

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 8 January 2013.

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

PRESENT BY INVITATION: The Mayor (Ray Mallon).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Budd, Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Resources.

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

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

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

12/77 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 11 DECEMBER 2012

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11 December 2012 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

12/78 ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS - MAYOR

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 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.

The Chair welcomed the Mayor, Ray Mallon to the meeting who indicated his intention to focus on a number of key strategic and operational priorities for 2011 to 2015 as identified in a document circulated at the meeting which continued to be revised as circumstances dictated.

From the outset it was acknowledged that to safeguard the finances of the Council was imperative and given the drastically reduced budgets there was a need to consider how to deal with a changing culture to ensure that the Council was fit for purpose now and in the future.

Of continuing importance was the demand led pressures within safeguarding and an increasing number of children looked after often with complex needs and pressures with regard to adult social care.

The Board's attention was drawn to operational priorities firstly to the complexities around the revenue and capital programme. Given the current financial situation and constant changing circumstances the Mayor indicated that the format of the Capital Programme should be examined to be more easily understood and reflect the Council's changing position.

In terms of the social, health and wellbeing priorities reference was made to the Youth Agenda and Social Deprivation issues such as the Troubled Families Unit, NEETs, youth unemployment, benefit dependency, public health issues and teenage pregnancies.

Specific reference was made to a number of schemes under the overall heading of regeneration and current situation with regard to delays which had occurred or a slowing down

in progressing certain schemes such as Enterprise Zones, Central Gardens East, Sports Village and Cannon Park development.

In relation to strategic priorities with regard to Transport particular reference was made to the need for further discussion around East Middlesbrough By Pass and careful consideration which needed to be given to the level of car parking charges in the context of the overall economic situation of the Town Centre.

Although the subject of further debate at the Council meeting on 9 January 2013 an indication was given by the Mayor regarding the short term and long term affects of the Council Tax Freeze Grant. The focus of attention needed to be on where benefits could be gained in making a positive difference such as maximising the opportunities of interest which had been demonstrated by the private sector in the Town.

Whilst acknowledging the positive signs Members referred to the difficulties of the role of Mayor in terms of engaging with the public but striking a balance in not unnecessarily raising expectations. The Mayor advised the Board of apparent overall changes in less people attending Community Council meetings and public meetings. The importance of any consultation/engagement process was to ensure that correct messages were given to the appropriate audiences.

Members concurred that many of the strategic priorities highlighted had often been raised as issues of interest and/or concern at ward surgeries. As an example, specific reference was made to the issues around Ayresome Industries and of the detailed work which had been undertaken and the need for further work to examine the opportunities for diversification.

Members supported the view to examine the current level of car parking with a view to attracting more people from Middlesbrough and from other areas into the Town Centre which was regarded as an important element of the Town's regeneration.

As Members commented on the successful DigitalCity partnership with Teesside University and growth in the digital sector the Mayor concurred that the importance of such a development and the need to raise awareness should be further promoted and of surrounding developments.

In discussing the capital programme a Member suggested the feasibility of holding a briefing session to which all Members would be invited to attend with a view to exchanging ideas on possible changes to the format of the Capital Programme to reflect the Council's current situation and raise ideas for possible long term investment such as the benefits of solar panels where appropriate such as at Hemlington Library.

The Mayor concurred with the Member's suggestion for a briefing for all Members of the Council in relation to the Capital Programme and also to provide additional information with a view to further promoting the Boho Zone the commercial sector of the Town's digital media and technology.

ORDERED that the Mayor be thanked for the information provided.

12/79

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK - DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE PATIENT UNITS-CORONER'S SERVICE

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

The Development of Private Patient Units, Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel
Coroner's Service, Final report of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel.

The Executive and the Corporate Management Team had considered and supported the Service Responses and noted the response from the South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in respect of Private Patient Units.

The Board was also advised that in relation to the Final report in respect of the Coroner's Service the Mayor had made a statement which included the following recommendations which had been endorsed by the Executive:-

- (i) Mr Sheffield resigns, as Her Majesty's Coroner for Teesside.
- (ii) That if he resigns his position, an independent review be commissioned in the terms as detailed within the Mayor's response.
- (iii) That a further report on the Coroner's Service comes back to the Executive within three months.

