and transformation programmes and projects;
- a reduced set of performance indicators including a mix from the Government's Single Data List and the Council's own local measurements in respect of the delivery of services;
- a move towards greater and more timely online publication of performance information of interest to local people in line with the Government's 'transparency' agenda;
- a reduction in external audit and inspection of the Council and the introduction of Peer Assessments on a three yearly cycle ;

As part of the development of the streamlined Strategic Plan the Scrutiny Panels had discussed the performance measures likely to be used for services going forward and on the improvement priorities identified by services for 2011/2012.

In relation to health scrutiny it was confirmed that the PI's would be based on the emerging Health and Well Being Strategy.

In overall terms it was reported that the Scrutiny Panels had expressed support for the improvement priorities identified to date and had suggested the following changes:-

- (a) That community involvement measures focus on numbers participating in activities and/or their satisfaction, rather than the numbers of meetings arranged, which is not telling;
- (b) That claimant count is disaggregated by group, for example, young people, and by Ward.
- (c) That some measure of affordable housing be considered.
- (d) That some measure(s) /actions relating to alcohol misuse reduction be included in the plan.

The current draft of the Strategic Plan indicators and improvement actions relevant to the purview of the Panels by Department and Service was provided at Appendix 1. It was confirmed that the Council's Corporate Management Team had agreed an outline structure for the Strategic Plan as outlined in Appendix 2. Reference was also made to other major changes which included the merger of the Council's People Strategy within the Strategic Plan to create a more integrated approach to service development.

Following further discussions including those with partners the 2011/2012 Corporate PI set would be finalised on the publication of the Single Data List. It was intended that a final draft of the Strategic Plan would be presented to the Council's CMT in mid-May 2011 before approval by the Executive and the Council. It was confirmed that the Board would be notified of any major changes at its meeting to be held in June 2011.

The Board was advised that the Strategic Plan would be published on the Council's website by 30 June 2011. Alongside internal reporting, quarterly updates would be published online one month after the end of every quarter in line with the Government's transparency agenda.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the current draft of the Council's Strategic Plan indicators and improvement actions together with the suggested changes by the Scrutiny Panels be supported.
2. That the proposed arrangements for the finalisation of the Council's Strategic Plan as outlined be noted.

APPOINTEESHIPS – FINAL REPORT OF THE SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation on the topic of appointeeships.

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

- (i) That efforts be actively made to reduce the number of appointeeships. Other alternatives also need to be explored to enable individuals who do not lack mental capacity but make unwise financial decisions to be supported.
- (ii) That when reviewing the appropriateness of current appointeeship cases consideration be given to whether the appointeeship is being operated in the most effective way having regard to the resources available and the identified needs of service users, for example, delivering cash.

- (iii) That no charge is introduced for the Appointeeship service in Middlesbrough.
- (iv) That consideration be given to the development of a chargeable money management service for vulnerable people who do not lack mental capacity but would benefit from the type of assistance the Estates Team can provide. Sufficient evidence would be needed to demonstrate that the introduction of such a service represents value for money for both the Council and service users.
- (v) That the referral process in respect of residential care appointeeships be reviewed and it be made a requirement that a care manager is responsible for evidencing that an individual lacks the mental capacity to manage their own finances. In such cases a best interests assessment must also be undertaken.
- (vi) That training be undertaken in partnership with the DWP (Pension Service and Job Centre Plus) to increase understanding amongst care managers (Social Workers and CPN's) on when an application for an appointeeship is appropriate and how to complete an assessment of capacity form / mental capacity assessment. The sessions should also include advice on what other options are available to care managers when the individual they work with does not lack mental capacity but makes unwise decisions or is deemed vulnerable to financial abuse/exploitation.
- (vii) That the DWP appoint a permanent representative on the proposed Finance Panel. The Panel is concerned that without the DWP's commitment the Finance Panel in Middlesbrough will not be as effective as in North Tyneside, where a permanent DWP representative is appointed to the Panel.
- (viii) That the department report back to the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel after the Finance Panel has been in operation for a six-month period to review how the panel is operating.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.