

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Monday, 17th September, 2007.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman) Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Lee Narrowway, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Allison Trainer

Officers: S. Willson (CESC); F. Shayler, M. Waggott (LD); B. Simpson (R).

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Coleman, Harrington, Mrs Nesbitt, Mrs Rigg, Sherris, Smith, Woodhead and Womphrey.

EXC 21/07 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda No. 5 Financial Performance and No. 10 Forward Plan due to being a Member of the Roseworth School Governing Body.

Councillor Gibson declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 6 Responses to Performance Questions and No. 11 Chair Updates further to being a Tristar Board Member.

Councillor Mrs Trainer declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 6 Responses to Performance Questions and No. 11 Chair Updates further to being a Tristar Board Member.

Councillor Narrowway declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 11 Chairs Updates further to being an employee of Tees Esk and Wear NHS.

EXC 22/07 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26th June 2007 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EXC 23/07 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24th July were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EXC 24/07 **Financial Performance**

Members were provided with information on the projected outturn position based on information to the end of June 2007, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and current issues for the 2008/09 Revenue Support Grant Settlement.

Members held discussion on the key movements such as the overspend on the Adults Learning Disability Agency, it was felt that this was a growing area and that there was a need to consider during the budget setting process. Discussion was also held on Refuse Collection and associated fuel costs.

Members also discussed the pressures in Housing Benefits Administration, the Surplus HRA, Single Status, NRF and Extended Schools Budget.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**EXC
25/07** **Responses to performance questions**

Members were provided with the responses to the performance questions raised at the meeting on 24th July 2007 relating to:-

Tristar Complaints
Delivery of Equipment and Adaptations
Adoptions/Fostering Placements

RESOLVED that Members note the responses.

**EXC
26/07** **Performance Report – Council Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2006/07**

Members were provided with the performance against Council Plan 2006-2009 and Service Improvement Plans for 2006/07.

Overall, 73% of key service improvement objectives and 77% of key organisational objectives were fully achieved or were on track. This compared with 75% of key service objectives and 76% of key organisational objectives fully achieved or on track for 2005/06. Members were provided with progress on each thematic area.

Members requested further information, to be supplied at the next meeting on the following points:-

1. Reducing total annual crime - target not achieved. The main crime types, which Stockton has been under performing in, were volume crimes including criminal damage and violent crimes especially common assault. Initiatives were under way to identify those individuals responsible for a large percentage of these crimes, and to take actions to prevent further offending.
2. Areas of continued priority included pressures from out of area placements for adults with Learning Disabilities, development of "Drugs move on" services, developing access to training and employment opportunities for those with learning disabilities, completion and implementation of the Library Service Review and continued development of the Preston Park and Hall development and work on the development of the cultural quarter.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and further information be provided to the next meeting on the points raised.

**EXC
27/07** **Referral from Cabinet - Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2008**

Members were presented with a request from Cabinet to include the Sustainable School Travel Strategy in the Select Committee Work Programme.

On 2 August 2007 Cabinet received a report that sought approval of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2008. It was requested that the Strategy be referred to Executive Scrutiny Committee for consideration and possible inclusion in the Select Committee work programme.

The Regeneration and Transport Select Committee were currently undertaking a review of Employability but no second review topic had been identified for the current year. However, a suggestion to undertake a review of Taxis had also been identified.

Members discussed the priorities of the Select Committee and suggested that once the Review of Employability was completed that the Select Committee should:-

1. Undertake Monitoring of the Street Lighting Recommendations.
2. Review - Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2008
3. Review - Taxis

RESOLVED that the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee set their work programme according to the priorities detailed above.

**EXC
28/07** **Feedback from Executive Scrutiny Away Day**

Members were presented with feedback from the Executive Scrutiny Away Day and proposed actions for discussion by the Committee.

An Away Day for Executive Scrutiny Members and all Chairs and Vice Chairs was held on 11 July 2007. The Away Day provided a refresher on the principles of good scrutiny, scrutiny roles, scrutiny structures and the review process as well as providing a discussion on the implications and opportunities arising from national scrutiny developments.

A summary of the feedback arising from Members discussion was provided for Members information together with proposed actions to address the issues raised.

RESOLVED that the actions arising from the Executive Scrutiny Away Day be approved.

