

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 16th February, 2010.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Aidan Cockerill (vice Cllr Sherris), Cllr Julia Cherrett (vice Cllr Mrs Trainer), Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Mrs Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Bill Woodhead, Mr Frank (Diocesan Rep).

Officers: Richard Bradley, Paul Diggins (DNS); Graham Birtle, Nigel Hart, Judith Trainer (LD); Esme Hall, Debbie Hurwood (R).

Also in attendance: Cllr Mick Eddy.

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllr Dixon, Cllr Sherris, Cllr Smith, Cllr Mrs Trainer, Mr Connaughton.

EXC 58/09 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Cains declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No 5 - EIT Review of Advice and Information Services further to being a Member of the Tees Credit Union.

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No 5 - EIT Review of Advice and Information Services further to being a Member of the Tees Credit Union.

Councillor Mrs Nesbitt declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No 7 - EIT Review of Child Placements further to caring for children prior to placement.

Councillor Mrs Rigg declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No 10 - Report on Chairs Updates further to a relative residing in a care home.

EXC 59/09 **Minutes for Signing - 17th November and 15th December 2009**

The minutes of 17th November and 15th December were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EXC 60/09 **Draft Minutes - 5th January 2010**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

EXC 61/09 **Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of Advice and Information Services**

Members were presented with the final appraisal information together with recommendations for the future development of advice and information services across the Borough. The Committee supported the recommendations going forward to Cabinet.

In respect of the recommendation to consolidate the advice and information services that the Council commissioned from external organisations into a

single contract, Members asked for assurances that support and advice would continue to be directed to the people who need it. The Head of Customer Services and Taxation confirmed that the important elements of services provided would be preserved in the new contract.

In respect of the recommendation for the temporary transfer of the Independent Living Fund Officer to the Personalisation Support Team, Members commented that more work was needed to encourage take up of the fund. The Head of Customer Services and Taxation advised that moving the member of staff into the personalisation team would mainstream the activity and should therefore have a positive effect on take up.

RESOLVED that the information for the options appraisal be supported subject to Members comments being taken into account.

EXC 62/09 Efficiency Improvement and Transformation (EIT) - Commercial Trading Services

Members were presented with final appraisal information together with recommendations for the strategy and business development of the Commercial Trading Services. The Committee supported the recommendations going forward to Cabinet.

Members also made the following comments:

- The introduction of re-useable green waste sacks were welcomed although it was noted that there might be complaints in some wards. Officers stressed that residents could still purchase their own clear plastic bags which would continue to be collected
- Members raised concerns that the size of the green waste sack would make them heavy for some residents to lift
- Some residents, who did not hold a credit/debit card, had experienced problems paying in advance for bulky waste collections. Officers advised that other forms of payment were accepted at Customer Service Centres and that residents could also take bulky items to the Household Waste Recycling Facility
- There was a need for greater publicity to residents about the consequences of using unlicensed waste collectors. Members also queried whether licensed operatives could be identified through the display of a licence or in some other way.
- Members suggested enquiring into whether the current customers of the tea service would be fully willing to increase the amount they paid to fully fund the service.

The Chair congratulated officers for the quality of the review and report.

RESOLVED that the information for the options appraisal be supported subject to Members comments being taken into account.

**EXC
63/09** **EIT Review of Child Placements**

Members were provided with the final EIT report for the Children and Young People Select Committee. The Chairman presented the report and highlighted each of the recommendations. Members discussed the recommendations and requested that a minor amendment be made to the wording of paragraph 1.9 and a correction to paragraph 4.64.

RESOLVED that the EIT Review of Child Placements subject to the minor amendments being forwarded to the next Cabinet meeting.

**EXC
64/09** **Review of Winter Maintenance Services**

Further to the extreme weather over the last few weeks, a review of the Winter Maintenance Policy was undertaken. Consultation had taken place with elected members, members of the public and Council employees.

The report identified learning and discussion points, as there were clearly some learning opportunities following recent events. Any suggested increase of the Council Response to severe weather events needed to be considered within the tight financial constraints that the Council faced.

It was also critical to note the damaging effect the severe weather had had on the infrastructure of the Borough's roads. A full inspection had taken place of the road network and early indications showed excess damage. Consideration would need to be given to the post event activities such as road repairs and budget implications would be considered within the Council's Financial Plan.

Members were provided with the following list of actions:

1. That the Winter Maintenance Plan be reviewed in light of the severe weather experienced over the last few weeks.
2. That a Snow Plan be devised with options for additional snow clearing activities and service improvements. The Snow Plan would consist of a set of actions, which could be brought into operation at the start of a Snow Event which would better meet Public expectations
3. That details of post event reparations be investigated and costed in term of resources required following severe weather events to repair the road network. Early indications suggested the recent prolonged snow event had caused additional damage to the road network.
4. An improved Communications Action Plan be devised to improve residents knowledge and ensure regular and updated information regarding SBC winter maintenance activities be easily accessible
5. That a further report be brought back to the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee at an appropriate time with costed options associated with the above.

Members held discussion on the report and felt that measures should be included for flooding following the snow. Members also felt that information

should be more readily available on where salt bins were located and who to contact if the bins needed refilling.

Members were also concerned about the legalities of people falling over and causing damage to themselves in the snow. It was felt that some legal clarification was required on this matter.

RESOLVED that the report and members comments be noted and the submission of a further report to the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee at an appropriate time with costed options as set out be endorsed.

**EXC
65/09** **Scrutiny Work Programme**

Members were presented with a request from Regeneration and Transport Select Committee to be involved in a review of winter emergency arrangements and confirm that the Children and Young People Select Committee were to lead further work on the Youth Services EIT Review.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Following the officer review, a further report on Winter Maintenance Services be presented to Regeneration and Transport Select Committee for consideration of costed options prior to Cabinet approval.
2. The Children and Young People Select Committee lead on further work on the EIT Youth Services Review with a view to reporting to Executive Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in the summer/early Autumn.

**EXC
66/09** **Forward Plan**

Members were provided with the statutory forward plan for 1st February 2010 to 31st May 2010.

Members held discussion on the item relating to Integrated Health and Social Care, Billingham, and it was requested that an update report be provided to the Health Select Committee.

RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted and an update report be provided to the Health Select Committee on Integrated Health and Social Care, Billingham.

**EXC
67/09** **Report on Chairs Updates**

Members were provided with an update from each of the Select Committees.

RESOLVED that the Chairs updates be noted.