

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 2 February 2016.

**PRESENT:** Councillors: T Mawston (Chair), J G Cole, T Higgins, N Hussain, J McGee, J Rathmell and D Rooney and J A Walker

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Elected Mayor: David Budd.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor A Hellaoui.

**OFFICERS:** A Crawford, L Henman and C Lunn.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillors: E Dryden, C Hobson, F McIntyre, J Sharrocks and J Culley.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

**1 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 5 JANUARY 2016.**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2016 were approved as a correct record.

**2 ATTENDANCE OF THE ELECTED MAYOR: MR DAVID BUDD.**

A report had been circulated to the Board which provided information regarding the scheduled attendance of Members of the Executive at the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Today's meeting was attended by the Elected Mayor - Mr David Budd.

The Elected Mayor made the following points in particular:-

- A variety of work had been undertaken in the last six months. It was felt that it was easy to concentrate on negative matters, particularly in respect of budget pressures, job losses, etc., but to concentrate on those would not aid progression. It was important to focus on the positive aspects of Middlesbrough in order to attract inward investment. It was stressed that this was not about ignoring problems, but about aiding progression.

Reference was made to some impending large and small scale projects. It was highlighted that, if progressed, projects such as the snow centre would have enormous potential for the town. It was possible that this attraction could garner up to 2 million visitors per annum, which had happened elsewhere. This would provide further opportunity for the establishment of new restaurants and hotels to cater for the additional people visiting the area. It was indicated that the Council's responsibility would be to gain the benefits of such projects for the people of the town, e.g. creation of job opportunities and securement of additional resources.

In terms of the projects and the financials involved, it was explained that the Council would need to act more innovatively in order to support project progression. Reference was made to the recent Holiday Inn Express development and the Council's role in effectively acting as a loan guarantor, which had never been done previously. It was felt that the development would not have proceeded without it, which had been so successful that the possibility of expansion was currently being considered. It was indicated that other hotel chains had expressed interest in pursuing developments within the town. It was possible that in order to ensure adequate flexibility in terms of resource allocation, instead of preparing a five-year capital programme, which once agreed was set, alternative approaches to financial planning

may be pursued.

- Regarding progression towards Middlesbrough becoming a dementia-friendly town, a promise that the Elected Mayor had made in May 2015, reference was made to dementia cafes, which had formed an integral part of the dementia-friendly progress. A number of businesses had become successfully involved and steady progress was being made.
- Community Bank - The purpose of this initiative was to provide household products at more affordable rates and prices. Progression towards establishing the Community Bank was being made; advanced talks with potential providers had taken place. The importance of the Council's role in promoting and supporting this initiative, once it was established, was highlighted to the Board.
- Middlesbrough's cultural future - It was felt that this was very important to the town and was not an optional extra; culture and heritage should be developed. It was felt that the town should be looked at as a city, and that aspirations should be raised to expect city scaled events and facilities. It was acknowledged that this would take some time to instil, but was fundamental to the town's development.
- SSI - The closure of SSI had been detrimental to the area, with reference being made to the number of job losses that had occurred. It was unclear as to how many people had been successful in obtaining new employment. Reference was made to training courses and support that had been offered to those made redundant, though it was felt that at least a further 6-9 months of support was required.

Regarding the site, it was explained that it would cost somewhere in the region of £8m-£18m per year to maintain it in its current state. There was potential for the site to be used for other purposes, but to clean the site alone would cost in the region of £1-2bn. Work to the site could potentially deplete the entire resource allocation that would be provided to the Combined Authority under the Devolution deal, and it needed to be ensured that this did not happen. The Devolution deal was arranged and signed prior to the closure of SSI.

- Combined Authority / Devolution - A Constitution had been created for the Combined Authority, which would come into being on 1 April 2016.

It was anticipated that Devolution would commence one year later; reference was made to the Mayoral Election that would take place in May 2017.

There had been some uncertainty and reservations raised regarding the Devolution deal, with reference being made to the additional £15m per annum resource allocation that would be received. It was yet to be confirmed what the standard amount per annum would be and when this would be made available. Mention was also made of the Regional Growth Fund and the implications of the Devolution deal on this. However, despite these concerns, it was felt that if additional resources were being allocated over time, and the Council had more input in determining how money was spent, then this would be positive. Reference was made to the work being undertaken with neighbouring authorities and the division of resources once Devolution was in place.

Regarding Scrutiny of the Combined Authority, it was explained that this was built into the Constitution and therefore not optional. Three Members from each of the five Local Authorities would be appointed, which would be politically balanced. Consideration was given to the work of Scrutiny and how Middlesbrough differed from other Tees Valley Local Authorities. The Mayor referred to the need to ensure that Scrutiny was used as a major policy and service development tool - as in Middlesbrough - and was not just used to examine decisions. It was felt that services in some areas would need to be joined up between Authorities in order for progress to be made, though further consideration would need to be given towards this. It was indicated that the exact role of Scrutiny would need to be defined, and would be

dependent on matters such as the role of the Mayor and the aspirations of the Members.

