

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 20 August 2013.

PRESENT: Councillors Brunton (Chair), Arundale, Cole, Dryden, Kerr, McIntyre, P Purvis, J A Walker and Williams.

PRESENT BY INVITATION: The Mayor, (Ray Mallon).

OFFICERS: G Brown, S Brown, P Clark, A Crawford, L Henman, E Pout and P Stephens.

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

MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 23 JULY 2013

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 23 July 2013 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS - THE MAYOR

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 Mayor, Ray Mallon to the meeting who indicated his intention to focus on a number of key strategic and operational priorities for 2011-2015 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 with complex needs and pressures with regard to adult social care. If the financial cuts imposed by the Government continued together with increasing demand for adult and children's social care it was expected that over the coming years that such costs would amount to over 75% of the Council's budget.

The Mayor referred to detailed information presented to the Council at its meeting held on 3 July 2013 when it had been stated that the envisaged financial cuts between 2010/2011 to 2019/2020 was likely to amount to £137.3 million. An indication was given of the complexities of the current situation and the likelihood of such an overall figure increasing.

In discussing the overall partnership arrangements confirmation was given that following major Health reforms this included working more closely with the local health and social economy including South Tees NHS Hospitals Foundation Trust, South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Board's attention was specifically drawn to the ongoing work with Tees Valley Unlimited, a public and private sector partnership involving the five Tees Valley Authorities striving for economic growth across the Tees Valley. At the centre of a City Deal for the Tees Valley was around the growth of the existing industrial base. The bulk of Middlesbrough's industrial companies were linked to the larger industrial companies and the commercial and retail

activity in the town was to a great extent dependent upon their success.

As Members commented on the successful DigitalCity partnership and growth in the digital sector the Mayor concurred that such developments were regarded as very important to the town and should be promoted.

Whilst there was much Partnership working and the City Deal would allow greater flexibility to suit the area's requirements it was recognised that inevitably there was a degree to which local authorities would be pursuing as to what was perceived best for their own area. The Mayor advised on the schools agenda which he regarded as one of the very complex aspects of the overall situation.

During the subsequent deliberations the Board was given an insight into the key points raised following discussions with local employers. Members concurred with the difficulties of striking the right balance focussing on academic achievement and encouraging graduates to remain within the town but at the same time ensuring that there were sufficient persons with the appropriate vocational skills which were most suited to the town's requirements.

ORDERED that the Mayor 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.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. The following Members' requests further information be forwarded to the Board in respect of the:-
 - (a) Future of MTLC;
 - (b) mima governance review and business plan 2012-2015.

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK 16 JULY 2013 - WINTER PRESSURES IN THE SOUTH TEES AND SOCIAL CARE ECONOMY - DOG FOULING

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:-

Winter Pressures in the South Tees Health and Social Care Economy - Final Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel
Dog Fouling - Final Report of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

The Executive had considered and supported the Service Response in respect of Dog Fouling and as reported at the meeting of the Board held on 23 July 2013 the Executive had requested clarification and further evidence on certain areas with regard to the Winter Pressures Final Report.

Confirmation was given of the intention to hold a meeting of the Board to which Members of the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel would be invited to attend when further information would be sought regarding certain aspects of the Winter Pressures Final Report.

NOTED

EXECUTIVE DECISION MONITORING SCHEDULE

As part of the overall scrutiny process and agreed by the Executive at its meeting held on 4 December 2013 the Executive Office Manager submitted an update on the monitoring of Executive Decisions including the implementation of agreed recommendations arising from Scrutiny reports as shown in Appendix A to the report submitted.

Based on guidance received from CEMT in relation to its operation the following would apply:-

- schedule implemented with effect from January 2013;
- schedule to be updated on a six monthly basis;
- Executive Directors update their relevant Executive Members every six months and that any identified issues are followed up through their 1 to 1 meetings;
- where those issues relate to approved scrutiny recommendations and if considered necessary, the Executive Member liaise direct with the relevant Scrutiny Panel Chair; and
- the Executive Office be responsible for maintaining the schedule.

Members acknowledged the extent to which the scrutiny recommendations had been actioned but sought clarification regarding the implementation in relation to the ICT Strategy 2012 -2017 which was shown to be on target although those in respect of Paperless Committee Meetings were shown to have been actioned.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That further information be provided regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel in respect of Paperless Committee Meetings.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013/2014

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive was presented on the development of the 2013/2014 Strategic Plan which outlined for each service area the headline performance measures, standards and targets; and major improvement activity for the coming year and beyond.