**EXC
29/07** **Forward Plan 1 September to 31 December 2007**

The Forward Plan for 1 September 2007 to 31 December 2007 was provided for Members information.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

EXC **Chairs Updates on the following reviews:-**

Corporate and Social Inclusion

Members had been continuing with their review of Theatre Subsidy and had completed the following:-

- Background and comparative information relating to subsidy levels and programming information had been supplied to the Committee
- a members' survey was issued
- two meetings of the committee had been held

The Committee had decided to hold an additional meeting of the committee in order to clarify several issues which may mean that the timescale may slip a month.

The Committee had also received an action plan setting out how the meetings venues review would be implemented and were due to receive a report on progress in November 2007.

Arts, Leisure and Culture

The Committee had started the review by receiving an overview of the various regeneration projects which were in place for the riverside area, including the Teesside Princess.

The Committee would be speaking to members of river based sporting clubs and requested an update from the Police Borough Commander in order to review the issue of anti-social behaviour at locations along the river.

Planned consultation included using the Youth Viewpoint/Viewpoint panel, a suitable method of consulting businesses and ward councillors/ parish councils bordering the river.

The review also received widespread publicity in the local press, in particular articles in the Herald and Post, and the Evening Gazette.

The Committee would also shortly be receiving an update on progress with the Preston Hall review and an action plan for the Festivals review.

Housing and Community Safety Select Committee

The Committee had examined the first annual report on the Service which was produced by the Head of Community Protection, and received a presentation on the work of the Service from the Security Services Manager.

Various consultation exercises had been undertaken.

The review was on schedule and was due to report to Cabinet on 25 October.

The Choice Based Lettings action plan was agreed by the Committee in June, and the progress report was due in December.

Environment

Members were provided with an Update on Progress of Cemeteries and Memorials – Phase 2 - The Management of Memorials.

The following activities had taken place:

- a site visit to Durham Road Cemetery where Members had a demonstration of memorial safety testing by MemSafe
- a press release was issued with photo opportunity and meetings with the press on the day of the site visit. Following this, there was significant press coverage in the D&S Times, the Northern Echo and the Evening Gazette
- a comprehensive background information pack supplied to all members of the committee
- the Committee had taken evidence from the service and Care for Your Area at two meetings of the Select Committee
- a members' survey was issued
- letters had been sent to churches and faith groups seeking their views.
- The Chairman and Vice Chairman to visit Carlisle (a best practice Authority) on 3 October
- a mid review "tri partite" meeting was held on 29 August 2007 to update the Cabinet Member with progress

Additional to the original scope for the review, the Committee had decided to undertake some further consultation directly with cemetery users.

This phase of the Cemeteries and Memorials review was due to report to Cabinet in November 2007.

The Committee had received an action plan setting out how the phase 1 recommendations would be implemented and were due to receive a report on progress in December 2007.

Adult, Health and Social Care

The Committee had met with the Regional Director of Public Health, the Regional Health Inclusion Manager and the Assistant Director of Programmes at the North East Public Health Observatory as well as local public health representatives to get an overview of service provision.

The Committee had taken evidence from representatives of preventative and primary care services and had arranged future meetings thematically. The Committee was due to meet representatives from North Tees Hospital and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust to determine secondary/tertiary service level provision. Evidence would then be taken from a variety of voluntary and community groups in the borough.

The timescale of the review was on track and would report to Cabinet on 20th December 2007.

A Monitoring Report for the Review of Dentistry would be considered on 26 November 2007.

Regeneration and Transport

The Committee was currently reviewing Employability and had held three meetings and taken evidence from the Government Office North East, Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council, Tees Valley Job Centre Plus, Stockton Riverside College, and from service groups within the Council, including the Adult Education Service, the Training and Employment Service, and the STEP's service.

A further three meetings of the review were currently scheduled, which had been programmed thematically. These focus on areas identified as particularly pertinent to the scope of the review, including health, disability and substance abuse; employers' views and information regarding key occupational sectors within the Borough; and third sector involvement in increasing employability.

As initial evidence had been taken, the review had developed from the original scope and project plan in terms of the witnesses and evidence the Committee would receive, in order to more effectively tackle the main issues and meet the stated aims of the review.

The review was currently on schedule with a view to the final report being presented to Cabinet in December 2007.

The Committee was due to undertake monitoring of the recommendations contained within the Street Lighting review by December 2007.

Children and Young People

The Committee had taken evidence from officers in CESC and would next meet with representatives from North Tees PCT to determine the level of support and service provision for looked after children in the borough.

The tripartite meeting was due to take place on Tuesday, 18th September and final agreement of the report on 3rd October.

The final report would be presented to Cabinet on 25th October 2007.

The Committee would also be considering monitoring reports on Teenage Pregnancy and Bullying.

RESOLVED that the Chairs Updates be noted.