

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 15 October 2013.

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

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

**OFFICERS:** B Baldam, J Bennington, G Brown, S Brown, P Clark, A Crawford, L Henman, N Pocklington, E Pout and S Reynolds.

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

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

**13/49 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 17 SEPTEMBER 2013**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 17 September 2013 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**13/50 ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

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 Chair welcomed the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to the meeting. In terms of day to day organisation the Executive Member confirmed that she met with the Executive Director at least on a monthly basis; every two weeks with the Director of Public Health and met with the service managers in Social Care on a regular basis.

The Executive Member drew Members' attention to a number of changes to the portfolio which included public health issues and how it was integrated within the Council such as the links with the Health and Wellbeing Board. Specific reference was made to the challenges with regard to smoking, drug abuse, obesity and alcohol related problems.

In terms of problems associated with smoking, details were given of the work undertaken by the Smoke Free Alliance and specific work carried out within schools. In an endeavour to tackle obesity specific reference was made to the planning activity group and other similar activity groups.

Reference was also made to work in association with Environment City promoting healthy eating and food sustainability.

The Board was advised of current challenges in particular, rationalisation of buildings which included the move of the Deaf Centre as their current building was not considered to be fit for purpose; and further reliance and links with the voluntary sector.

As Chair of Older Person's Partnership the Executive Member gave an indication of the significant amount of work undertaken in this regard by the voluntary sector.

Members sought clarification on a number of areas including further discussions around the

prevalance of fast food outlets in certain areas of the Town. It was suggested that consideration be given to the introduction of saturation zones within certain areas as implemented with regard to alcohol zones.

Following Members' question it was confirmed that the contract in respect of smoke cessation groups was due for renewal and it was intended to establish more groups including the likelihood of one in East Middlesbrough.

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

13/51 **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.

**NOTED**

13/52 **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE CHILDREN - BUDGET AND SERVICE PRESSURES**

Further to the meeting of the Board held on 17 September 2013 the Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Specialist Services presented a report which outlined measures being pursued to deal with predicted budget pressures and to provide information on budget provision.

The Board was advised that in overall terms, Wellbeing Care and Learning had developed a strategy to manage costs as a short to medium term measure but the development of effective early help for children and families was seen as the way forward in the longer term.

From the outset it was recognised that demand and growth were incredibly complex issues and particularly difficult to predict. It was confirmed, however, that the Department had undertaken a detailed analysis of trends over an eight year period and projected such figures forward to establish a position until 2016/2017. Such a model illustrated that across both Children's and Adults Services, the cost of growth to 2016/2017 would be around £16 million of which £9.5 million had been identified for Children's Services.

Members' attention was drawn to key factors which would impact on growth and demand in the future which included increase in 0-19 population by 1% to 36,650; high survival rates of children born with complex needs; high level of low birth weight babies; welfare reforms; economic situation; and national impact of Serious Case Review findings.

In terms of the measures being pursued it was acknowledged that the impact of the Early Help Strategy had yet to make significant impact on the numbers of looked after children although there were clear signs that the strategy was becoming embedded with practice across all agencies in Middlesbrough.

The Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Specialist Services reaffirmed the action being taken as outlined in the report submitted which included:-

- Increasing in-house Fostering Services with an impending further promotional campaign which would include TV advertising;
- A review and challenge of the cost of external placements;
- Continuing negotiations with Ofsted about increasing capacity in three Five Rivers Children's Homes;
- New contracting arrangements with Advanced Childcare Ltd for four dedicated residential beds;
- Impact of work undertaken by the Youth Team currently being evaluated;
- The pilot Emergency Support scheme had demonstrated the benefits of providing alternative strategies to taking children into care.

In terms of the budget a number of assumptions had been applied, one being demand led pressures for children for 2013/2014; £1 million allocated for demand; although budget monitoring indicated increased demand led pressures for 2013/2014. The current Medium Term Financial Plan made provision for the demand that had been identified of £9.5 million up to 2016/2017.

In response to clarification sought from Members an indication was given of some of the challenges in relation to Independent Fostering Agencies and information provided on current monitoring arrangements. Reference was also made to the challenges arising from an increasing number of larger families with complex needs.

Clarification was provided regarding the number of social workers and challenges relating to the manageability of current caseloads.

The Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Specialist Services reaffirmed the importance of the Early Intervention Strategy and involvement of all agencies, including schools, to ensure that children and their families received timely interventions from confident, appropriately skilled services.

**ORDERED** that the Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Specialist Services be thanked for the information provided which was noted.

13/53

#### **2013/2014 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTFURN UPDATE**

A report of the Director of Strategic Resources was presented which gave an estimate of the annual projected outturn for 2013/2014 based on the first budget update exercise of revenue expenditure against the current years Revenue Budget.

It was reported that the projected outturn position for 2013/2014 was a net budget pressure of £349,000 which represented a 0.24% saving against the 2013/2014 revenue budget.

The Board considered the significant financial pressures within services identified within the report which included:-

- Children, Families and Learning - Independent Fostering (+£817,000) and Residential Schools agency budgets (+£277,000);
- Social Care - demand led pressures of +£1,453,000;
- within Environment the savings targets for Fleet Management (+£50,000) and Depot Rationalisation (+£204,000) would not be achieved in full;
- within Property Services, a shortfall of +£75,000 on Commercial Property rent income and the accommodation review savings target of +£350,000 would not be achieved;
- a pressure of +£430,000 was currently projected on the Partnership budget;
- a pressure of +£412,000 in the Assistant Chief Executives Office as the cross cutting savings targets for overtime premium payments, essential care user allowances, staff car parking charges across the Council would not be achieved.

