

## Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 5th June, 2018.

**Present:** Cllr David Harrington (Chair), Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Hampton, , Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley and Cllr David Wilburn.

**Officers:** Peter Bell, Peter Mennear and Judy Trainer.

**Also in attendance:** None.

**Apologies:** Peter Snowden.

### **ESC 1/18 Evacuation Procedures, Audio Recording & Housekeeping**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted. It was also noted that the Governance Officer would be making an audio recording of the meeting to assist in the drafting of minutes of the meeting.

### **ESC 2/18 Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

### **ESC 3/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2018 for approval and signature.**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018.

Members discussed minute ESC 61/17 and it was felt that the following amendment should be made to the third paragraph:-

“Concerns were expressed, and questions asked, about Silver Street, that had accessible car parking, but would soon become pedestrianised, and this would be a loss to those who needed to park close to the town centre.”

It was agreed that the Director of Economic Growth and Development would respond to the above Members concerns as a matter of urgency.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, as amended.

### **ESC 4/18 Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme**

Consideration was given to a report that outlined the agreed process for setting the Scrutiny Work Programme.

Council approved revised scrutiny co-ordination arrangements which sought to strengthen coordination of the scrutiny work programme. Key features of the new arrangements included:

- Greater emphasis on policy review and development work

- Strengthened project management of in depth scrutiny reviews
- Improved communication mechanisms, including regular “tri partite” discussions between Scrutiny Members, Cabinet Members and Officers during the course of reviews
- Identification of “link officers” for reviews from within the service or organisation under scrutiny
- Establishment of a Scrutiny Liaison Forum to facilitate dialogue between scrutiny and Cabinet Members. This enables SMT and Cabinet Members to comment on priorities for the scrutiny work programme
- Establishment of Executive Scrutiny Committee to approve and coordinate the work programme

Our formal structures and informal mechanisms had sought to foster a constructive working relationship between Cabinet and scrutiny and had led to a flexible work programme adapting quickly to changing priorities for the Council.

Over the years the Council’s scrutiny function had consistently received positive feedback from external inspections such as the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. The Scrutiny Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary was one of six national finalists in the Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny category of the MJ Awards in 2016 and individual Members had been recognised for individual contributions to scrutiny.

Attached to the report were extracts from Part 4 of the Constitution setting out the role of Scrutiny Liaison Forum and Executive Scrutiny Committee in discussing and ultimately setting the work programme.

In line with the Constitution, each year the Chair of Executive Scrutiny Committee wrote to all Members inviting topics for review. Members were encouraged to suggest topics which supported the Council’s policy principles, identify efficiencies and reduced demand for services. At the same time an email was sent to SMT asking officers suggest topics, thereby feeding in ideas from management team meetings and the wider workforce.

In addition, an item was included on the annual Overview Meetings of each Select Committee allowing officers to highlight potential areas for in depth review and Select Committees to feed in their suggestions.

It had been customary for a number of years to invite topics suggestions via a pro forma asking for basic information on the topic proposed and the justification for scrutiny.

A “PICK” prioritisation tool was used to give the topic a score based on public interest, impact, performance and efficiency issues and context. An initial score was allocated by one scrutiny officer for consistency. It was stressed that the score was a tool to aid prioritisation and was not binding in any way.

The prioritisation was then discussed by Scrutiny Liaison Forum and priorities from that Forum were presented to Executive Scrutiny Committee who ultimately set the Work Programme and allocate reviews to Committees.

Executive Scrutiny Committee were not bound by the initial PICK score or SLF prioritisation.

In addition to in the depth reviews which form the majority of the Scrutiny Work Programme, Select Committees also received updates and reports on other items including:

Overview  
Monitoring  
Quality and Safety  
Health Scrutiny

Members discussed the membership of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum and the fact that there was no major opposition Member on the Forum.

It was requested that in future years the report to Scrutiny Liaison Forum and Executive Scrutiny Committee which sought to prioritise and agree for the scrutiny work programme should contain more detail about the overall process.

In answer to a question from a Member, it was also clarified that Members or Committees could suggest a topic for a scrutiny review at any time during the year and this would be logged by the Scrutiny Team

It was noted that at the last meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee, Lee Owston (Senior Ofsted Inspector for the North East, Yorkshire and Humberside) had been in attendance and had been very complimentary about Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and its approach to in-depth scrutiny reviews and use of evidence from external bodies such as Ofsted. He felt that this led to informed decisions and was something that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council should be proud of. Thanks were given by Members to the Democratic Services team for the hard work that was put into the whole scrutiny process.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**ESC  
5/18**      **Statutory Forward Plan - May 2018 - August 2018**

Members were presented with the Statutory Forward Plan - May 2018 - August 2018.

RESOLVED that the Statutory Forward Plan - May 2018 - August 2018 be noted.

**ESC  
6/18**      **Select Committee Chairs' Updates**

Members considered the Select Committee Updates.

The Committee was given opportunity to make comments/ask questions.

RESOLVED that the Select Committee Chair's Updates be noted.

**ESC  
7/18**      **Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme**

Members were presented with the Executive Scrutiny Work Programme.

Due to the heavy workload of the Committee it was agreed that all future meeting for the remainder of the Municipal Year commence at 9.30am.

The Chair outlined that he would circulate a note on SIRF following the meeting.

The Chair reported that with regard to co-opted members on committees of the Council, an item would be considered at the Independent Remuneration Panel in the near future. Members agreed that they should receive a report on the role of co-opted members at the meeting in September 2018.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Executive Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.
2. The Chair's Update be noted.