

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 24th March, 2009.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Julia Cherrett (vice Cllr Allison Trainer), Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Stoker; Mr Frank (Diocesan Representative); Mr Paul Connaughton (Parent Governor Representative).

Officers: Simon Willson (CESC); Paul Diggins (DNS); Graham Birtle, Peter Mennear, Fiona Shayler, Judith Trainer, Margaret Waggett (LD); Kate Fulton, Lesley King (PP); Garry Cummings (R).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllr Mrs Nesbitt, Cllr Perry, Cllr Sherris, Cllr Mrs Trainer, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Woodhead; Mrs J Robson.

1 Declarations of Interest

None

2 Draft Minutes 27th January 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Quarter 3 Medium Term Financial Plan Update and 2009/10 Budget

Members were provided with a report that outlined the Council's financial performance to 31 December 2008 and were provided with an update to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from 2009/10 incorporating the recent budget decisions.

Discussion was held on the delay of introducing Integrated Service Areas (ISA), the expenditure would not be incurred until 2009/10. It was stated that this was due to organising suitable accommodation for the ISA's.

Members discussed the report in detail and noted the working balances and revised Capital Programme.

RESOLVED that the updated Medium Term Financial Plan, level of working balances and revised Capital Programme be noted.

4 Quarter 3 - Performance Report October - December 2008

Members were provided with a report that outlined the Council's service performance to 31 December 2008 highlighting achievements and areas for improvement.

The Corporate Basket currently monitored 218 measures to provide an overview of the 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.

This report also included information on consultation activity and complaints and commendations received within the last quarter. Details of the performance against the corporate basket measures, available for collection at Quarter 3 were available on the Council's website.

Members discussed the figures in relation to 16-18 year olds who were not currently engaged in Employment, Education and Training (NEET).

Discussion was held on the slippage for the payment of invoices. It was stated that this matter would be investigated and a response sent to Members.

Members discussed sickness levels which had risen due to a flu epidemic during this quarter, it was hoped to see a reduction in sickness levels during the final quarter.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report and performance for Quarter 3 be noted.
2. An update with regard to the payment of invoices be forwarded to Members.

5 Environment Select Committee Final Report - Review of Dog Fouling/Animal Welfare

Members were provided with the Environment Select Committee's final report on the Review of Dog Fouling/Animal Welfare.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

6 Housing and Community Safety Select Committee Final Report - Review of Neighbourhood Policing/Neighbourhood Watch/Outward Facing Aspects of CCTV

Members were provided with the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee's final report on the Review of Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and CCTV.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

7 Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee Final Report - Review of Tees Active

Members were provided with the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee's draft report on the Review of Tees Active. Members were provided with updated recommendations following the Select Committee's meeting on 20th March where the report had been finalised.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

8 Scrutiny Work Programme - Selection of In Depth Scrutiny Reviews

Members were provided with a report that provided suggestions received from Members and officers, together with the identified priorities following discussion at the Scrutiny Liaison Forum on 26 February 2009. The prioritisation reflected a strong focus on the Efficiency Improvement and Transformation Programme (EIT) given its strategic importance.

Topics had been sought from Members and Officers on a standard pro forma in line with previous practice. Justification of proposals had been requested based on public interest, impact, performance and efficiency issues and context. This PICK system approach allows a score to be given to each suggestion to help with prioritisation of topics.

Taking into account the EIT Programme which was being developed, it had been agreed that the PICK system should reflect the strategic importance of efficiency work as well as organisational effectiveness with reviews supporting the efficiency work taking a high priority. Suggestions under the heading Council performance and efficiency had therefore been given a greater weighting.

EIT topics which were identified by Scrutiny Liaison Forum at their meeting on 26 February for in depth scrutiny reviews were provided. In addition, Scrutiny Liaison Forum proposed that there would be Select Committee involvement and management of Gateway reviews together with reports to Executive Scrutiny Committee.

Members were reminded that last year the Council approved a revision to the terms of reference of all Select Committees to allow them to undertake review work not strictly falling under the remit of each committee. This had enabled reviews to be prioritised across the board and allocated by Executive Scrutiny Committee.

Looking at the top seven priorities, the draft programme Scrutiny Liaison Forum had identified comprised:

Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion- Communication, Consultation and Engagement
Health - Fair Access to Care
Children and Young People - Child Placements and Residential Care
Regeneration and Transport - Commissioning and Provision of Public and Community Transport
Housing and Community Safety - Regulation and Enforcement
Environment - Commercial Trading Services
Arts, Leisure and Culture - Three Gateway Reviews
Executive Scrutiny - Four 'Reporting In' Reviews, Overview of Progress of EIT programme

The above programme included 6 select reviews, 3 gateway reviews and 4 'reporting in' reviews. Scrutiny Liaison Forum therefore suggested that, both from a committee and officer capacity perspective, to deliver the programme one select committee was designated as a gateway committee with the option to co-opt relevant select committee Chair (if willing given workload), and the Executive Scrutiny committee receives all reporting in EIT reports as well as an overview of progress.

Members discussed the various proposed reviews and felt that the preferred option for Environment Select Committee would be to undertake a review of Carbon Management (eighth priority review) and the the review of Commercial Trading Services be a 'reporting in' review.

Select Committees would continue to receive support from a scrutiny officer and democratic services officer and a departmental link officer would also provide support to Select Committee for individual in-depth reviews. Gateway reviews and 'reporting in' reviews would also receive appropriate support from service departments as well as scrutiny support.

In order to support Select Committees undertaking reviews as part of the EIT programme, there would be a need for specialised training for Select Committee members on the framework for EIT reviews in order to equip them with the skills for this role.

A regular progress overview report of the EIT programme would be submitted to Executive Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Scrutiny Work Programme be approved.
2. Subject to the view of the Corporate Management Team the Environment Select Committee undertake an indepth review of Carbon Management with Commercial Trading Services being undertaken as an officer review 'reporting in' to the Executive Scrutiny Committee.

9 Forward Plan

Members were provided with the Statutory Forward Plan for 1 March 2009 - 30th June 2009.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

10 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 - This report was scheduled to report to Cabinet 14th May 2009.

Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee - Review of Tees Active - The report would be presented to Cabinet 16th April, 2009.

Housing and Community Safety Select Committee - Review of Neighbourhood Policing/Neighbourhood Watch/Outward Facing aspects of CCTV - The report was due to be considered by Cainenet on 16th April 2009.

Environment Select Committee - Review of Animal Welfare and Dog Fouling - The final report would be presented to Cabinet on 16th April 2009.

Regeneration and Transport Select Committee - Review of Highway Network Management/Pavement Parking - The final report was due to be considered by Cabinet on 14th May 2009.

Children and Young People Select Committee - Review of Obesity - The final report had been accepted by Cabinet on 5th February and would be presented to the PCT Board on 26th March. The Committee would be presented with an action plan on 27th March, 2009. Members were reminded to submit their signed Corporate Parent declarations to the Democratic Services Unit.

Health Select Committee - Audiology - The final report would be presented to Cabinet on 14th May 2009. The Committee had also undertaken the Annual Health Check and had been consulted on the Billingham Headway Development.

RESOLVED that the Chair's updates be noted.