

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 5 February 2013.

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

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillor Rostron, Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health.

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Arundale, Cole, C Hobson, P Purvis and Sanderson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

MINUTES-OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 8 JANUARY 2013

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 8 January 2013 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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.

Specific reference was made to the schedule of dates for the Overview and Scrutiny Board and confirmation given that the meeting to consider the Revenue Budget would now be held on 13 February 2013 commencing at 4.00 p.m. and not 6 February 2013 as previously indicated.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rostron, the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health.

The Executive Member initially focussed on matters relating to Community Protection in relation to the period as Executive Member for Community Protection in the current Municipal Year.

Of particular note was the significant reduction in crime and importance of partnership working such as the Neighbourhood Safety Team.

Reference was made to the Mayor's 2013/2014 budget proposals and the reinstatement of the CCTV service given its significant contribution to the protection and wellbeing of the community 24 hours a day and supporting the police and Council services providing reassurance to residents and businesses. Following Members' questions it was agreed that further information would be provided on current discussions with other agencies with particular regard to financial arrangements and possible contributions.

An indication was also given of the substantial work carried out by a number of sections and the likely impact of reduced budgets with particular regard to trading standards and work involved around troubled families and the role of the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership in this regard.

It was noted that one consequence of reduced budgets had resulted in Officers working across different disciplines and reference was made to the commitment which had been shown by staff to take on additional duties. Given the potential impact of the Government's Welfare Reforms there was a concern at the likely pressures on a reduced number of staff (two persons) dealing with money advice. It was pointed out that changes to the legal aid system and current waiting lists at the Citizens Advice Bureau were also likely to increase pressure on the Council.

Reference was made to the current number of Street Wardens of 11 which had been reduced from 78. The provision of such a valuable service was currently being examined.

Members commented on the usefulness of the publication of the newsletters by the Community Protection Services and specifically referred to the link between the dog warden service with a social network site the only local authority so far to do so in this regard.

The Board's attention was drawn to the recent change to the appointment of the Executive Member to the portfolio of Adult Social Care and Public Health.

Confirmation was given of initial meetings which had been held with staff on examining options as to how to respond to people accessing adult social care services. The Board was advised of one of the main demands on social care in relation to an increasing number of people with dementia and of ongoing work in developing a dementia strategy. The need to increase awareness and provide better information on the services available was of particular importance.

In response to Members' comments on the financial pressures facing the NHS and local authorities with particular regard to such services as community services the Executive Member confirmed that there were ongoing discussions in this regard and clarification on areas of responsibility. The Executive Member confirmed that the present situation around discharges from hospital was of concern and would be examined further.

The Board was advised of the Authority's new statutory responsibilities in respect of public health with effect from 1 April 2013. Local authorities were to receive a ring fenced public health grant for commissioning and delivering public health programmes. On 10 January 2013, the Department of Health announced the public health grant allocations for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15. It was confirmed that Middlesbrough Council would receive a ring-fenced public health grant of £15,932,000 and £16,378,000 for 2013-14 and 2014-15 respectively. National guidance was emerging on the future commissioning and delivery of key public health programmes such as screening, immunisations, and emergency planning and response.

It was confirmed that further details would be provided regarding the allocation for public health funding received by other North East authorities and clarification in relation to the ceasing of non-recurring public health funding in respect of Middlesbrough.

Members also referred to the importance of the Council being in a position to help tackle the increasing problems associated with obesity, alcohol related problems, anorexia and smoking cessation programmes.

ORDERED that the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health be thanked for the information provided.

EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

As part of the Board's remit in terms of holding the Executive to account a report of the Executive Office Manager was submitted which identified the forthcoming issues to be considered by the Executive as outlined in Appendix A of the report submitted.

It was pointed out that non key decisions were also now included in the Executive Forward Work Programme.

NOTED

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK - ENVIRONMENT SERVICES JOINT WORKING - ENVIRONMENT SERVICE STANDARDS

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 of the Environment Scrutiny Panel:-

- Environment Services Joint Working
- Environment Service Standards.

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

Specific reference was made to the proposed action plan with regard to Environment Service Standards Final report and the suggestion for Scrutiny to present their 'views on the implementation of proposed cuts and as to where future cuts could be made'.

NOTED

ENERGY REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS OF LOCAL BODIES - FINAL REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation into Energy Reduction and Environmental Awareness of Local Bodies.

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

- (i) That Middlesbrough Council leads on establishing a Joint Energy Reduction Partnership. This should initially involve the organisations that have contributed to the scrutiny exercise, although the possibility of including neighbouring local authorities in due course should also be examined. The partnership should meet once or twice a year to share information and examples of best practice on energy reduction. It should also explore the possibility of collective purchasing of energy in order to determine whether this approach could be used to reduce costs. Middlesbrough Environment City should also be invited to contribute to the process.
- (ii) That, through electronic bulletins, staff inductions, team meetings and any other appropriate methods, the Council regularly highlights and publicises to all staff the cost of energy used, targets for reduction and the part that all employees can play in delivering such reductions. The necessary change of culture in the Authority should be progressed via strong leadership.
- (iii) The feasibility of the Council adopting an invest to save approach in the use of renewable energy, in particular photovoltaic systems (solar panels), should be examined, including whether grant funding can be obtained for such schemes. The Authority should also explore all methods of energy reduction as demonstrated/evidenced by the organisations involved in the scrutiny exercise.

In commenting on the final report Members highlighted the importance of the Council clearly demonstrating that it was taking the lead on such matters. One suggestion was for all reports to include consideration of the impact of environmental and energy saving. Reference was also made to the possibility of examining the use of secondary glazing where appropriate

within the Town Hall.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive subject to an additional recommendation:-

That where appropriate, reports presented to the Executive contain a reference to energy and carbon reduction implications.

SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUESTS

It was noted that no scrutiny requests had been received since the meeting of the Board held on 8 January 2013.

NOTED

SCRUTINY PANELS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

In discussing the current activities of the Health Scrutiny Panel Members commented on existing complaints procedures at James Cook University Hospital. Members were mindful of the impending publication and the local implications of the Francis Report.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That the Health Scrutiny Panel consider the inclusion of the local implications of the impending Francis Report on the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry into its scrutiny work programme.

CALL-IN

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

NOTED