

# Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 25th October, 2011.

**Present:** Cllr Miss Tina Large (In the Chair), Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey.

**Officers:** Julie Grant; Fiona McKie, Judith Trainer (LD).

**Also in attendance:** Mr Malcolm Frank (Diocesan Rep); Mrs Judith Robson (Parent Governor Rep); Mr Paul Robson; Henri Murisan (RNIB).

**Apologies:** were submitted on behalf of Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Ross Patterson.

## 1 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mohammed Javed declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 8 - Report on Chairs Updates further to being an employee of Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.

Cllr Nigel Cooke declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 8 - Report on Chairs Updates further to being an employee of Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.

## 2 Minutes for Signing - 5th April, 5th July, 2nd August 2011

The minutes of the meetings held on 5th April, 5th July and 2nd August were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 3 Draft Minutes - 4th October 2011

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 4th October 2011.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

## 4 Legal Services EIT Review - Baseline Report

Legal Services was undergoing a review as part of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Programme. The review has concentrated on:-

- The provision of internal Legal Services
- The provision of external Legal Services
- The Local Land Charges Service

Monitoring Officer and Proper Officer functions were statutory functions and were the responsibility of the Director of Law and Democracy. Whilst the Director was supported in these functions by Legal and Democratic Services, they did not form part of this review except where such functions were mentioned in the context of the range of legal services provided.

The main issues discussed were as follows:

- Savings made to date
- Existing Budget Gap
- Increase in demand for Legal Services in areas such as Safeguarding
- Spatial Data Sets and Land Charges
- Cost of External Legal Fees

Members requested that a risk assessment be carried out as part of the review. Julie Grant confirmed that this would be done as part of the process and would bring back further information to the meeting in December, 2011.

AGREED that the information be noted and a further report be presented on 20th December 2011.

## **5 Future Role of Scrutiny**

Members were provided with an overview of the Council's scrutiny arrangements and discussed the future of scrutiny against the backdrop of national developments and public sector reform.

Members held discussion on the impact of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill 2010.

Select Committees were currently working to complete Year 3 EIT reviews, with several reviews reporting to Cabinet in November/ December. It was therefore proposed to hold a Scrutiny Liaison Forum in December 2011 to consider future work for the Select Committees. It was suggested that future work should consist of a combination of the following elements:

- Appropriate support for the Value for Money Programme following completion of the EIT reviews. This could include new reviews of any outstanding service areas or follow up work emanating from earlier EIT reviews which were identified for further investigation. Experience from earlier EIT reviews has confirmed that Select Committees were able to add most value to the process where there was a public facing dimension to the work undertaken.

- A robust framework for local and self regulation. Select Committees were ideally placed to play a role in self regulation following the abolition of external inspection regimes. It was proposed that the Select Committee receive half yearly performance information relating to the portfolio areas within the remit of the Committee. The framework would ensure that important issues of local concern such as dignity in health and social care were addressed, utilising enhanced scrutiny powers to scrutinise all commissioners and providers.

- In depth topic based reviews – it was proposed to invite topics from Members, CMT/ Heads of Service and key partners. As in previous years, topics would be invited on a pro forma and prioritised for consideration by Scrutiny Liaison Forum.

- Health Scrutiny – Potential in depth topic based reviews on health issues. Overview of local NHS transitional arrangements, continued updates on Momentum and other issues (e.g. statutory consultations, Quality Accounts etc.)

- Realign Select Committee remits with Cabinet Portfolios by moving the "Adult Services" element of CASSI Select Committee back into the terms of reference of Health Select Committee to allow the Adult Services and Health Select Committee to scrutinise the increasing linkages between health and social care, including the remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Continued development of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny role with reference to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill.

AGREED that the report be noted and the above proposals be approved.

## **6 Forward Plan**

Members were provided with the statutory forward plan 1st October 2011 - 31st January 2012.

AGREED that the forward plan be noted.

## **7 Report on Chairs Updates**

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

AGREED that the updates be noted.