In response to an enquiry regarding promotion of the town, it was felt that ways were always being developed to assist with this. Reference was made to the Love Middlesbrough magazine, which was felt to have been especially successful. Involvement with local businesses and excellent links with the University had been established in order for symbiotic relationships to be formed. Reference was made to a recent Corporate Peer Review, with feedback being obtained as to how optimistic and clean Middlesbrough was.

In response to an enquiry regarding the criteria for accessing the Community Bank, it was explained that it would operate as a standard Credit Union in addition to offering products, therefore there would be rules and regulations surrounding that. There would not be a need for those accessing the service to be members of the Credit Union in order to purchase products, but it was unlikely that multiple purchases of the same item(s) would be permitted.

A Member made reference to the local media in respect of the promotion of the town and the types of activities conducted via this. It was felt that additional promotion outside of Middlesbrough was required in order to raise the town's profile. It was felt that although negativity had hit the town, more positivity needed to be shown and demonstrated for the good things that the town had achieved, such as job creation in recent months. Reference was made to the potential for participation in events and activities to raise the town's profile nationally. In that context, mention was made of the football Premier League and the potential benefit for the town if Middlesbrough F.C were to be promoted.

In response to an enquiry regarding progress monitoring / scrutiny, reference was made to performance statistics and measures such as: cleanliness; visitor figures; housing, school and crime rates, but it was felt that the principal indicator concerned employment and how all of the aforementioned factors interacted to ensure that the people of the town were able to live as full a lives as possible.

Reference was made to the impending Tour De Yorkshire event; it was felt that this presented an enormous opportunity for the town. There was a lot of preparation work currently being undertaken and it was considered that the event had huge potential for raising the profile of the town, both nationally and internationally.

Mention was made of the Tour De France event that took place in 2015 and the initiatives undertaken by organisations in Yorkshire to get involved in the event. It was indicated that similar opportunities existed for Middlesbrough, for example: land art, cultural events and painted bicycles along the route.

It was indicated that part of the route would pass through Stewart Park; the Friends of Stewart Park had applied for a grant for land art. It was hoped that the Endeavour could be sited in the park, though this would be dependent upon financials. Discussions had also been held with the sports village management team to determine the possibility of utilising exercising machines to pedal the distance that Captain Cook had travelled.

It was felt that there was opportunity for everyone to get involved in the upcoming event.

In response to a comment regarding Devolution, it was explained that the Tees Valley Economic Strategy was currently being reviewed. It was hoped that the importance of Middlesbrough town centre and the potential for its future expansion would be included in the Strategy. Reference to other regional centres and comparison to Middlesbrough and the surrounding areas was made.

The Chair thanked the Elected Mayor for his attendance and update.

**NOTED****3 FINAL REPORT OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL - ALBERT ROAD REGENERATION.**

The Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel presented a report, the purpose of which was to present the interim findings of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel in respect of its examinations of the topic of Albert Road Regeneration.

Specific reference was made to the Background; Terms of Reference; The Scrutiny's Panel's Findings; and the Recommendations sections of the submitted report.

It was suggested that a section of the report pertaining to the Council's potential inability to provide direct financial assistance could be amended. It was felt that it would be more accurate if reference was made towards such schemes as the Holiday Inn, and the Council's provision of a grant scheme to support the progression of that development. It was hoped that, in acknowledgment of the Holiday Inn development and the refurbishment works at Baker Street and Bedford Street, the Council would be in a position to offer further similar support in the future. A Member suggested that it may be beneficial to insert the Holiday Inn as an example within the Conclusions and Recommendations of the report, in order to demonstrate how well this financial model worked.

Reference was made to the Tour De Yorkshire and impending visitors. A Member commented that in order to ensure the best first impression, works should be undertaken around the train station area. Reference was made to opportunities available to local businesses and activity on social media, where a number of businesses had expressed an interest in retailing their products along the route.

A query was raised regarding car park provision in relation to recommendation 8 of the report. In response, the Chair of the Panel explained that business operators had raised concerns around car parking provision in the area. Additional businesses would be approached in respect of this issue in order to garner further comments on this issue.

A Member queried the potential business opportunities and concessions that may be available for the Tour De Yorkshire period. Reference was made to pop-up shops, decorative hoarding / shop frontage and business rates. It was explained that the Mela events team would be assisting with the event; Members hoped that a similar setting up of stalls could be achieved along the cycle route. It was envisaged that temporary road closures would also be put in place.

Reference was made to paragraph 23 of the submitted report and the Council's submitted bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for Townscape Heritage Funding. It was clarified that Albert Road was included in the town's Historic Quarter Conservation Area. It was felt that the buildings in this area were particularly attractive and it was hoped that funding could be achieved to sustain these in the future.