The Board was advised that in recent years the Council had significantly streamlined its performance management framework in response to the reduction in the Government's oversight of local government performance, and is now in the process of fundamentally reviewing its approach to performance management. It was anticipated that the review would result in the following changes:

- the implementation of a 'Balanced Scorecard' model of performance management by Quarter 4 of 2013/2014;
- the integration of the Strategic Plan with the Change Programme to form a new overarching document for the Council, which would be approved in March annually alongside the Council's budget; and
- integrated quarterly reporting of customer, financial, business and people performance to CEMT, OSB and Executive.

Members indicated the importance of obtaining the relevant information from departments at an earlier stage in order to provide an opportunity for Scrutiny Panels and the Board to consider such information prior to submission to Council.

NOTED

BORO BECKS PROJECT - 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 of the topic of the Council's Boro Becks Project.

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

(i) That relevant external grant funding sources are explored with a view to continuing the Boro Becks Project, albeit on a smaller scale if necessary. Should funding be forthcoming, an assessment will need to be made as to how the project can be supported by the Council - for example by ensuring that any associated future maintenance requirements are sustainable, or continuing to provide assistance in kind.

(ii) That the process of recruiting Volunteer Becks Rangers and establishing Friends Groups is continued and taken forward as a sustainable approach to continuing the work of the Boro Becks Project. Consideration should also be given to how best the use of volunteers and friends groups can be supported and promoted within existing resource levels - such as by promoting the sharing of information, expertise and resources between all friends groups and ensuring that any necessary training is provided. In order to ensure a sustainable way forward, any additional funding that is secured should not be directed towards revenue costs/staffing but should be used to promote the increased use of volunteers.

(iii) That relevant schools are contacted and:

(a) Informed of the educational value of becks in their area, including education programmes undertaken by the Boro Becks Project to date.

(b) Invited to assist, on an educational basis, with the maintenance of areas around becks.

(c) Invited to make a financial contribution to future educational programmes in relation to Middlesbrough becks.

In response to Members' comments regarding the inclusion of other becks throughout the Town reference was made to the grant funding arrangements which had been specifically targeted at areas of deprivation and therefore the Boro Becks Project had only covered four becks as outlined.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive with the exception of an additional recommendation suggesting that endeavours be made for any future funding and improvement work to include all of the Middlesbrough's becks.

WINTER PRESSURES UPDATE

Further to the meeting of the Board held on 23 July 2013 Members considered a report of the Health Scrutiny Panel which outlined the Panel's findings of a recent update on their review of Winter Pressures.

The Board's attention was drawn to the Panel's conclusions. The Panel had recognised the difficulties the Health Service had in planning for events which were subject to factors outside the control of any one organisation and acknowledged that the well publicised problems of last winter came from a confluence of events including:-

- extremely cold weather lasting longer than usual;
- rising demand for healthcare from an ageing population;
- delays in ambulances being able to 'hand-over' patients;
- lack of capacity in the health and social care economy to absorb patients from acute hospital beds;

- delayed discharges;
- Out of Hours provision - ambulances being called in the absence of patients being assessed by a doctor.

The Panel had been pleased to see that each organisation continued to work together to ensure that an all system approach addressed the problems and ensured the public could remain confident in the health and social care services ability to offer a safe and high quality service. Members were pleased to receive a written report delivered by the South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group which clearly showed a consensual approach by all partner organisations.

It was noted that the Panel had been unable to ascertain what new resources were to be made available with the exception of the commitment for increased bed capacity at James Cook University Hospital (JCUH). It was noted that the Panel would await the outcome of the recent announcement by the Government for additional monies to some A & E departments.

The report submitted stated that following a lengthy round table discussion the Panel had agreed the following course of action:-

- (a) To write to the Chief Executive to seek information on what steps were being taken to ensure the take up of the flu immunisation by the Council's staff.
- (b) To invite representatives from the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and Cleveland Police to a future panel meeting to discuss emergency access to JCUH.
- (c) That the Panel receives further information on the Out of Hours service.
- (d) That the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel follow up the recent Government announcement with JCUH to establish if any of the additional monies will be received in this area.

In considering the Panel's findings the Board acknowledged the actions which were being pursued with particular regard to reviewing admissions, improvements relating to discharge planning, Rapid Response service, Care Plans to Prevent Admission, Virtual Ward, Nurse led triage and discharge, review of Ambulance procedures and review of the Out of Hours service.

Members were reminded of the intention to arrange an additional meeting of the Board to which Members of the Health Scrutiny Panel and Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel would be invited to attend when further evidence would be sought and considered on the issues raised.

ORDERED that the findings of the Health Scrutiny Panel be noted.

SCRUTINY PANELS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

Following Members' comments regarding Nature's World it was confirmed that all expressions of interest and options for future use were currently being examined.

NOTED

SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUESTS

It was noted that no scrutiny requests had been received since the meeting of the Board held on 23 July 2013.

NOTED

CALL IN

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

NOTED