

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 11 November 2014.

**PRESENT:** Councillors N J Walker (Chair); L Junier, M Thompson, J A Walker and M B Williams

**OFFICERS:** B Carr and A Crawford.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillor J G Cole, Councillor E Dryden, Councillor C Hobson, Councillor T Mawston, Councillor F McIntyre, Councillor P Purvis, Councillor P Sanderson, Councillor P Sharrocks.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point of the meeting.

**14/51 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 21 OCTOBER 2014**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21 October 2014 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

A Member made reference to the minute regarding the Tees Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan and queried whether the recommendations contained at a) to e) had been actioned. The Scrutiny Support Officer advised that he would contact the relevant officer to clarify whether the recommendations had been implemented.

**14/52 ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES**

The Scrutiny Support Officer advised that a schedule had been prepared for 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 Councillor Brenda Thompson - Executive Member for Supporting Communities to the meeting. Councillor Thompson explained that the Executive Member for Supporting Communities was a new Executive portfolio. The Supporting Communities portfolio was aimed at promoting Wellbeing by focussing on preventative measures. The Executive Member provided the Board with an overview of the areas of responsibility included within the Supporting Communities portfolio including the 0-19 Service, Troubled Families, Community Hubs and libraries, Street Wardens, Travellers, the Skills Agenda and Apprentices and reported on progress made in carrying out those responsibilities.

The Executive Member explained that although each Executive Member had their own designated responsibilities, there were also thirteen general responsibilities which each Executive Member was required to adhere to which included being a spokesperson for the Council with regard to issues relating to their portfolios.

The Board was advised that as part of the Skills Agenda the Council was aiming to increase the number of Apprentices in the Council and throughout the town. Reference was made to the work currently being carried out with the Army in respect of Apprenticeships and it was highlighted that Councillor Arundale had already visited Catterick to progress this initiative.

As part of their role, Executive Members were required to work closely with officers and carry out work on their own initiative. The Executive Member for Supporting Communities advised that she had visited a different library hub every week to ascertain what types of service each

hub offered. It was highlighted that the new library based at the Rainbow Leisure Centre was working very well and it was anticipated that members of the public would be able to change library books at the Neptune Centre in the near future.

The Chair of the Board referred to the Mayor's Budget statement and the proposal to reduce funding for the purchase of books. It was highlighted that Ormesby library in Redcar and Cleveland welcomed contributions of books from members of the public where the books were in good condition. A section was set aside in the library to specify that the books had been donated by the public. The Executive Member advised that she would make further enquiries regarding this initiative to see whether this initiative could be adopted in Middlesbrough libraries. It was commented that many libraries were functioning as hubs even though they were not officially classed as hubs.

The Executive Member had also spent time with the Stay Safe Team which comprised of members of the Police, 0-19 team, a SECOS worker and a Social Worker. The working relationship between the members of the team was working particularly well and the response from the young people on the streets had been very positive. The Executive Member also highlighted that she had spent time with the Enforcement Team and Street Wardens, visiting shops that had experienced anti-social behaviour. The Board was advised that the Street Wardens were now based in the Bus Station with the CCTV team.

As part of her role, the Executive Member also held regular meetings with the Executive Director for Economic Development and Communities, the Assistant Director of Supporting Communities and the Community Grants Team.

The Executive Member reported that in terms of the Troubled Families Programme the Council had a target of 'turning around' 570 families by March 2015 and the Council had achieved 93% of that target. Plans were being progressed for Middlesbrough Council to become an 'Early Starter' authority for Phase 2 of the programme. The funding for Troubled Families was currently ring-fenced by the Government but there was a possibility that the funding could become main-stream in Phase 2.

The Council was looking at the support available to troubled families to prevent families from ending up in 'crisis'. Many families were escalated straight to the Safeguarding Team upon their initial contact with the Council. More work was being done at Stage 1 of the process so that low level cases that were not appropriate for the Safeguarding Team to deal with could be signposted to the appropriate service area or organisation to ensure that they received an immediate response to their problems.

A Member commented that there had been some degree of integration with the libraries throughout the town and he queried whether this would be an issue if the Council chose to outsource Leisure Services. The Executive Member advised that she would clarify the position regarding the services currently provided by libraries and whether there were any proposals for some of the services to remain with the Council as it was important to ensure that the eventual decision with regard to the future of Leisure Services was in the interests of the residents of Middlesbrough.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board advised that the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel were currently investigating Alternative Delivery Methods in relation to Leisure Services. The Scrutiny Support Officer responsible for the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel advised that the issue of part of the services that were currently being delivered in-house remaining if Leisure Services was to be outsourced was not something that the Panel had highlighted however it was an issue that could be considered.

The Board was advised that it was anticipated that savings of £2m would be generated over the next two years in respect of the services within the Supporting Communities portfolio.

