

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 23 June 2017 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor R Crute (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, A Batey, M Clarke, I Jewell (substitute for H Smith), P Jopling, H Liddle, L Maddison, J Makepeace, O Milburn, M Nicholls, A Patterson (Vice-Chair), M Simmons, O Temple (substitute for C Martin), J Turnbull, A Willis and S Zair

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bell, K Hawley, C Martin, J Rowlandson, H Smith, F Tinsley and Mrs M Elliott (Faith Communities Representative).

2 Substitute Members

Councillor I Jewell substituted for Councillor H Smith and Councillor O Temple substituted for Councillor C Martin.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 24 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to points raised from the minutes of the meeting held on the 24 March 2017, the Head of Strategy provided the following updates:-

- Item 6, paragraph 6 regarding unemployment figures and the percentage gap of people not accounted for – as well as 230,000 unemployed and 34,000 who wanted a job, there were 61,000 people who were economically inactive.
- Item 6, paragraph 9 regarding the high percentage of schools not performing as well – 9 secondary schools required improvement 3 of the schools were maintained by the authority and 6 were academies.

The minutes of the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 April 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to points raised from the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 April 2017, the Head of Strategy provided the following updates:-

- Item 6, paragraph 4 referring to staff losses and turnover – In quarter 3 to quarter 4 the staff turnover had moved from 8,364 to 8,284 which was a loss of 100 staff with 180 leavers and 86 starters with a churn in casual staff.
- Item 7, paragraph 5 referring to the closure of the leisure centre at Crook and the allocated funding for replacement community facilities – leisure facilities in Crook would open in July/August 2017.
- Item 9, paragraph 3 referring to the number of managers who had not received training on the updated policy – a list of managers who had not undertaken the training had been given to the Heads of Service, and reminder e-mails had also been sent to those managers.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 County Durham Partnership Update:

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that updated Members on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership including the board, the five thematic partnerships and all area action partnership. The report also included updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Nicholls complimented the work that had been done on suicide prevention.

Councillor Jopling referred to food banks and how they could engage with people to educate on how to better use their income but how could they engage with people who didn't use food banks. She also referred to the Salvation Army now offering cookery lessons.

The Principal Area Action Partnership Co-ordinator responded that P Darby was leading a partnership that were looking at a single point of entry for people to receive advice and a universal offering on where to go for help.

Councillor Adam referred to the gross disposable household income that had increased 18.1% since 2008 and how people had more disposable income but income had frozen.

The Principal Area Action Partnership Co-ordinator responded that the figures were from 2008 so were pre-recession and that they also reflected the private sector as well as the public sector but deprivation and the gap still existed.

Members commented that this could be a future scrutiny topic for the work programme.

Councillor Batey commented that the Area Action Partnership provided good quality presentations and were willing to talk to people at the local level which was delivered in a less formal way.

Members discussed food banks and how many people who used these were in full-time employment.

Councillor Turnbull referred to the Mid Durham AAP who had previously gone out to villages and would be doing so again. The foodbank located in Brandon was well used and they had a range of officers in attendance who were not just from the council and had recently offered computer training at the food bank.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

6 Quarter 4 2016/17 Performance Management Report:

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided progress against the council's corporate performance framework by Altogether priority theme for the fourth quarter for the 2016/17 financial year. A presentation was given by the Head of Strategy (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

Councillor Liddle referred to fly tipping being a massive concern in her division and asked what impact had the introduction of permits made, had it improved or remained the same. The Chairman indicated that fly tipping was an issue in his ward.

Members discussed how some local authorities did not charge for the collection of bulky waste but due to the harmonisation of services DCC did now charge and had this impacted on the increase in fly-tipping.

Councillor Maddison referred to the workload of social workers and had this been taken into consideration for part time workers.

The Head of Strategy responded that the hours worked was taken into consideration as part of the workload. Members commented that it was about the level of support rather than numbers.

Councillor Jopling commented that the number of children taken into care had increased and were there links with other areas such as an increase in population, alcohol treatment or parents not engaging.

The Head of Strategy responded that they were currently looking into this as part of a piece of work commissioned by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services.

Councillor Jopling then referred to apprenticeships and how the Council picked up those who dropped out of schemes and worked to re-engage with training providers.

Councillor Batey as Chair of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee responded that this was on the work programme for her committee.

Councillor Adam referred to fly-tipping and indicated that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had done some work on this and it had not been proven that the increase in charges had an impact on fly-tipping. He referred to some fly-tipping which was as a result of people coming over the border. He advised that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would keep focus on this.

