Housing and Community Select Committee

Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 5 July 2013

Update on Progress (including issues/problems/successes)

Review of Tobacco Control

The Committee met on 2 May to deal with the referral regarding the Teesside Pension Fund investment in tobacco companies. The fund's Pensions and Investment Panel Chair, Director of Resources, and Head of Investments attended the meeting to give evidence.

The Committee met on the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health on 22 May.

The final tripartite meeting was held on 6 June when the draft report and recommendations were accepted to go forward to Cabinet on 11 July.

Review of Welfare Reform

The Committee agreed the scope of the review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion at the meeting of 6 June. The review will examine the early impact of the welfare changes introduced in April 2013 on the Council and partner agencies, and identify where policies will need to be reviewed in response. The review will also provide an overview of the preparations for further changes including Universal Credit.

The review will also consider the wider aspects of financial inclusion, looking at a range of factors such as food banks, illegal money lending, and credit unions. There will be close links with the review Child Poverty.

Due to the fast moving nature of the issues under review, it was agreed that the Committee may make interim reports to Cabinet on a particular issue should the need arise.

Overview Meetings

The Committee also received the overview of Community Safety Services and the work of Stockton's Police at its meeting on 6 June.

The Committee noted the continued decline in crime and the joint efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Committee discussed the emerging issues facing the Borough, including key environmental health projects, and the re-structure of Cleveland Police in order to achieve the budget reductions necessary, including the creation of a force-wide Neighbourhood Policing command, in order to maintain frontline resources as far as possible.