

## Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 15th December, 2009.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead

**Officers:** L King (PPC), G Cummings (R); P Diggins (DNS); S Willson (CESC); Mrs T Harrison, Mrs J Trainer, Mrs M Waggott (LD)

**Also in attendance:** P Connaughton (Governor)

**Apologies:** Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Mrs Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Mick Stoker and Mrs Alison Trainer.

### **1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 Draft Minutes - 17th November 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

### **3 Quarter 2 - Performance and Budget Report July - September 2009**

Members were provided with a report, which outlined the Council's financial and service performance for the second quarter of 2009/10, 1st July to 30th September 2009, highlighting achievements against objectives in the Council Plan, the Local Area Agreement, the National Indicator Set, consultation activity undertaken, complaints, commendations and comments received and an update of the EIT Reviews programme.

Members were advised that issues regarding care packages within Children Education and Social Care would be reported at the next Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Members were informed that the income shortfall in Planning from Planning fees had been managed by maintenance of vacant posts and redeployment of staff to other areas.

In addition to existing pressures placed upon Development and Neighbourhood Services, a recent fire at the waste incinerator site, which had resulted in alternative means of disposal of waste being utilised at a cost to the Council.

Members were advised of a change in the general fund expenditure and balances.

Members queried the under spend in relation to Integrated Services Areas and whether this was a 'managed' saving or as a result of something else. Members were advised that the saving were due to a number of unfilled vacancies for Social Workers within the Council which had impacted on the service provided. However this was due to recent high profile issues related to Social Work which

had resulted in a national problem in recruiting Social Workers.

Members were presented with an update on performance against the National Indicator set, the Local Area Agreement and against Council Plan objectives and targets. In relation to the Local Area Agreement areas of slippage and action being taken was highlighted.

Members were advised that the annual process of refreshing and renegotiating targets was currently underway through Government Office North East (GONE). The guidance from GONE was that the renegotiations would be limited to the economic indicators. Approval for the renegotiated targets would be via Cabinet and the Local Strategic Partnership.

Members were informed that performance related to creditors and sickness absence in Xentrall were improving.

Members were advised that although there was national guidance on what was deemed to be acceptable levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting, Stockton's results on graffiti of only 1% unacceptable amount meant that there was no graffiti in 99% of the sites surveyed.

Members were provided with additional information on unemployment levels in Stockton compared to the Tees Valley averages. These showed that Stockton's increase over the year from September 2008 to September 2009 was slightly higher than the average increase across the Tees Valley authorities.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

#### **4 Health Scrutiny - Responding to consultations from Health Bodies**

Members were provided with a report which proposed an amendment to the Council's constitution to give power to the Health Select Committee to respond to health consultations whilst requiring endorsement by the full Council of proposed responses in respect of matters of 'significant variation'.

Members were advised that this would enable the Health Select Committee to deal with minor issues directly rather than going through Cabinet.

**RECOMMENDED that Council approve amendment to the Council's constitution to give power to the Health Select Committee to respond to health consultations but require that responses to consultations on 'significant variations' are endorsed by full Council prior to submission to the relevant health body.**

#### **5 Forward Plan**

Members discussed the Forward Plan and advised that the Committee should contact the Chief Executive advising that the Youth Service Review should be a Member led review.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.

2. The Chair advises the Chief Executive that the Committee feel that the Youth Service Review be a Member led review.

**6 Chairman's Update**

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

RESOLVED that the Chairs updates be noted.