Councillor Adam also commented on whether there was a correlation with the 10% of people looking for work with a particular age group who were unemployed. The Head of Strategy responded that further analysis of employment going forward would be considered by the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Makepeace asked if there was a correlation with the cost of clean-up with the cost of charges. The Chairman indicated that this had been looked at and it was found to be cost neutral.

Councillor Nicholls commented that fly-tipping in his area was rogue landlords who just wanted a quick turnaround with old/new tenants. He then referred to alcohol and young people and how they had come a long way by working with young people and shop owners. He also commented that people were living longer and that women were living longer than men.

Councillor Temple raised on behalf on Councillor Martin the declining occupancy rates in town centres and if this was a blanket problem or just certain towns.

Councillor Batey responded that this was going to be looked at by the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Turnbull asked for the figures on looked after children and how many were new to the county. Cllr Jewell responded that the Corporate Parenting Panel do look at these figures.

Councillor Jewell referred to deliberate fires and where the intelligence was coming from and what was it telling us. The Head of Strategy advised that the intelligence was received from the Safe Durham Partnership. More information was also required on the deterioration of town centres.

Councillor Jopling referred to the shortage of social workers and how turnover was fast and the reasons for this.

The Head of Strategy responded this was in part due to re-organisation. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be looking at the role of the Social Worker through the eyes of a child in the coming year.

Councillor Jewell commented that Sunderland City Council had increased their salaries for Social workers which had resulted in many social workers leaving to join Sunderland City Council.

Councillor Adam commented that in his ward they had five fires in a month and following a visit by County Durham and Fire Rescue Services to a local school, the fires stopped.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

7 Customer Feedback: Quarter 4 Annual Representations:

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resource; Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services and Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which presented the Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions 2016/17 Year End; the Annual Representations report for Adults and Health Services 2016/17 and the Annual Representations report for Children's and Young People's Services 2016/17 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Adam referred to the pie chart on page 99 of the report and indicated if they got rid of some of the incidents relating to bin collections this would amount to 40% of the complaints. He asked if the complaints were relevant to a particular area.

The Head of Digital and Customer Services responded that a cross-service working group had been established to reduce missed collections. A number of complaints had been received when the new routes were introduced.

Councillor Patterson referred to the procedure for missed green bins in particular if a refund was given. The Head of Digital and Customer Services responded that they did have a policy in place and they would go back and collect a missed bin within 2 days and if this was not done a refund would be given.

Councillor Jewell asked if missed bins were sometimes associated with access issues such as parked vehicles. The Head of Digital and Customer Services responded that this would not be included in the figures for complaints unless it was a recurring issue.

Councillor Jopling sought clarification on the procedures for contaminated bins in particular if bins were removed. The Head of Digital and Customer Services advised of the procedure and that the removal of the bin would be a last resort and was due to the costs associated with the removal of the contamination from the plant.

Councillor Simmons referred to contamination in bins due to take away cartons being placed in bins in residential properties. The Head of Digital and Customer Services responded that it was up to the resident to manage.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

8 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17:

The Board received a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 for comments and approval prior to its submission to the County Council Meeting (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be agreed and submitted to the County Council meeting to be held on 19 July 2017.

9 Review of the Committee's Work Programme 2017-19:

The Board received a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an updated work programme for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board 2017-19 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Resolved: That the work programme 2017-19 as attached to the report be agreed.

10 Notice of Key Decisions:

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that provided a list of key decision that were scheduled to be considered by the Executive (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported that since the last update, Aykley Heads project update had moved to September. The Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy had moved to October and new to the plan for July was the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service Procurement, for September was the Strategy for School provision and for October was the 2018/19 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget MTFP 8, Council Plan and Service Plans.

Resolved: That the information contained in the report be noted.

11 Petitions Update:

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that provided an update on the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported that since the last update, 2 new paper petitions had been received and had completed the process. 4 new e-petitions had been hosted on the website. One was still live and collecting signatures until 30 June relating to Neville's Cross 30 mph and road safety review and currently had 177 signatures.

Since the papers were printed Petition 207 – Speeding and Parking, Buckingham Road, Peterlee received 1 signature on e-petition and a paper petition with 10 signatures was also received and was waiting for a response from the service.

Petition 308 – Term Time Holiday received 1 signature and the information had been passed to the service.

Resolved: That the information contained in the report be noted.

12 Information update from Overview and Scrutiny Chairs:

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided an update of overview and scrutiny activity from March 2017 – June 2017 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Resolved: That the information contained in the report be noted.

Signed.....

Date.....