

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 8 November 2016.

**PRESENT:** Councillors T Mawston (in the Chair), J G Cole, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, J McGee, L McGloin, D Rooney and M Walters

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor N J Walker - Executive Member for Finance and Governance

**OFFICERS:** B Carr and C Walker

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillor E Dryden, Councillor C Hobson, Councillor L Lewis, Councillor J Sharrocks, Councillor J A Walker.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None Declared.

**1 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 11 OCTOBER 2016**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11 October 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**2 ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AT THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Democratic Services Officer submitted a report to provide information in respect of the scheduled attendance of Members of the Executive at the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB). 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.

The Chair welcomed Councillor N Walker, the Executive Member for Finance and Governance, to the meeting.

The Executive Member advised the Board that James Bromiley had recently been appointed to the post of Strategic Director of Finance, Governance and Support and as part of his role, he had overarching responsibility for Finance and Governance and was also the Council's Section 151 Officer. The Executive Member held weekly meetings with the Strategic Director and with officers of the next tier down.

Councillor Walker provided information in respect of the following:

- The integration of Finance and Performance;
- The changes following the review of Democratic Services (e.g. one officer attending meetings);
- Consolidation of financial reports and regular reporting timescales;
- Increased Project Management training;
- Reporting on Internal and External Funding separately;
- New One Stop System and involvement of Members on specification to ensure it was fit for purpose;
- Customer Strategy (e.g. re-design of Middlesbrough House to accommodate self-serve, installation of access points in hubs for self serve purposes (initiated through a Task and Finish group in relation to Customer Contact));
- Members Tablets (pilot ongoing);
- Members Printers (decision that members can retain printers);
- Accessing Council emails by mobile phone;
- Appointment of Senior Coroner, new coroner's court and new regulations stating that coroner must retire at 70;
- Council Tax Collection and Benefits and the Benefit Cap;
- Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2017/18 (Council Tax Hardship Fund);
- Use of in-house bailiffs for sensitive cases;

- ICT Service Improvement Programme (changes to helpdesk opening times etc);
- Agile Working

A Member queried whether the Executive Member would be able to forward details of case studies of people affected by the benefit cap. The Executive Member advised that details of four case studies would be emailed to all Members of the Board.

### 3 COMMISSIONING CONSULTANTS

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance advised that following the presentation of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel - Response - Council's Use of Consultants to the Executive meeting held on 8 September 2016, three actions had been identified. The full detail of the actions was attached at Appendix A to the report.

In response to the actions, the following work had been undertaken:

- Drafting a Policy for Commissioning Consultants;
- Agreed definition for 'Consultancy';
- Business Case Template developed;
- A dedicated GL Code has been created;
- Quarterly spend reports to be implemented;

The draft Policy for Commissioning of Consultants had addressed the concerns raised by the Scrutiny Panel but it was highlighted that some of the recommendations conflicted with the Middlesbrough Manager Model. The Executive Member advised that it was important that in respect of all expenditure, that the Council had the appropriate methods in place for authorising expenditure. It was also important that the view of Audit had been sought to ensure that the Policy complied with audit requirements.

The Policy contained a defined definition of a consultant 'An individual or organisation that provides professional technical advice or expertise that is not readily available inside the Council, or is outside the scope of usual service delivery'.

The Policy had been drafted in consultation with Human Resources as there would be implications for the Council if the commissioning of Consultants was not carried out appropriately. A separate budget code for consultants had also been identified to allow the Council to run reports on consultancy spend, so that the use of consultants could be monitored to ensure that the process for appointing consultants was transparent. It was proposed that quarterly spending reports on consultancy use would be presented to the Leadership Management Team (LMT).

The new business case template would ensure that the definition for the use of a consultant was met and that evidence of the outcome of any savings to be achieved was provided. It would also provide a robust audit trail for approval to commission a consultant as opposed to employing someone on a fixed term contract basis. The business case was designed to hold the service area to account in relation to the savings or non-cashable efficiencies that would be achieved through the use of consultants so that value for money was evident.

A copy of the Commissioning A Consultant request form was attached at Appendix A to the report. The form required the person commissioning a consultant to give reasons for the request and provide details of savings or efficiencies to be achieved from the project. The form also required details such as:

- Confirmation that the project was short-term or in relation to a specific piece of work;
- Estimate of the cost for the consultant, payment terms and budget code;
- A milestone plan showing the project length and desired outcomes, including any financial benefits or added value that would be delivered;
- Risk associated with if a consultant was not procured e.g. work not completed, grant funding lost or savings not achieved etc.

The request form would be submitted to the Contracts and Commissioning Service to

discuss/agree milestones for guidance on monitoring. The new Project Management documentation would be utilised to assist in the monitoring process.

The policy would be submitted to LMT and considered by an Executive Member Decision meeting in order to formally endorse the Commissioning A Consultant Policy.

The Policy would be reviewed after a period of six months by the Internal Audit team.

**AGREED** as follows:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board acknowledge the draft policy on Commissioning a Consultant.
2. That Members of the Board acknowledge the agreed definition of 'Consultancy' as defined in the draft policy.
3. That the Board acknowledge the implementation of the production of quarterly reports on the use of consultants.
4. That feedback on the outcome of the review be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

#### 4 **TEES-WIDE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD - STRATEGIC PLAN - 2016-2017**

The Democratic Services Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to receive information from the Chair of the Tees-wide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) as part of the Board's local accountability arrangements.

The TSAB was established to ensure that adults at risk across Teesside were protected and safeguarded. It had been the statutory body in respect of this function since April 2015. Ann Baxter, the Independent Chair of the TSAB was in attendance at the meeting to present the Tees-wide Safeguarding Adults Board - Strategic Plan - 2016-2017.

