

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 1st June, 2010.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson(Chairman), Cllr Miss Tina Large(Vice-Chair), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher (vice Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell,

Officers: Judith Trainer and Michael Henderson (LD); Mike Batty and Barry Jackson(DNS);Paul Saunders (R)

Also in attendance: Leslie Gibson (Harbour)

Apologies: Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Mrs Allison Trainer, Cllr Bill Woodhead,

**EXC
2/10** **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**EXC
3/10** **Notes of Inquorate meeting held on 4th May 2010**

Members considered a note taken at a scheduled meeting of the Committee held on 4th May 2010 which had been inquorate. Members considered the note and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED that the note and the recommendations contained in it be agreed.

**EXC
4/10** **EIT Review of Domestic Violence**

Members were provided with a report relating to an Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Review of the Council's Domestic Violence Services. It was intended that the report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet on 10 June 2010.

It was noted that the report had taken account of comments this Committee had made at its meeting held on 5 January 2010 and were highlighted within the report in italics.

During consideration of the report the following comments were made:-

- The Committee recognised that the current economic climate placed increasing demands on domestic violence services and that it would therefore be inadvisable to look for net reductions at the present time but that efforts should continue to be made to ensure that the service was cost effective and represented value for money in order to respond to the increasing demands
- The Committee asked that further work be undertaken to assess the level of need and identify funding opportunities to help children, affected by Domestic Violence, to remain at their own schools (where appropriate). The Committee requested that officers consider this issue and report back to a future meeting of the Committee on their findings.
- The Committee accepted that there was a case for raising awareness of domestic violence services in specific areas of the Borough although it was recognised that this would place additional demand on services
- In respect of recommendation 5, the Committee asked that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People be added to the Council's representatives on the Domestic Violence Strategy Group alongside the Cabinet Members for Housing & Community Safety and for Adult Services & Health, as Member Champions for domestic violence services.

RESOLVED that

1. the report and recommendations be agreed subject to the amendment to recommendation 5 as detailed above.

2. issues surrounding the promotion of children remaining in their own schools be investigated and a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

**EXC
5/10**

EIT Review of Procurement and Commissioning - Scope and Project Plan

The Committee considered the scope and project plan in respect of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Review of Procurement and Commissioning.

It was explained that most of this activity took place within the service groupings. The review would include considering whether procurement activity across the Council could be undertaken in a different way e.g centralised. If specialised knowledge of markets was applied to all procurement activity this was likely to produce better deals for the Council.

It was noted that site visits were planned to Councils which had already gone down the line of centralised procurement

Reference was made to a regional review, which was looking for improvements in terms of work undertaken within the North East Purchasing Organisation. It was noted that outcomes of the regional review may have to be factored into the Council's review

RESOLVED that the scope and project plan be agreed.

**EXC
6/10**

Alteration to the Scheme of Planning Delegation

Members considered a report relating to the Council's planning scheme of delegation.

It was explained that in January 2008 Council had agreed alterations to the scheme of delegation and Planning Committee Site Visits. Council also agreed that that a review of scheme of delegation be undertaken by an appropriate Scrutiny Committee. Given this the Committee was asked to consider the operation of the scheme since its approval.

The report provided to the Committee included the views of the Planning Committee and examined how the scheme had operated. The report also proposed certain alterations to the scheme to make it more efficient and streamline.

The Committee considered the report and agreed its conclusions and proposed changes as set out below.

E mail representations

It was explained that the use of Email was quite prevalent but an Email address was capable of being disguised and did not clearly identify the individual making representation or where they resided. Given this it was recommended that Emails should include a real name and address and the author of an Email without a proper name and address be advised of the need to provide one.

Council Developments

Members noted that, for Council developments, "minor" development was classed as extensions of up to and including 100m² of floorspace, disabled access facilities, fencing, storage buildings and renewal of consents. It was considered that this was a very low threshold and had resulted in applications being reported to Planning Committee for single CCTV cameras. It was therefore recommended that the definition and thresholds should be raised and delegated development be classed as buildings up to and including 500m², of floorspace, Advertisements, CCTV systems, and any structures required to be erected to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibility and function of Community Safety.

Council Member spouse or Partner, Member of Council Staff Spouse or Partner

It was considered that the requirement for the above category of planning application to be referred to Planning Committee be limited to:-

Where an objection representation had been received to the planning application

Those cases where the Officer recommendation was for approval but it constituted a departure from the Development Plan

Those cases which appeared to the Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services or the Head of Planning to be extraordinary when viewed against established policy guidelines, or warranted consideration by Planning Committee;

Where the applicant was a Member of Staff of Planning Services or their spouse or partner.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed changes to the scheme of delegation, as detailed above and in the report, be approved.

**EXC
7/10**

Statutory Forward Plan - June 2010 to September 2010

Members considered the Statutory Forward Plan for the period 1st June 2010 to 30 September 2010.

RESOLVED that the plan be noted

**EXC
8/10**

Report on Chairs Updates

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

Members noted the positive work being undertaken by all the Committees.

With regard to Health Select Committee included with the update was a copy of a proposed Terms of Reference and Protocol for a Regional Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members noted that the document would be reported to Cabinet in July for approval.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.