

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 5th August, 2008.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Lee Narrowway, Cllr Mrs Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mrs Allison Trainer.

Officers: Helen Dean (CE); Nigel Hart, Fiona Shayler, Margaret Waggott, Kirsty Wannop (LD); Garry Cummings, Brian Simpson (R).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead; Mr P Connaughton (Parent Governor Representative).

1 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Rigg declared a personal/non-prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 6 - Scrutiny Work Programme further to being a Partnership Board Member.

2 **Minutes - 10th June - For Signing**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th June were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3 **Minutes - 8th July 2008**

The draft minutes of 8th July were agreed as a correct record.

4 **Performance and Finance Report Year end 31st March 2008**

Members were provided with a report that outlined the Council's performance and financial position for the period Quarter 4, January to March 2008 and year end outturn, providing details of performance against targets and improvement trends. The report included the linkages between finance, performance and corresponding risks, general fund balances, medium term financial and capital plan position. Also included within the report was the performance against Council Plan objectives, Service Improvement Plan progress, Corporate Basket of key performance indicators, Gershon Efficiency Savings, complaints and commendations, consultation and sharing of good practice.

The Corporate Basket for 2007/08 held 95 of the council's key measures including Best Value Performance Indicators, Performance Assessment Framework measures (PAF) and local indicators. Outturn results showed good levels of achievement against targets. Of the 95 measures, 80% of targets were achieved with 78% showing an improvement trend from the same period last year.

Members considered the report in detail and raised a number of queries. Further information was requested on the Special Placements Fostering/Residential underspend. Further information would be provided to Members on this issue.

Discussion was held on the Neighbourhood Nurseries Service and the costs associated with the externalisation of this project. Information was also requested on how many nursery places may have been lost as a result of this. The Chairman would seek further clarification and report back to Members.

Members discussed the Youth Justice Plan and requested a copy for their information.

Discussion was held on complaints and commendations and how these were defined.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5 **Scrutiny Work Programme-Position Statement**

Further to the previous meeting, Members were requested to consider the anticipated timescale of the scrutiny review of Taxis and to note the current position regarding the workload of all of the Select Committees. This was with a view to determining, if necessary, the allocation of further review work in advance of the scheduled half yearly review of the overall Work Programme in September 2008.

Good progress was being made by each of the seven Select Committees with regard to their current review work and detail was provided on when their current reviews would be completed. The Environment Select Committee was near completion of its first review for this year and anticipated that scoping for their next review of Dog Fouling would take place at their meeting in September.

Members noted that the review topic of Area Partnerships and Support Arrangements was the next scrutiny topic in order of priority. The Assistant Chief Executive had advised that it would be advantageous to the Council to be made aware of any financial implications arising from such a review prior to budget setting and service planning. This would mean that a scrutiny review would need to be undertaken by November 2008. Therefore a short time limited review by a task and finish group preferably made up of Members who were or had been Members of Partnership boards providing that there were no conflict of interests. Officers would look into this matter and begin compiling appropriate evidence.

Further information had been received regarding Officers review of the Policy and Procedures for Taxi Drivers, it was anticipated that their review would be completed in order to submit a report to this Committee on 28th October, 2008. It was suggested that Members consider at this meeting the allocation of a time limited scrutiny review by a Select Committee/Task and Finish Group, if deemed appropriate.

A meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum would be held on 17th September 2008 to review the current work programme and allocate work topics to Select Committees for as and when there capacity allowed. It was expected that new topics such as Motor Bike Nuisance and Homelessness would be added to the submission of topics for consideration by the Forum. In addition, the Council had recently been made aware of a White Paper produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) entitled 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely-A Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal', which effectively set out the Government's framework for long term disposal of radioactive waste and invited expressions of interest from communities wishing to open up discussion (without commitment) on the possibility of hosting a geological facility at some point in the future. Members felt that they did not want to make any further discussions on this matter at this time and that they did not feel a review of this matter was required.

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

6 Forward Plan

Members were provided with a copy of the Statutory Forward Plan from 1st August to 30 November 2008.

RESOLVED that the content of the forward plan be noted.

7 Report on Chairs Updates

The Chairman/Vice Chairman of the following Select Committees provided an update on their current reviews/work programme:-

Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee - Review of Older People Strategy; Action Plan for the Voluntary and Community Sector Review.

Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee - Review of Tees Active.

Housing and Community Safety Select Committee - Review of Registered Social Landlords.

Discussion was held on the current housing market, shared ownership properties and empty RSL properties.

Environment Select Committee - Review of Customer First. Progress report on the Waste Management Review and the Future Development of Cemeteries and the Management of Memorials.

Regeneration and Transport Select Committee - Review of Highway Network Management; Progress of Street Lighting.

Children and Young People Select Committee - Review of Obesity.

Health Select Committee - Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare - Consultation Review; North Tees Health Centre Development; Updates on Local Involvement Network (LINK).

RESOLVED that the Chair's updates be noted.