

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 21st January, 2020.

Present: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley(Chairman), Cllr Helen Atkinson (Sub Cllr Chris Clough- Vice-Chair), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Riordan (Sub Cllr Tony Hampton), Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Eileen Johnson (Sub Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E), Cllr Julia Whitehill (Sub Cllr Laura Tunney), Cllr Jacky Bright (Sub Cllr Matthew Vickers),

Officers: Garry Cummings (F&B), Gary Woods, Judith Trainer, Sarah Whaley (MD)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers

ESC 41/19 **Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

ESC 42/19 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

ESC 43/19 **Minutes from the Executive Scrutiny Committee which was held on 20th November 2019**

Consideration was given to the Executive Scrutiny Committee minutes from the meeting which was held on the 20th November 2019.

AGREED that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

ESC 44/19 **Financial Update & Medium Term Financial Plan Q2**

Members were asked to consider the Council's financial performance and position at the end of the second quarter of the 2019/20 financial year which updated the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) accordingly.

- The financial position had shown an overall improvement from the previous reported position. There were still financial pressures within Children in our Care, but the early indications were that work in this area was starting to improve the position.

- The Report presented an update on the Capital Programme and set out a number of programme revisions.

- The report also presented the outline plans for the 2020/21 budget and the MTFP. This was however, in the context of significant uncertainty around Government funding:

- The 2020/21 funding was not confirmed as the Council had not received a

Provisional/Final Local Government Finance Settlement. The Provisional Settlement should have been in early December but had been delayed due to Purdah.

- The 2021/22 financial position was even more uncertain, and as previously outlined to Members would be affected by a Government Spending Review, a Fair Funding Review and proposals around increased Business Rates Retention.

- Based on the assumptions in the report and subject to decisions on Council Tax levels, it was anticipated that the Council would have a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan, although this would need to be reassessed once further funding announcements were made.

- Officers highlighted, pressures identified within Community Services, such as school academies no longer purchasing school catering services from the Council.

- Discussion took place around the new homes bonus and whether Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council were on track to receive their share of the national £900 million bonus and what the prospective figure would be. Officers informed Members that the new homes bonus was part of a current review which was being undertaken and it was not known whether the bonus would exist in 2021.

- In terms of the Better Care Fund Stockton was expected to receive approximately £800,000 to help with winter pressures.

Discussion took place in relation to additional funds which had been used to complete Stockton's new crematorium. Officers informed the Committee the additional funding was used to turf the facility as oppose to seeding to make sure the facility was completed on time.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**ESC
45/19** **Crime and Disorder Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home (Executive Summary for information)**

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee presented the Executive Summary from the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- Although the remit for the Scrutiny Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home was aimed at those residents aged 80 years plus, it had been challenging to keep to the remit as some agencies did not keep data detailing the age of their clients.

- Members welcomed the recommendations, however raised questions in terms of future monitoring.
- The Chair of Crime and Disorder informed the Committee that the Thirteen Group were very much part of the review and dialogue would continue in terms of this review.
- It was acknowledged that community transport capacity was an issue across the Borough and the Crime and Disorder Select Committee had recommended looking to see what could be done in the future along with the relevant Cabinet Member.
- It was highlighted that there had been a spate of walk in burglaries in older people's properties in and around the leafy suburbs as well as local Town Centres. Members felt that an increased presence of police was required in those areas.
- The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee assured Members that all of the recommendations would be monitored and updates would be received as part of the post-review process.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**ESC
46/19** **Crime and Disorder Select Committee - Councillor Call for Action:
Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School
(Executive Summary for information)**

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee presented the Executive Summary from the final report of the Councillor Call for Action: Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- The review had been very thorough and although this had been a Councillor Call for Action for a specific school, the issue was acknowledged as a Borough wide and national problem.
- Reference was made to previous scrutiny review's which had looked at parking issues. Members agreed that previous review recommendations be re-visited for consideration.