The areas of concern on key budgets for each service area were shown in Appendix A and for service savings in Appendix B of the report submitted.

**ORDERED** that the Officers be thanked for the information provided which was noted.

13/54

#### **CHILD POVERTY, DEPRIVATION AND ATTAINMENT**

The Chair of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation of the topic of child poverty, deprivation and attainment.

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

1. That Middlesbrough Council's work in partnership with local health services, public services and the voluntary sector to put prevention in early life at the heart of service delivery and practice is continued and that, with particular regard to measures relating to deprivation and its impact on attainment:

(a) That the Middlesbrough Child Poverty Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 are updated to reflect the change of national government in 2010 as well as the fact that targets included in the Child Poverty Act 2010 are unlikely to be met.

(b) That mechanisms that are in place to measure and evaluate the impact of interventions relating to deprivation and attainment, and to take corrective action as necessary, are reviewed to ensure that they work at maximum effect.

2. That an appraisal is undertaken in respect of the Save the Children UK Families and Schools Together (FAST) project and its involvement in the CANparent scheme locally and the possibility of expansion of the FAST project in Middlesbrough is explored.

3. That continued liaison is undertaken with schools in respect of the most effective future use of the Pupil Premium, in particular to ensure that appropriate interventions are made at the earliest opportunity. This should include involving Middlesbrough Achievement Partnership in identifying and sharing among schools examples of best practice regarding the use of the Pupil Premium, as well as by assisting and supporting schools prior to OFSTED inspections, for example by arranging mock inspections.

4. That Middlesbrough Council's Wellbeing, Care and Learning Department undertakes an exercise to identify examples of best practice among other local authorities in respect of measures to address child poverty and deprivation. This should ascertain whether any schemes or initiatives successfully tried elsewhere could be beneficial to Middlesbrough.

Members sought clarification in respect of a number of areas and supported the recommendations in particular the possibility of developing the FAST project further and the suggestion to identify examples of best practice of other local authorities in pursuing measures in an endeavour to assist child poverty and deprivation.

**ORDERED** that the findings and recommendations of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

13/55

#### **OUT OF HOURS UPDATE**

In a report of the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel the Board was provided with an update on the findings of the Health Scrutiny Panel following their meeting regarding the Out of Hours Service.

The Board noted that evidence had been received regarding improvements in respect of the following:-

- The Clinical Commissioning Group and JCUH were identifying and supporting those people who may be at risk of an unplanned admission in the future.
- The CCG was collaborating with the Northern Doctors Urgent Care (NDUC) to review pathways and ensure robust criterion for those patients requiring admission to hospital.
- The NDUC had provided information on the development of the Out of Hours Service which included Paramedic Support Line, Special Patient Notes and Access to GP Patient Records.

**ORDERED** that the information provided be noted and the intention of the Health Scrutiny Panel to revisit the topic with particular reference to the development of the new contract for the Out of Hours provider in 2016.

**13/56 AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL - PAPERLESS COMMITTEE MEETINGS UPDATE**

The Senior Resources Officer presented a report which provided an update for Members on the progress of the recommendations identified as part of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel's investigation on paperless committee meetings as shown in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

The Board's attention was drawn to the estimated implementation timescale of 2015 for the possibility of introducing a paperless system in respect of Middlesbrough Council's committee meetings and the use of portable devices by Members to facilitate such measures.

It was confirmed that the implementation timescale had been agreed to take place over a number of years to tie in with other corporate initiatives such as the Change Programme and Work Smart, as effective implementation was dependent on upgrades to the Council's networks, wi-fi and mobile working solutions.

It was pointed out that a meeting had taken place with the Council's Corporate Programme Manager to ensure the requirements of project were considered throughout the different stages of the Work Smart programme.

The Board's attention was drawn to the current process of updating Members' software on their current PCs and gave an indication of available training as part of the overall strategy.

Following Members' questions it was confirmed that not all Officers would receive mobile devices and this would be dependent on the respective business cases. Reference was also made to the need to upgrade certain PCs in order to cope with new network requirements.

Details were given of the current procedures in relation to the disposal of obsolete IT equipment.

**ORDERED** that the information provided be noted.

**13/57 SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUEST**

In a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer the Board was advised of a request received from a member of the public for a scrutiny investigation to be undertaken in respect of the following:-

'Given Middlesbrough's present boundaries and that the available land has been reserved for housing, as opposed to commercial and industrial usage. Can Scrutiny examine to assess the town's economy is sustainable?'

The Board considered the topic against the current criteria to assist in determining if the topic should be investigated.

Members questioned the statement made in the request in relation to the extent of land reserved for housing and other land uses. It was acknowledged that the economic vitality and sustainability for the Town underpinned many important considerations not least employment but also impacted on the wider area. Specific reference was also made to the policies contained within the Local Development Framework.

In order to assist in determining whether or not to pursue the topic for scrutiny investigation it was considered that further information should be provided on current land usage and the Town's economic vitality.

**ORDERED** that the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities be invited to attend the meeting of the Board to be held on 12 November 2013.

**13/58 SCRUTINY PANELS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

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

activities.

**NOTED**

13/59

**CALL-IN**

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

**NOTED**