

# Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 4th March, 2008.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Lee Narrowway, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Mrs Allison Trainer, Cllr Bill Woodhead; Mr Frank (Diocesan Representative); Mrs S Mustafa (Parent Governor Representative).

**Officers:** Helen Dean (CE); Kate Fulton (PP); Graham Birtle, Nigel Hart, Fiona Shayler, Margaret Waggott, Judith Trainer (LD).

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** were submitted on behalf of Cllr Harrington, Cllr Mrs Nesbitt, Cllr Perry, Cllr Sherris, Cllr Smith, Cllr Womphrey.

## 1 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Narrowway declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 - Performance Report Quarter 3 further to being an employee of CAMS.

## 2 **Minutes for Signing - 15th January and 5th February 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th January and 5th February were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 3 **Local Area Agreement 2008-2011**

Members were provided with a report that outlined the emerging role for the Council's scrutiny function in Local Area Agreements (LAA), explained the LAA development process and welcomed comments on the attached draft LAA for 2008-2011.

Stockton was one of the 21 local authorities that piloted LAAs in 2004, and also one of the 17 local areas that tested the "dry run" process (previously feasibility) for negotiating their new LAA 2008 - 2011.

Following the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (2007), all LAAs were being reinvigorated and refreshed. Some important changes were announced for LAAs which were outlined below.

The LAA would be the three year delivery plan for the new longer term Sustainable Community Strategy and should link to the Local Development Framework.

The LAA would be at the heart of the new performance framework with the LAA effectively forming the key performance contract between Central and Local Government.

There was now a statutory duty between councils and named partners to set targets, co-operate with negotiations and have due regard for achieving the targets, contained within the LAA, in producing their organisational plans. (Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill)

Councils were also subject to a duty to prepare the LAA in consultation with others, including the voluntary/community and business sector.

The government also outlined in the White Paper a commitment to streamline the number of indicators that local government had been required to report upon from potentially over a thousand to a National Set of 200 (now 198). The NIS will supersede the old Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs).

Each Council working through the Local Strategic Partnership would be responsible for negotiating an LAA containing up to 35 indicators from the NIS list of 198. There were also an additional 16 mandatory Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) targets, which were focussed around educational attainment. In addition to the up to 35 from the NIS list the LAA

could include a set of customised local indicators with locally determined definitions that partners would still be legally bound to co-operate in agreeing and having regard to in their organisational planning.

The new LAAs would be negotiated between Government Offices, on behalf of Central Government and Councils and their partners.

Government Office NorthEast had indicated that LAAs would be signed off by the Secretary of State in June. As Stockton's current LAA ended in March 2008 negotiations with GONE and the Government's Department of Communities & Local Government for an earlier sign off were taking place, in line with our service planning processes, however this would be subject to GONE and Ministers capacity to achieve this in the time frame.

RESOLVED that the emerging role of Scrutiny in the development and performance monitoring of the Local Area Agreement for 2008-2011 be noted.

2. The Executive Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the draft Local Area Agreement for 2008-2011.

#### **4 Performance Report Quarter 3 - October to December 2007**

Members were provided with the Council's performance and financial position for the period Quarter 3, October to December 2007, providing details of performance against targets and improvement trends. This report included the linkages between performance and corresponding risks, performance against the Corporate Basket of key performance indicators, Gershon Efficiency Savings, complaints and commendations, consultation and sharing of good practice, undertaken during Quarter 3.

Members discussed progress against performance by the five different thematics.

Children and Young People - Members raised a query on the published performance for pupils achieving GCSEs at Grades A\*-C, and whether this included English and Mathematics. The resource pressures on Placements for complex needs was raised and whether it was financially viable to have a council owned Centre.

Safer Communities - Domestic burglaries, 40% being walk in burglaries at peoples homes. Could further publicity be carried out to raise awareness via Home Safety.

Economic Regeneration and Transport - Members discussed the projected deficit in Building Control and requested further information.

Discussion was held on complaints and commendations and further information was requested on complaints recording and how second complaints were recorded.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the issues raised be clarified and distributed to Members.

#### **5 Review of Parkview Care Home**

Members were informed that the Adult Services and Health Select Committee had completed their evidence gathering for the Review of Parkview and the final report was being finalised. It was anticipated that the report would be distributed later that day and would be considered by Cabinet on 13th March, 2008.

RESOLVED that the report be distributed by email to Members as soon as it is finalised.

#### **6 Forward Plan**

Members were provided with the forward plan 1st January 2008 - 30th April 2008.

RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted.

## Report on Chairs Updates:-

Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee

Review of Community and Voluntary Sector

The Committee had appointed Members to a smaller task and finish group of the full committee to conduct this review. The task and finish group were continuing to take evidence meeting and would be taking further evidence from the following:-

- Dawn Welsh – Neighbourhood Renewal Manager
- Stephen Bray – Chair of Catalyst
- Paul McGee – Consultant
- Ian Jones – Chief Internal Auditor
- Julie Harkin – Senior Finance Manager

The Group would also be meeting with representatives of the organisations core funded by the Council and conducting an all Member survey as part of the review.

The review was due to report to Cabinet in May 2008.

Members raised the issue of meeting times due to the increased number of meetings being arranged to complete reviews and it was requested that meetings not be rescheduled unless it was due to external factors.

Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee

Review of River Based Leisure Facilities

At a meeting on 13 February the Committee heard evidence from Jack Goodfellow (Sports Development Service Manager) in relation to schools use of the facilities on the river and representatives of Four Seasons White Water Course/British Canoe Union, Tees Valley Rivers and Fisheries Associations, and also Castlegate Marine Club. The Committee also received an update from Neil Schneider in relation to the issue of the Kellington.

At a meeting on 28 February, the Committee heard an update from Graham Clingan (Countryside and Greenspace) on the River Tees park project. At the same meeting, the Committee received evidence from Carol Straughan in relation to issues surrounding quality of development near to the river, land use and ensuring access to the river was maintained and improved.

A meeting has been arranged for 5 March to discuss possible recommendations, and also a meeting on 26 March to agree the final report.

The review remained on schedule and was due to report to Cabinet at the first meeting of the next municipal year.

The Chairman updated Members on the position with HMS Kellington, a letter had been received from Frank Cook MP retracting any obligation by the MOD from the Kellington. The Chairman would have a meeting with the Corporate Director Development and Neighbourhood Services to see what action could be taken on this matter.

Housing and Community Safety Select Committee

Traveller Transit Site Selection

At a meeting of 31 January, the Committee considered the results of the consultation on the proposed site of land adjacent to Bowesfield Pumping Station. Following this the Committee decided that the site was not suitable and therefore that there were no suitable sites within Council ownership. It was recommended to Cabinet that the terms of reference for any future search should be widened to include sites outside of Council ownership.

The Committee's report was presented to Cabinet on schedule at a meeting on 14 February.

A seminar would be held on Travellers and Transit Sites.

#### Environment Select Committee

##### Waste Review

The Committee was continuing to meet to take evidence as part of this review. Evidence would be taken at the Committee's next meeting from:

- Mike Chicken (Environment Policy Manager)
- Arups Consultants

The response to the public consultation "Start Talking Rubbish" has been excellent with over 3000 questionnaires returned to date.

The Waste review was due to report to Cabinet in May 2008.

##### Task and Finish Group – Vermin Control

A Tripartite Meeting was held on 7 February 2008 to discuss scope of review and the first meeting scheduled for 29 February to receive evidence/confirm scope of review.

The estimated completion date for this review was March 2008 allowing for evidence to be provided from Town Centre Manager/Retail Forum; N.Water etc.

#### Regeneration and Transport Select Committee

##### Sustainable School Travel Strategy

This was referred to Executive Scrutiny by Cabinet in August. Cabinet suggested that School Travel Plans be considered as part of the review, in relation to what degree they had been implemented in Stockton and how effective they have been.

Since the last update, the Committee has taken evidence from Khalid Azam on the child health agenda, Pauline Beall on safeguarding children in relation to school travel, and Mike Chicken on the wider environmental impact of travel by car.

The Committee also received evidence from staff and students from Tilery Primary School, Junction Farm Primary School, and Conyers School to examine the different travel issues facing schools in Stockton, how schools put together a travel plan, and subsequent actions taken. Jane Sinclair, Jonathan Kibble, and Neil Ellison from the Road Safety Team also attended this meeting to provide information on operational issues of School Travel Plans, and the benefits of, and barriers to, securing more sustainable school travel.

Evidence was also received from Karen Smith and Nigel Gibb concerning measures to tackle illegal or inconsiderate parking outside schools.

In addition to this, a questionnaire has been sent out to all of Stockton's schools with and without a School Travel Plan.

The review was on schedule with the final report being presented to Cabinet in April 2008.

#### Children and Young People Select Committee

##### Review of School Organisation Plan

The Select Committee had completed its evidence gathering having taken information about the future house developments and the initial BSF consultation findings.

The Committee would meet on Thursday, 28th February to determine its views and recommendations.

The Committee would report to Cabinet on 24 April.

#### Adult Services and Health Select Committee

##### Review of Parkview Care Home

The Committee held an evidence gathering day which provided Members with the national and local policy context for care home provision as well as learning about the specific issues regarding Parkview.

The day also allowed family / carers; staff; Village Park Residents Association, and Thornaby Independent Association to provide the Committee with evidence arguing for Parkview to remain open.

A number of site visits took place on Monday, 18th February. Members of the Committee visited Parkview, Mandale House, The Poplars, and Aspen Gardens to compare Parkview with similar properties as well as seeing the Extra Care that was now being provided elsewhere.

The Committee met to agree its findings on Monday, 25th February. The Committee would report to Cabinet on 13th March.

##### Other Work

The Committee had agreed that Stockton Borough Council should be part of a Section 244 Consultation Committee that was being set up with other local authorities to respond to the NHS plans for a new hospital north of the River Tees. The consultation would begin in June following Durham and Hartlepool Councils elections. A Joint Scrutiny Committee would be established in order to consider potential sites, it had been proposed that the Committee would be made up from 2 Members from Durham, 3 Members from Hartlepool and 6 Members from Stockton.

The Committee would also be consulted by the North Tees PCT and North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals Trust on 10 March 2008 regarding its submission to the Healthcare Commission's Annual Healthcheck.

RESOLVED that the updates and comments be noted and Officers be authorised to seek and confirm the appointment of elected members to the Joint Scrutiny Committee in accordance with political proportionality.