

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 19th February, 2009.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton(Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Alex Cunningham, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson and Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey.

Officers: N Schneider (CE); P Saunders (RES); M Robinson, S Daniels (DNS); J Humphreys, R Kench, S Willson (CESC); D E Bond, P K Bell (LD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Cains, Cllr Dixon, Cllr Fletcher, Cllr Large and Cllr Walmsley.

Apologies: None.

CAB 148/08 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Coleman declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 3 - Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2009/10 as he was a Member of Stockton International Family Centre and left the room during consideration of recommendation 5 of the report.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 3 - Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2009/10 as she was the Chair of Stockton District Information and Advice Service and left the room during consideration of recommendation 5 of the report.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 3 - Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2009/10 as she was a Member of Billingham Town Council.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 3 - Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2009/10 as he was a Member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 3 - Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2009/10 as he was a Member of Stockton District Information and Advice Service and left the room during consideration of recommendation 5 of the report.

None

None

CAB 149/08 **Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2009/10**

In order to record this decision adequately it was necessary to include lengthy tables of information. Inclusion of such tables currently causes format problems within the e-genda system and because of this it is not possible to reproduce this decision/ minute on e genda in the usual way.

However a word version of the minutes of the meeting is attached or is available by contacting Democratic Services.

CAB **Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Programme**
150/08

Further to the reported downturn in the national economy and its impact on the borough's Medium Term Financial Plan, consideration was given to a proposed new Council approach to driving improvement and efficiency. The proposed approach would refine current approaches to performance and financial management, placing residents' needs and efficiency at the heart of the council.

A three year programme of efficiency and improvement reviews was proposed across all the Council's activities and consideration was given to the proposed approach to these reviews. It would also mark the beginning of a development phase for the Council as it followed a period where the Council had been nationally recognised for its high performance and forward thinking, where resident satisfaction was generally high and where quality of life for local people had improved. Even without the financial drivers for improved efficiencies, this programme was needed in order to maintain high performance, continue to improve satisfaction and enable further improvement across the borough.

The objectives of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) programme, considered by Cabinet at its January meeting, were:

- To improve services while reducing costs enabling the Council to manage its Medium Term Financial Plan effectively;
- To improve resident satisfaction;
- To further develop the council's service focus, excellence, improvement and efficiency culture;
- To maximise the potential of partnership working to improve efficiency and delivery to residents and service users;
- To ensure the Council remains high performing and that the borough is seen as high performing in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment;
- To develop service delivery models which will be effective in meeting the changing needs of our communities e.g. the needs of an aging population.

The principles embedded within the review framework were:-

- Member involvement throughout
- Resident focus
- Innovation
- Service focus
- Efficiency focus
- Performance focus
- Doing more, better, for less or maybe not doing it at all
- Future proofing the council
- Effective project management.

The Efficiency and Improvement strands of the programme would be delivered through a whole Council review programme. Reviews would be carried out which encompassed every function whether delivered directly or through commissioned / contracted services. Some reviews would be of discreet services or groups of services such as a review of youth services; others would be of themes which affect a range of services / areas of the Council such as

advice and information services.

Councillors would be involved in every review. Some reviews or elements of reviews would be carried out by Scrutiny Committees as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme. For reviews not carried out by Scrutiny Committees there would be two ways of involving non-Executive Councillors in the reviews. The first is through allocating a Scrutiny Committee to each efficiency and improvement review. The allocated Committee would receive progress reports at its meetings enabling members to challenge the progress and findings of the review. The second option is for a Scrutiny Committee or a specially formed task and finish group of councillors to be involved in a “gateway” review of the findings of the challenge and procurement modules. This would enable members to test the findings of these two critical stages in the review, challenging their robustness before they are reported to Cabinet. Cabinet members would be involved in all reviews relating to their portfolio.

Details were submitted of how the three following main stages of the review framework would operate:-

- Challenge
- Procurement
- Business Process Re-engineering (simplifying the way we do things to make them more efficient).

Every aspect of the Council’s work would need to be covered by the review programme. There would be two review programmes – one for reviews to be carried out by Scrutiny Committees and one for reviews to be carried out by officers with scrutiny committee involvement.

The Scrutiny review programme for 2009/10 would be developed as normal through the identification of potential review areas, assessment against the PICK (Public interest, Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area, Council performance and efficiency, Keep in context) criteria, discussion of priorities at the Scrutiny Liaison Forum and decision by Executive Scrutiny together with allocation of each review to an appropriate Scrutiny Committee. Greater weighting would be applied to reviews with an efficiency focus in the PICK criteria.

The programme of efficiency and improvement reviews to be carried out by officers would be developed over the coming weeks and brought to Cabinet in March alongside the Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for approval. This programme would then be used by Executive Scrutiny Committee to decide which option for scrutiny involvement to apply to each review. The review programme would be firm for the first year (2009/10) and indicative for the following two years.

Progress in delivering the Scrutiny work programme would be monitored as normal by the Executive Scrutiny Committee. Progress in delivering the officer review programme would be monitored by a “programme board” of senior officers and reported to Cabinet and Executive Scrutiny on a quarterly basis. Progress with the reviews would also be outlined at the regular “policy update” members seminars.

RESOLVED that the proposed managed approach to improvement and efficiency over the medium term, be approved.

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CAB 151/08 Performance and Budget Report Quarter 3

Members considered a report that outlined the Council's performance and financial position for the period Quarter 3 October to December 2008 highlighting achievements and areas for improvement.

The National Indicator Set (NIS) of 198 statutory measures included a number of new measures, never before collected. Work continued with the Council and its partners to develop systems to collect this new data with work underway to test the data collection systems to ensure that they are robust. Delays at a national level were likely to mean that some National Indicators would not be introduced until 2009/10.

The NIS also includes measures which were dependent on perception data collected through the Place Survey (adults) and Tell Us survey (children). The Place Survey results were due for publication in February 2009. The Tell Us survey results were published in December 2008 with some national comparative data still awaiting publication.

The Corporate Basket currently monitors 218 measures to provide an overview of our progress towards achieving the themes and actions identified within the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council Plan. Of these measures 90 were due for reporting and were available at quarter 3. As many of these measures were new for 2008/9, the first year of data collection was being used to determine a baseline from which future targets could be set. As a result of this, for 20 of the measures collected at quarter 3, data was held but progress could not be shown against a target.

For the remaining 70 measures, 49 were on track or have achieved the targets set with 21 currently indicating that the target would be missed. This equated to 70% of targets on track or already having achieved target. This was a similar trend to overall achievement of targets at the same period in previous years. Full details of progress against each objective was provided to Members. Cabinet also noted information on consultation activity and complaints and commendations received within the last quarter.

RESOLVED that the report detailing performance, as at Quarter 3, be noted.

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