

# Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Friday, 5th July, 2013.

**Present:** Cllr Ken Lupton (Chairman), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey.

**Officers:** Simon Willson (CESC); Paul Diggins (DNS); Graham Birtle, Fiona McKie, Peter Mennear, Judith Trainer, Margaret Waggott (LD); Lesley King (PIE); Tony Montague (R).

**Also in attendance:** Richard Amir (Parent Governor Representative)

**Apologies:** were submitted on behalf of Cllr Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Ross Patterson.

## 1 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Nigel Cooke declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as he was employed by Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust. Cllr Cooke had been granted a dispensation in this regard.

Cllr Ken Lupton declared a personal/non prejudicial interest further to being a Non-Executive Director of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

Cllr Bob Gibson declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 10 further to being Board Members of Tristar Homes.

Cllr Tina Large declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 10 further to being Board Members of Tristar Homes.

## 2 Minutes for Signing - 26th March 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2013 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 - 5th June 2013

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2013.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

## 4 2012/13 Year End Performance

Members were provided with details of the Council's performance in 2012/13, highlighting achievements, areas for improvement and proposed actions and included information relating to Freedom of Information requests, complaints and commendations and the staff suggestion scheme. Whilst the report aimed to give a perspective on the overall performance of the Council its primary focus was on the achievement of the basket of measures and associated targets agreed as part of the Council Plan development.

The Committee acknowledged that it was a good report with good levels of performance considering the circumstances in which the Council had been operating due to all of the recent and continuing budget cuts.

Members held discussion on the report and raised the following questions/queries:-

- Could the Council's contracts be looked at to see if we could add a condition that requires main contractors to pay their sub-contractors invoices within 30 days?
- Members requested to see comparator information with other relevant areas in relation to the congestion figures.
- It was requested that further information be requested on the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests that had been refused either on the grounds of time/cost and/or vexatious.
- Members requested information on how FOI's from the media were recorded.

AGREED that the levels of performance and the proposed actions be noted.

## **5 MTFP update**

Members were provided with an update report that focused on the financial performance and position at the end of the 2012/13 financial year and updated the Medium term Financial Plan accordingly. The financial outlook continued to be uncertain with indications of further funding reductions as part of the Spending Review in June and officers were continuing to manage finances carefully in light of the uncertainty.

Members requested further information and a progress update on the Capital Programme. It was suggested that this be presented to a future meeting.

Discussion was held on the underspend for individual client budgets for Social Care. Members requested that further information be provided on the reasons why clients were underspending.

AGREED that:-

1. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the current level of general fund balances be noted.
2. The financial uncertainty surrounding the Spending Review and the continued planned approach to financial management and delivery of efficiencies be noted.
3. A further report on the Capital Programme be presented to a future meeting.
4. Further information on personal budgets be supplied to Members.

## **6 Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13**

Members were provided with the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2012/13. During the past year, the Scrutiny Work Programme had focused on a wide range of topics including reviews of public facing services as well as internally focused

efficiency work. In addition to their review work programme, all Select Committees had taken the opportunity to review the impact of previous reviews and recommendations. Some key achievements and outcomes highlighted from the monitoring of past reviews were provided.

AGREED that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13 be noted.

## **7 New Health Scrutiny Regulations**

Members were provided with an update on the new health scrutiny regulations following the introduction of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and subsequent amendments to the regulations.

AGREED that the revised health scrutiny regulations, the production of draft guidance, and implications for Stockton be noted.

## **8 Adult Services and Health Scrutiny - Improved Approach to Monitoring Quality (Including Response to the Francis Inquiry)**

Members were informed that the arrangements for quality assurance, and specifically the role of the Adult Services and Health (ASH) Select Committee, had been reviewed in light of public concern, national guidance and inquiries, and the impact of the health reforms. The report summarised work to date and outlined areas for improvement. It also included the response of the health scrutiny function to the relevant recommendations of the Francis Inquiry into the failure of care at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Members held discussion on the report and raised the following issues:-

- Discussion was held on ensuring Members were provided with adequate training.
- Discussion was held on partner organisations such as Healthwatch, CQC etc. and their roles.
- Members felt that they needed to be in a position to influence decision making of the bodies that they would be scrutinising.
- Discussion was held on the quality of some of the information that needed to be scrutinised.

AGREED that:-

1. The revised approach to monitoring the quality of local services as outlined within Appendix 1 of the report, including the response of the health scrutiny function in relation to the relevant recommendations of the Francis Inquiry be noted.

2. Member's comments be noted.

## **9 Forward Plan**

Members were provided with the statutory forward plan for 1st July to 31st October 2013.

AGREED that the forward plan be noted.

## **10 Report on Chairs Updates**

Members were provided with an update from each of the Select Committee's Chairman.

Members were provided with the recommendations from the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee's Review of Tobacco Control which was due to be considered by Cabinet on 11th July 2013.

AGREED that the Chair's updates be noted.