Members were advised that the Board worked with a range of strategic bodies including the four local authorities (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton), Health, the Fire authority, the voluntary sector and the Police to provide a safeguarding network to promote consistency in relation to adult safeguarding.

It had been a significant year in respect of safeguarding adults. The Care Act provided a statutory requirement for an Adult Safeguarding Board to be established. A Safeguarding Adults website had been established and it was currently receiving 500 views a week. Over the last year, the Board had provided a range of multi-agency training and hosted conferences in respect of neglect and hoarding.

There had been a number of significant challenges faced by the partner agencies including a reduction in the number of nursing home beds, a number of residential homes closing (particularly in Hartlepool), an increase in the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding cases, an increase in domestic abuse reporting to the police and a lack of available resources and increased pressure for some of the sectors involved in safeguarding work.

Feedback from members of the public obtained through the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework in terms of the proportion of people who used the service who felt safe placed Middlesbrough at the top of the table in respect of the four local authorities with a figure of 73%. In terms of the proportion of people who used the services who felt that those services had made them feel safe and secure, the figure for Middlesbrough was 91%.

The TSAB had the following five strategic aims:

- Personalisation;
- Prevention;
- Protection;

- Partnership; and
- Professional Accountability.

The Board's highest priority was to improve awareness of safeguarding and to ensure that all organisations worked together to safeguard adults.

At the end of the year the TSAB looked at what they said they would do and what they had actually received. A survey had been carried out and 800 responses to the survey had been received.

The TSAB had established the following Sub Groups:

- Communication and Engagement Sub-Group;
- Learning, Training and Development Sub-Group;
- Performance, Audit and Quality Sub-Group;
- Policies, Procedures and Practice Sub-Group;
- Safeguarding Adults Review Sub-Group; and
- Local Executive Groups for each of the four local authorities.

If any concerns about safeguarding were raised, a Safeguarding Adult Review was carried out and a Sub-Group had been established specifically to look at these cases. Nine learning reviews had been carried out across the Tees Valley to see if lessons could be learned and the Safeguarding Adults Review Sub-Group monitored the implementation of the action plans linked to the learning reviews.

Further multi-agency training would be carried out in 2016/2017 in order to strengthen safeguarding practices across the Tees Valley and share best practice.

The Chair of Social Care and Adult Services advised that she would like to invite the Chair of the TSAB to a future Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel and that it would be useful to see a copy of the Annual Report.

A Member indicated that she would be interested in finding out what training in respect of safeguarding was available. The Chair of TSAB advised that some of the training was centred around raising awareness and recognising the signs of safeguarding issues. A range of e-learning could be accessed from the TSAB website.

The Chair thanked the Independent Chair of TSAB for a very informative presentation.

**AGREED** that the information presented be noted.

## 5 **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL - FINAL REPORT - STREET BEGGARS**

The Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel outlined the Scrutiny Panel's main findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation of the topic of Street Beggars

The Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel recommended to the Executive:

1. That the multi-agency approach adopted in addressing the issue of street beggars be endorsed and supported.
2. That the public information campaign to encourage people to 'Think before you Give' be widely advertised and promoted across Middlesbrough.
3. That a charity donation box be installed in the town hall to allow members of the public to make an immediate donation to a homelessness charity.
4. That approved street performers be required to display their Busking Permits for easy identification by members of the public.

A member referred to Conclusion 8a and requested a breakdown in respect of the nine prolific street beggars with regard to the issues that they experienced. The member also queried with regard to the figure presented in respect of some beggars receiving upwards of £2000 a month in benefits. The Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel advised that the information would be clarified and a response would be provided direct to the Member concerned.

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

## 6 **ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL - FINAL REPORT - COMMUNITY HUBS**

The Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel outlined the Scrutiny Panel's main findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation of the topic of Community Hubs.

The Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel recommended to the Executive:

1. That in order to build on the involvement of external agencies and partners in community hubs; ensure awareness of all available services; promote closer working; and potentially improve cross-organisational working:
  - a) A list of all agencies, organisations and partners working at community hubs, together with details of all services available, is circulated to all parties/organisations providing such services.
  - b) Information is also provided to Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA) as above and the organisation requested to circulate it to all of the member organisations on its database.
2. That, in order to encourage take up of services and facilities, the availability of all community hubs and services to all Middlesbrough residents is actively promoted, for example via an article in the Love Middlesbrough publication and via social media. Consideration should also be given, in conjunction with relevant partner organisations, as to how or whether outreach provision can be made for community hub services such as money advice and support for the elderly into areas not covered by existing hubs.
3. That an update on progress made in implementing the Action Plan on libraries and community hubs that was approved by the Executive in November 2015 is considered by the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel.
4. That support is provided to Friends Groups and community groups that are not directly affiliated to a community hub to assist them in accessing sources of funding.

A Member raised the following queries:

- whether the Council received any income from the privately run swimming pools located within the Hubs;
- whether a list of activities taking place in each Hub was available;
- whether information on footfall by postcode within each of the Hubs was available;
- In respect of gyms located within the hubs - who was using them e.g. whether it was residents within the area or if people came from further afield and did it impact on income coming in.

The Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel advised that the information would be clarified and a response would either be provided direct to the Member concerned or processed through the one-stop system.

**ORDERED** that the findings and recommendations of the Economic Regeneration and

Transport Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

7 **SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORTS**

The Chair of Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel provided Members with an update in respect of the Panel's current topic of investigation - Sextortion.

The Chair of Environment Scrutiny Panel advised that the Panel were currently looking at the topic of Commercialisation.

The Chair of Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel advised that the Panel were currently investigating the topic of Safeguarding Adults.

**NOTED**