

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 8th March, 2011.

Present: Cllr Miss Tina Large (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Mick Stoker.

Officers: Tony Beckwith (CESC); Anthony Duffy, Fiona McKie, Judith Trainer, Margaret Waggott (LD); Garry Cummings, Paul Saunders (R).

Also in attendance: Mr Paul Connaughton (Parent Governor Rep).

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Harrington, Mrs Nesbitt, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Bill Woodhead.

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Draft Minutes - 8th February 2011**

The draft minutes on 8th February 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

3 **Building Asset Review - Update**

This report outlined progress on the EIT review of building assets, and details a draft Asset Transfer Policy for consultation which was intrinsically linked to the review.

The Report to Executive Scrutiny Committee on 4 January 2011 set out the aims, principles and baseline information for the EIT Review of Assets. The overall aim of the review was to focus on the Council's building estate to ensure that properties were being utilised efficiently and effectively. This included developing a strategic overview of facilities in the Borough and considering opportunities for rationalisation, re-location and combining of facilities. The potential opportunities linked to any known or planned service developments would also be considered.

The Council owned and operated a significant number of buildings and spends approximately £7m in the management and upkeep of those buildings. There were a range of different management arrangements, and large differences in the condition and the extent of utilisation of those buildings across the estate. A key aspect would be to optimise the use of our buildings and to understand the services delivered in each locality and match the service requirements with the most efficient and appropriate space available. The review had a target saving of £1m and aimed to:-

- Determine a methodology as to where, why and how the Council chooses to retain and invest in its building stock.
- Look more closely at the overall (rather than just the department-specific) effectiveness with which building stock was managed – covering issues such as occupancy levels, building efficiency and duplication of function.
- Develop an asset rationalisation plan which could result in asset disposals or transfers to community organisations

Members held discussion on various buildings within the authorities control and discussed the transfer of property. It was stated that a 12 week consultation period would take place on a transfer policy with a view to present this back to Members in the Summer.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4 **Action Plans for Year 2 EIT Reviews Reporting in to Executive Scrutiny**

Members were asked to consider the Action Plans setting out how the agreed recommendations from the year 2 officer led Efficiency Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Reviews, and the Task and Finish Scrutiny Review of Outside Bodies, would be implemented and target dates for

completion.

The Officer led and Task and Finish final reports were considered by Cabinet in December 2010. Cabinet accepted the recommendations.

Action Plans had now been drafted to set out how the relevant services would be taking forward the agreed recommendations including target dates for implementation. Reports were received on the following Action Plans:-

EIT Task and Finish Review of Democratic Services
EIT Reporting In Review of Devolved ICT
EIT Reporting In Review of Procurement and Commissioning
Task and Finish Scrutiny Review of Outside Bodies

Members were informed that progress reports would be presented to Committee on a quarterly basis.

Members held discussion on the EIT Review of Democratic Services. Member wished to express their concern regarding the loss of printers within Members homes. It was stated that other print solutions were being considered and further options would be presented to the Members Advisory Panel.

Members also discussed ward surgeries and use of appropriate venues as well as alternative methods of communication with their residents.

Discussion was held on the Task and Finish of Outside Bodies and it was requested that the appointment of Councillors to School Governing Bodies be added to the list of items for possible future scrutiny reviews.

RESOLVED that each of the Action Plans be agreed and the comments be noted.

5 Forward Plan

Members were provided with the Statutory Forward Plan for 1 March 2011 to 30 June 2011.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

6 Report on Chairs Updates

Members were provided with an update from each of the Select Committee's:-

Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion - EIT Review of School Catering had been presented to Cabinet and the Committee were due to receive the action plan. The Committee were due to receive the action plans for the officer led reviews of Human Resources and Customer Services and Taxation.

Arts, Leisure and Culture - Members had received an action plan for their review of Sport, Leisure and Recreation and quarterly updates on outstanding recommendations from previous reviews.

Housing and Community Safety - Members had considered a report on the work the Committee had undertaken during the last four years. The action plan for the Review of Taxi Services had been received and Officers would be providing an update following the consultation regarding taxis using bus lanes on 7th April 2011.

Environment - Review of Built and Natural Environment had been agreed by Cabinet and Members had received the action plan and quarterly updates on the outstanding recommendations from their reviews of waste management, customer first and carbon management.

Regeneration and Transport - Members had agreed their report for the EIT Review of Events, Arts and Tourism. The Committee had received monitoring updates and would be receiving a review of the work the Committee had undertaken over the last four years.

Children and Young People - The Committee would be consulted on the Youth Service reconfiguration and action plan on 9th March 2011. The Committee received a further report on the review options for the EIT Task and Finish Review of Connexions prior to it reporting to Cabinet. The Committee supported the proposal to re-structure the Integrated Youth Support Service as part of the wider EIT review of Early Intervention Grant services with an agreed level of annual savings to be determined. The Committee would also be receiving the scope for the task and finish review of Early Intervention Grants at its meeting on 9th March.

Health - Members had considered the options report for the Officer led Task and Finish Review of Adult Service Structures and would be considering the preferred options on 8th March 2011. The Committee would also be considering the scope for the review of Mental Health and Learning Disability Services.

Members were informed that a stakeholder event on the Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community would be held in Newcastle on 30th March.

The Judicial Review had dismissed the objections regarding the fluoridation of water. Therefore the Strategic Health Authority had been requested to investigate considering fluoridation locally.

RESOLVED that Chairs updates be noted.