NOTED

12/80

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH-FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

The Vice-Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel together with the Senior Scrutiny Officer outlined the Panel's findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation into the Neighbourhood Watch.

The Board considered the following recommendations of the Panel based on the evidence submitted which would contribute to improving the awareness of the service Neighbourhood Watch provided:-

(a) That the Police, Problem Solving Co-ordinators and Council meet to resolve the problems and tensions with the Executive which has caused the recent fragmentation. That a structured and operational Executive be established with clear guidelines and that all local representatives are aware of the structure, meeting dates and processes.

(b) While appreciating the problems associated with budget constraints, the Panel considers it is necessary to demonstrate a commitment and support to Neighbourhood Watch. Therefore consideration must be given to establishing the position of Problem Solving Co-ordinator as a full time position which aligns to the support and commitment provided with the neighbouring authority.

(c) In recognition of the Police concern that the Police, Problem Solving Co-ordinators and Council draft a strategy which focuses on the improvement of marketing to contact the 130,000 residents of Middlesbrough for greater participation in Neighbourhood Watch.

(d) Appreciating the initiative of Campus Watch that positive engagement be undertaken with the student population in or indeed around the University of Middlesbrough to encourage involvement with Campus Watch.

(e) Communication is considered a major factor for a good Neighbourhood Watch scheme and therefore regular meetings, driven by the Executive are established. It is recommended that these be programmed and that notification be sent to all local representatives and that the Police and Problem Solving Co-ordinators attend to update on detail.

(f) That a structured approach be undertaken to spending the £16k funds secured for Neighbourhood Watch in Middlesbrough and that this expenditure and the assistance it provides to residents is marketed and conveyed to the residential areas of Middlesbrough.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

12/81

SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUESTS

It was noted that no scrutiny requests had been received since the meeting of the Board held on 11 December 2012.

NOTED

12/82 SCRUTINY PANELS -PROGRESS REPORTS

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

Further to the meeting of the Board held on 16 October 2012 it was confirmed that the Environment Scrutiny Panel had considered information relating to the levels of fly tipping since the introduction of junk jobs. It was pointed out that although there had been a 7% reduction in reported fly tipping in the previous 12 months a slight increase had resulted in two Council Wards. It was noted that fly tips were normally removed within 24 hours of being reported and that income from junk jobs was projected to meet its £30,000 target for 2012/2013.

In order to keep fly tipping incidents to a minimum the Panel had suggested that where possible all free disposal methods for bulky waste should be publicised.

The Board was also advised of the information received by the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel in relation to the introduction of 21 fixed day closures at the Orchard Day Centre as reported to the Board at its meeting held on 16 October 2012.

It had been confirmed that since the Orchard Day Centre had opened in 2010 there had been various quality issues in relation to the operation of the Centre which had resulted in an overall review of the service. As a direct result of the review it had been proposed to introduce fixed day closures to help the service run in a safer and more effective way. Such a proposal had been the subject of consultation in March 2012.

Evidence presented to the Panel demonstrated that there had been very little response from carers on the proposal and that staff at the Centre had accepted that fixed day closures would improve service delivery. The decision to introduce fixed day closures had come into effect in October 2012. The Panel had received written evidence from a total of six carers but other than the individual who had submitted the original scrutiny request no other carers had raised any concerns about the introduction of fixed day closures.

Aside from the introduction of fixed day closures the Panel had been advised that the review had led to improvements in a number of areas including the level of activity undertaken in relation to the level of planned activity and the amount of physiotherapy undertaken. Having considered the evidence received the Panel had supported the introduction of the 21 day fixed centre closures and had agreed that no further action was required.

NOTED

12/83 CALL-IN

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

NOTED

12/84 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - MEETINGS

The Chair confirmed that the meeting of the Board held on 9 January 2013 had been cancelled but that two Member Workshops had been arranged at 2.00 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. on 10 January 2013 to which all Members of the Council had been invited to attend in respect of the Boundary Commission, Electoral Review.

NOTED