Reference was made to Recommendation 2 contained within the report, with particular mention being made to the daytime economy of the area. Members felt that this had deteriorated over time and particular attention was required here.

The Scrutiny Support Officer made reference to paragraph 39 of the submitted report and suggested to the Board that, following receipt of useful information regarding empty properties/National Non-domestic Rates (NNDR), an additional conclusion be added to the report as follows:

'Information received by the Scrutiny Panel confirmed that the Council uses the National Non-domestic Rates (NNDR) system to maximise income for the authority while, at the same time, ensuring that property owners and businesses receive support such as rate relief when

this is due'.

Members agreed to the insertion of this additional conclusion to the report.

**ORDERED:**

1. **That the additional conclusion, as detailed in the preamble, be inserted into the report.**
2. **That the recommendations, as detailed in the submitted report, be approved.**

4 **FINAL REPORT: HEALTH INEQUALITIES – IMPROVING LEVELS OF BREASTFEEDING IN MIDDLESBROUGH.**

Councillor McGee, Member of the Health Scrutiny Panel, presented a report, the purpose of which was to present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel following their investigation into the topic 'Health Inequalities - Improving Levels of Breastfeeding in Middlesbrough'.

Members were directed to the Terms of Reference that the Panel had agreed as part of their review, which were shown on page 15 of the submitted report.

Paragraph 8 of the submitted report, which provided information in respect of local statistics, was highlighted to Members. Mention was also made of austerity measures and the impact that these had had health inequalities.

Regarding issues around breastfeeding, the positives around this were highlighted to the Board. It was explained that advantages for both mothers and infants had been identified during the investigation, and that if more women were breastfeeding, rates of admission to hospitals could potentially reduce as the health of both improved. It was felt that there was a strong case evident here for investment to save, i.e. if funding additional funding was provided, associated costs of hospital admissions to the NHS could be reduced.

Reference was made to the national and regional breastfeeding rates that were detailed in the submitted report. It was highlighted to the Board that rates were poor, both in terms of initiation and beyond, and it was acknowledged that there were issues that needed to be addressed. It was felt that viewing of, and comparison to, other national Local Authority data had been very useful in terms of learning and improving the situation within Middlesbrough. Representation from various health bodies at Panel meetings had been made, which the Panel had found very useful in terms of establishing the challenges faced and identifying potential ways forward, which included changing attitudes and promoting Middlesbrough as a positive place to breastfeed. Reference was made to paragraph 76 of the submitted report in respect of these and other matters with regards to initiating change.

Reference was made to paragraph 36 of the submitted report and research undertaken by Teesside University in 2014 on the topic of breastfeeding within Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland.

In terms of the conclusions reached, it was explained to Members that culture played a particularly prominent role. The culture within Middlesbrough for many years had revolved around bottle feeding. Culturally, breastfeeding had not been favoured, which presented significant challenges around mind set and how this could be shifted. Consideration had also been given to inter-generational influence and informed decision-making. Paragraph 88 of the submitted report was highlighted to members, which detailed information pertaining to the conclusions that the Scrutiny Panel had reached.

Paragraph 89 of the submitted report was read out to Members, which detailed the recommendations that the Scrutiny Panel had made.

In the discussion that followed, Members indicated that this was a very good and

comprehensive report.

Members commented on infant formula and the use of this in other countries.

A Member made reference to Sure Start Children's Centres and an initiative trialled previously in respect of breastfeeding groups. It was indicated that this had been well received by mothers in attendance, but progression on this was unknown. In response, it was explained that those schemes still existed; however, the places where they were found to have the most impact was where paid staff were supporting mothers. Reference was made to page 37 of the report and the possible inclusion of the positive use of Children's Centres in the Panel's recommendations.

**ORDERED**

**That the submitted report be approved, subject to amending the recommendations to include reference to the involvement of Children's Centres in promoting breastfeeding.**

5 **INTERIM REPORT: TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THE BREAST RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL.**

In the absence of the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel, it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

**ORDERED**

**That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.**

6 **FEEDBACK FROM EXECUTIVE - 19 JANUARY 2016.**

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with information regarding the decisions of the Executive on the Overview and Scrutiny Board final reports.

Two reports had been presented to the Executive, as detailed in the submitted report, which had both been approved by the Executive.

**ORDERED**

**That the information contained in the submitted report be noted.**

7 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME.**

The Board noted the contents of the submitted report.

**NOTED**

8 **SCRUTINY PANELS' PROGRESS REPORTS.**

The Board noted the contents of the submitted reports.

The Chair of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel explained to the Board that the next meeting would be taking place on 3 February 2016. The Panel's investigation concerned the safeguarding of Looked After Children and Members had been visiting schools as part of it. It was envisaged that the final report would be completed in the near future and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board accordingly.

**NOTED**

9      **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

No items.

**NOTED**