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee highlighted that not all the parking issues stemmed from illegal parking, volume of traffic also posed a problem. In terms of Whitehouse Primary School, a lot of children who attended that school lived outside of the area and therefore required transport to get to school. The Chair also informed Members that the Councils magazine 'Stockton News' would be approached to publish an article highlighting those issues to residents within the Borough. There was also the potential for a DVD to be produced using local school children to encourage responsible parking.

- It was acknowledged that in terms of resource, this was not only a Local

Authority issue, but also a police issue in terms of tackling the problem.

AGREED that the report be noted.

ESC 47/19 Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Care Homes for Older People (Executive Summary for information)

The Chair of Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee presented the Executive Summary from the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Care Homes for Older People.

The review had been long and in-depth. Some ratings for care homes had improved due to work undertaken by Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council.

It was felt that the recommendations would continue to help improve the quality ratings for Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council care homes.

AGREED that the report be noted.

ESC 48/19 Place Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Area Transport Strategy (Executive Summary for information)

The Chair of the Place Select Committee presented the Executive Summary from the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Area Transport Strategy.

The Chair highlighted the review had been successful and had been driven by the Committee members themselves with all recommendations unanimously agreed. Central to this was for the existing ATS scheme ceases at the end of the current financial year (31st March 2020), with the yearly ATS funding allocation to be transferred to the Community Participation Budget (CPB) on a Ward-by-Ward basis determined by population per Ward. This addition to CPB funding should be ring-fenced for transport-related spend only.

AGREED the report be noted.

ESC 49/19 Children and Young People Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse and its Impact on Children (Executive Summary for information)

The Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee presented the Executive Summary from the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse and its Impact on Children.

The report was due to be presented to Cabinet at its January 2020 meeting.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- One of the recommendations was to seek further feedback on the effectiveness of Operation Encompass and specifically the length of time between the Police being made aware of a problem and the school being notified.

AGREED the report be noted

ESC Forward Plan of Key Decisions

50/19

The Statutory Forward Plan was noted

AGREED that the report be noted.

ESC Select Committee Chairs' Updates

51/19

Members considered the Select Committee Chairs' Updates.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee;

The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee had just recently met where representation was made by the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). The Committee heard that the NEAS had improved working practices, however were still experiencing response issues due to greater demand. Handover times at James Cook were long, a possible impact of the closure of the A&E department at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton.

In terms of the CCG, changeover regards the new pharmacy regulations was progressing, although there were several issues in terms of clients accessing their medication via repeat prescriptions. Assurances were given that the changes to paper prescriptions would be completed this coming year.

- It was felt that some of the big chain pharmacies were not operating as well as the small independents.

- Members highlighted that some elderly patients, were experiencing difficulty obtaining three to four weeks' worth of prescriptions due to the change, and when they contacted their local surgery they were told to go online, but had no means to do so.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee;

The update was noted.

Children and Young People;

The Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

- The Scrutiny Review of the Domestic Abuse and its impact on Children would be presented to Cabinet at its January 2020 meeting.

Health Watch annual report was due to be presented to the Committee in

February 2020

People Select Committee

In the absence of the Chair of the People Select Committee, the Scrutiny Team Leader gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

- It was highlighted that due to staffing changes at the Tees Credit Union the Scrutiny Review of the Tees Credit Union, would be put back and swapped with the Scrutiny Review of Public Consultation.

Place Select Committee

The Chair of the Place Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

- In terms of the Scrutiny Review of Business Support and Engagement, the Place Select Committee was currently taking evidence.

- The next Place Select Committee meeting would be looking for any Members interested in being involved with the Task and Finish Review for Planters in Residential Streets.

AGREED that the updates be noted.

**ESC
52/19**

Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme 2019 - 2020

Members were informed that a letter would be sent to all Councillors inviting suggestions for topics for future Scrutiny Reviews. There would also be an explanation of the PICK system used to prioritise those suggestions received. Members would have the opportunity to highlight any issues they may want to bring forward and the impact they could have.

Following on from Members responses to the write out, suggestions would be brought back to Executive Scrutiny Committee at its March 2020 meeting for consideration. As part of the scrutiny work programme-setting process, the Committee were also informed the next meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum was scheduled for 16th March 2020.

The Work Programme was noted.

AGREED that the information be noted.