**ORDERED** that the Executive Member for Supporting Communities be thanked for the overview of progress made in developing and implementing the new portfolio for Supporting Communities.

14/53

**FINAL REPORT - COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL -  
ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MECHANISM FOR SPORT AND LEISURE SERVICES**

In the absence of the Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board outlined the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation into the topic of the future operating model for the delivery of Middlesbrough's sport and leisure services.

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

- a) That if the proposal to transfer the management of sport and leisure services to an external Trust is taken forward a commitment is made not to 'claw back all the possible savings' but to provide the Trust with the necessary resources to grow and improve for the long term benefit of all Middlesbrough residents.
- b) That the panel's preference is for the procurement of a 'not for profit' Established Trust, as opposed to a private sector operator, however the panel acknowledges that inviting variant bids will encourage innovation and enable the Council to benefit from the most cost effective option.
- c) That if the option to procure an Established Trust is taken forward the current terms and conditions of staff working in sport and leisure services be protected and retained. This should be done in line with nationally recognised best practice approaches and go beyond the minimum legal requirements of TUPE.
- d) That if the option to procure an Established Trust is pursued a local stakeholder board is formed, which includes political, community and staff representation to help inform and influence the Trust and reflect local issues.
- e) That if the decision is taken to procure the service from an Established Trust surpluses generated in Middlesbrough are re-invested in the town's leisure facilities for the benefit of Middlesbrough residents.
- f) That reference visits be undertaken as part of the commissioning process and an invitation extended to the Executive Member for Environment and Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel to partake in these visits.
- g) Pricing and accessibility is another key issue and the panel recommends that pay as you play access is maintained at all of the town's leisure facilities irrespective of the model adopted and that Middlesbrough residents benefit from discounted charges and membership rates.
- h) That the Council's 'invest to save' principle in leisure facilities is maintained and that the changing facilities at the Rainbow Centre benefit from investment at the earliest opportunity. The panel is of the view that there is an immediate need to enhance these facilities for the benefit of Middlesbrough residents.
- i) That social objectives are built into any contract specifications including the need to tackle health inequalities and provide diversionary activities for young people.
- j) That efforts continue to ensure an integrated approach is adopted in respect of Tennis World's involvement in the development of the new Middlesbrough Sports Village to ensure a seamless service is delivered to customers using both facilities.
- k) That the panel revisit the issue of traffic impact once the Prissick Sports Village development is complete owing to the concerns raised in respect of the potential impact the new facility will have on traffic in East Middlesbrough.

Members raised the following points:

- Whether all of the facilities currently provided within a venue would be provided by a new trust;
- Whether the Panel had explored what opportunities were available for an established trust to generate funding or access grants which might not be accessible to a local authority.

It was suggested that the recommendations contained at (a) to (k) be grouped separately into those that related directly to the Alternative Delivery Model and those that related to other issues. A Member requested that the comments of the Board be passed to the Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel prior to the report being submitted to the Executive.

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

#### 14/54 **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL**

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the position following discussions at the previous meeting of the Board in respect of the Elected Mayor's strategic priorities and direction of travel.

Following an overview of the key strategic and operational priorities, but in particular the political direction and the direction of travel in respect of the authority provided by the Elected Mayor at the previous meeting of the Board, the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) had agreed that these issues should be considered together as a possible scrutiny topic for investigation by the Board.

A Member had suggested that the scrutiny should involve round table discussions between key stakeholders involved in the process. The Chair of the Board suggested that representatives from organisations including the University, the Police (including the Police and Crime Commissioner), Health, the Trade Unions, Members of Parliament and the Elected Mayor should be invited to a meeting of the Board in early January to hold a round table discussion and that consideration should be given to using a venue other than the Town Hall.

**AGREED** that a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board be arranged for early January 2015 and that an invitation be extended to all key stakeholders, to discuss the Mayor's key strategic and operational priorities including the direction of travel of the Council.

#### 14/55 **SCRUTINY PROCESSES - UPDATE REPORT**

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) of actions that were being taken to strengthen and improve Middlesbrough Council's scrutiny process.

The Chair suggested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Board to allow all Scrutiny Panel Chairs the opportunity to discuss the proposed amendments to the arrangements supporting the scrutiny process.

**NOTED**

#### 14/56 **SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORTS**

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

**NOTED**

#### 14/57 **CALL-IN**

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

14/58

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION NATIONAL PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board referred to the Local Government Association's National Procurement Strategy and suggested that the Board could consider looking at the document as a one-off scrutiny topic, particularly in relation to the potential for the use of procurement to maximise local economic, social and environmental benefits.

It was suggested that an officer from the Council's Procurement Team be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board to advise on the content of the Council's current Procurement Strategy and compliance with the National Procurement Strategy.

**ORDERED** that an officer from the Council's Procurement Team be invited to the next meeting of the Board to provide Members with an overview of the Council's current Procurement Strategy in the context of the Local Government's Procurement Strategy.