

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 18 September 2012.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Brunton (Chair), Councillors Arundale, Dryden, Harvey, Mawston, McIntyre, P Purvis, Sanderson, J Sharrocks (as substitute for Councillor Cole), J A Walker and Williams.

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Rooney, Executive Member for Regeneration, Economic Development.

**OFFICERS:** J Bennington, P Clark, A Crawford and J Ord.

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

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations on interest made at this point of the meeting.

**1 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21 and 30 August 2012 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

As requested at the meeting of the Board held on 30 August 2012 further detailed information had been circulated by the Deputy Director of Resources to Members on the matters raised in respect of the 1st Quarter Revenue Budget Projected Outturn report 2012/2013. It was noted that a Member had raised concerns regarding certain matters on the information provided.

**ORDERED** as follows:-

1. That the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21 and 30 August 2012 be approved as a correct record.
2. That any further queries regarding the information circulated on the 1st Quarter Revenue Budget Projected Outturn report 2012/2013 be forwarded directly to the Deputy Director of Resources.

**2 ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer the Board was reminded of arrangements usually made for individual Members of the Executive to attend meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to provide updates on their respective work in terms of their aims, aspirations, objectives, priorities and any emerging issues or pressures.

The process was part of the scrutiny arrangements of holding the Executive to account and also provided the opportunity for the Board to identify or highlight any issues of concern or difficulty.

A schedule detailing the proposed attendance for Executive Members to meetings of the Board was outlined at Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rooney, Executive Member for Regeneration Economic Development who provided a briefing note on the range of services delivered by the Regeneration directorate which supported the economic well being of Middlesbrough. Within the overall economic climate and reduced service budgets the focus of attention was to maintain the momentum of local regeneration and delivery on schemes that had already commenced.

A range of objectives were being pursued including the need to stimulate the growth of the

local economy. Although it was acknowledged that inevitably there were difficulties in this regard there had been many significant developments and infrastructure improvements throughout the Town in recent years which had built on the Town's resilience and retained investment interest. The Board's attention was drawn to investment in facilities such as mima, Centre Square and at Middlehaven which had resulted in much interest and were supporting the growth of local business and the University.

It was reiterated that Middlesbrough was particularly disadvantaged by the loss of additional funds designed to tackle deprivation such as Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Housing Market Renewal Funding and, Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

New businesses and households were considered to be key to the generation of income to fund service delivery. The need to address the imbalance of housing stock was reiterated in order to lessen the continuing migration of population.

In terms of the budget process an indication was given of the difficulties arising from compromises which had had to be made following the prioritisation of statutory obligations.

Although the general economic environment was considered to be extremely challenging there was evidence that Middlesbrough continued to perform relatively strongly. The Board's attention was drawn to recent private sector job creation in relation to AXA insurance, Hertel, Gopal Marine and the development of the Tees Multimodal Bio-Freight Terminal.

Information was provided on a number of key development schemes including Middlehaven, Gresham, Grove Hill, Prissick, a number of housing developments and the Boho Zone.

The Board sought clarification on a number of areas. In response to Members' concerns regarding the difficulties in attracting new businesses in the immediate future the Executive Member drew Members' attention to improved road infrastructure and the opportunities which existed which were being built upon. Specific reference was made to developments within the Boho Zone the commercial quarter for the Town's digital technology and creative sectors.

Information was also provided on the benefits of opportunity for the Council to drive forward the development of a Centre for Offshore Renewable Energy at Teesside Advanced Manufacturing Park. Such a development would enable a key economic asset to be put in place, creating jobs and supplying chain opportunities for local companies.

Members specifically referred to the need for improving access to and from the Cleveland Centre Shopping Centre, Linthorpe Road with particular regard to an easier approach to Albert Road, Centre Square and mima. It was confirmed that whilst the shopping centre was in private ownership reference was made to ongoing efforts by the Council to secure improvements in this regard.

Reference was made to progress on acquisitions of properties within Gresham and funding from the Government's Clusters of Empty Housing Fund which would be utilised for the House 2 Home project involving 100 vacant properties in the area being brought back into use including a block of 60 properties within the Wentworth Street and Waverley Street.

**ORDERED** as follows:-

1. That the schedule detailing the attendance of Executive Members to meetings of the Board be approved.
2. That the Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development be thanked for a comprehensive report.

### 3 **ENVIRONMENT SERVICE STANDARDS**

A Final Report of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Panel following its investigation of Environment Service Standards had been circulated.

**ORDERED** that in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Panel consideration of the Final report on Environment Service Standards be deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

4 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2012-2013 REVISION**

Further to the meeting of the Board held on 21 August 2012 the Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a report regarding the intention to revise the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2012-2013 in response to the financial pressures facing the Council. It was proposed that Scrutiny Panels would have a greater emphasis on examining areas of service delivery primarily looking at the policy, which established the standards of service, the facilities provided and the associated costs.

Members confirmed that some Panels had already incorporated topics into their work programme which focussed on service delivery or would shortly be discussing the potential of undertaking such work.

**NOTED**

5 **SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUESTS**

It was confirmed that no requests for scrutiny reviews had been received from the Executive, Executive Members, Non-Executive Members since the last meeting of the Board.

Members were advised of a request which had been received for the Board to receive an update report in respect of asbestos removal from housing stock. It was also confirmed that a scrutiny investigation into the health implications had also been submitted a subject which had already been considered for inclusion within the scrutiny work programme of the Health Scrutiny Panel.

The Board was advised that the Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Specialist Services had been invited to attend the next meeting of the Board to clarify certain budget issues.

**ORDERED** as follows:-

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That an update report concerning asbestos removal from housing stock be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

6 **SCRUTINY PANELS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

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

**NOTED**

7 **CALL-IN REQUESTS**

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

**NOTED**