

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 23 July 2013.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Brunton (Chair), Arundale, Cole, Dryden, C Hobson, Mawston, McIntyre, Sanderson, P Sharrocks, J A Walker and Williams

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Budd, Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Resources

**OFFICERS:** J Bennington, G Brown and P Clark

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kerr and P Purvis.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

**MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 2 JULY 2013**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 2 July 2013 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS - DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

By way of introduction the Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a report which included a schedule detailing proposed attendance by individual Members of the Executive to meetings of the Board. It was intended for Executive Members to provide updates on their respective work in terms of their aims, aspirations, objectives, priorities and any emerging issues especially having regard to the current financial pressures and ways of mitigating such circumstances. The process was part of the scrutiny arrangements of holding the Executive and Executive Members to account and also provided the opportunity for the Board to identify or highlight any issues of concern or difficulty.

The Chair welcomed the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Resources who indicated that whilst the portfolio covered a wide range of issues he intended at this meeting to focus on regional issue and the Council's Capital Budget which had the subject of a major review and report recently been considered by the Executive.

It was acknowledged that essentially the Capital Programme invested Council resources to pump-prime the town's regeneration, attracting further investment, securing external funding and ensuring continuing improvement to the town's facilities such as Centre Square and Linthorpe Road improvements. Reference was also made to the links with the Change Programme in terms of investment in order to achieve the required savings.

The Board noted the intention for a Programme Board to be established to oversee and monitor the Capital Programme which included an annual review and system of reporting back. Whilst the report on the Capital Programme included the necessary technical details it had been compiled with the aim of being more easily understood. Although the Capital Programme related to a period of four years it was recognised that it required inherent flexibility in order to respond to emerging priorities.

It was noted that the total programme and funding recommended for approval was reported as £151,000 million which included investment in regeneration of Gresham and Grove Hill, Middlehaven and redevelopment of the Western Gateway. Reference was also made to the Boho Zone which now involved private sector funding to a large extent and work with Tees Valley Unlimited which had secured approval for two areas for Enterprise Zone designation. An indication was given of the Council's direct investment in terms of improving the highway infrastructure and funding which had been secured to implement a new rail halt at James Cook University Hospital.

The vitality of the town centre was considered key to the future prosperity of the town and the continuing efforts to establish Middlesbrough as the cultural heart of the Tees Valley was an important consideration. The town's prosperity was intrinsically bound to that of neighbouring local authorities and the Capital Programme should be seen in the context of wider developments through Tees Valley Unlimited and the forthcoming City Deal.

In response to Members' questions the Deputy Mayor gave an indication of the extent of his involvement with the compilation of the report on the Capital Programme.

A discussion ensued on the current process and extent of the political and community input with regard to Section 106 contributions which were largely negotiated as part of the planning process which included consultation with the respective Community Councils. Their main purpose was to ensure that developments fairly contributed to the infrastructure and Council services which their development would require or use. A Member suggested that it might be beneficial for a Members' information briefing to be arranged on Section 106 contributions. Clarification was also sought regarding the utilisation of Section 106 contributions and capital receipts. It was agreed that further clarification and information would be sought with the respective Executive Member at a future meeting.

Following Members' comments regarding the future of Nature's World it was noted that an update was to be provided at the next meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

The Deputy Mayor drew the Board's attention to regional issues and circulated an example of an agenda of a meeting of the Association of North East Councils to which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended on a regular basis, every four to six weeks. It was confirmed that the papers for such meetings were published on the NEC's website.

Information was provided on a number of areas which demonstrated the scope for promoting Middlesbrough and also for such an organisation to collectively raise and promote issues at a national level such as alcohol and smoking related problems; improvements in relation to bus and rail services; monitoring the impact on welfare reform; and improved partnership working. Members referred to the importance of campaigns such as 'Love Middlesbrough' and those similar to the 'Passionate People, Passionate Places' themed campaign led by the former Regional Development Agency.

The Board acknowledged the significant work and discussion which was undertaken by the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Resources with particular regard to promoting the town at a regional level.

It was emphasised that given the unprecedented public spending cuts, increasing costs and increasing demands on social care there was a need for the Council to change radically if it was to continue to deliver quality services. By means of the Capital Programme, investment in technology and a reduced accommodation portfolio would enable the Council to deliver comparable services for less and transform services for the future.

**ORDERED** that the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Resources be thanked for the detailed information provided.

## **SCRUTINY PANELS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

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

In commenting on the evidence being sought by the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel with regard to the Voluntary and Community Sector Members referred to recent recommendations by the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel with regard to the importance of an improved partnership approach with the Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency and for them to actively seek to develop support to secure funding for voluntary sector organisations looking to provide social care support for the BME community.

It was noted that Elise Pout would be returning as a Scrutiny Support Officer focussing on the health scrutiny committees.

**NOTED**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUESTS**

It was noted that no scrutiny requests had been received since the meeting of the Board held on 2 July 2013.

**NOTED**

**CALL IN**

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

**NOTED**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS - HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL - WINTER PRESSURES**

The Chair referred to a meeting of the Executive held on 16 July 2013 when consideration had been given to the Service Responses to the Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel with regard to Winter Pressures.

The Board was advised of concerns which had been expressed regarding the extent to which evidence had been sought in respect of a couple of areas and a request made for the Board to seek clarification and further evidence on such issues. Given the expertise on such issues it was suggested that the Health Scrutiny Panel be invited to attend when consideration is given to the matter.

**ORDERED** that arrangements be made for a special meeting of the Board to be held to which Members of the Health Scrutiny Panel be invited to attend to give further consideration to the matters raised with regard to the Winter Pressures Final Report.