

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

At a Meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 28 April 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Armstrong in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors P Stradling, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, D Boyes, R Crute, B Graham, D Hall, K Henig, J Lethbridge, C Potts, M Simmons, R Todd, J Turnbull and S Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr A J Cooke and Mr D Kinch

Also Present:

Councillor M Williams

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Hopgood, P Lawton, H Liddle, T Nearney, A Shield, and Reverend Phipps.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 25 March and 1 April 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to item 7 of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2014 regarding communication, the Head of Planning and Performance advised that information on a request for ideas on running services differently had been published in the Members' Update (spring edition).

The Head of Planning and Performance referred to item 9 and confirmed that a note of the changes made to the Council Plan and Service Plans had been provided.

Referring to item 10, the Head of Planning and Performance updated Members on the new co-optee arrangements. All non-voting co-optees had received a letter thanking them

for their valuable contributions and asked them to indicate if they wished to be considered for a further term. Application form, person specification, protocol for non-voting scrutiny members, information on the role of overview and scrutiny and the role of a non-voting co-optee had been published on the Councils website and shared with AAPs. The closing date for applications was 29 April, and members agreed that relevant thematic scrutiny officers would support members in the selection process in line with the cooptee protocol previously agreed by this committee.

The Committee Service Manager referred to item 12 and advised that further information on the main consultees would be provided on future Notice of Key Decisions with the next one being published on the 13 May 2014.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted members or interested parties

There were no items from Co-opted members or interested parties.

6 Progress Towards a Partnership Approach to Supporting Opportunities for Young People within County Durham Update

The Board considered a report of the Head of Strategy Programmes and Performance that provided an update on progress towards delivering a partnership approach to supporting employment and training opportunities for young people within County Durham. A presentation was given by the Strategy, Partnerships and Resources Manager (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

Members discussed the underlying issues and challenges that needed to be addressed in order to achieve the ambitions outlined within the report which included:

- Transition from education to employment;
- Rising youth unemployment;
- Persistent high number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs);
- Skills gaps and differing supply and demand;
- Changing employer perceptions.

Councillor R Crute suggested that Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee look at the delivery of projects and schemes that focus on youth employment and the links between education and businesses. Members commented that it was important to match the provision of training and skills, to the types of jobs, to ensure the trained workforce remain in the North East.

Clarification was provided on the membership of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and it was suggested that information be provided to the Board on the partnership

arrangements with the Authority. Councillor Armstrong requested that an update on the Combined Authority be given at a future meeting.

Councillor D Hall emphasised the need for a stronger focus on self-employment, that it was so important with many young people now setting up their own businesses, to be provided with as much support as possible in the early phase.

Resolved:

- That the information contained within the report and support for the next steps outlined within section 4.0 of the report be noted.
- That Regeneration and Economic Development and Children and Adult Services continue to work closely with partners to support and maximise the opportunities for young people within the county.

7 Development of Corporate Performance Indicators and Targets for 2014/15 - Report of Assistant Chief Executive

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided a summary of the issues raised by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on developing the corporate indicators and targets for 2014/15 and outlined the outcomes and actions taken to address those issues (for copy see file of minutes).

At a special meeting held on 17 January 2014, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board were provided with the opportunity to influence the indicators and targets that are used by the Council ahead of developing the corporate set for 2014/15 to monitor performance and progress in achieving objectives.

Resolved:

That the Board considered the key outcomes from the meeting held on 17 January 2014 as listed in Appendix 2 of the report.

8 Fit for Purpose, Fit for the Future - Review of Durham County Council's Area Action Partnerships - Final Update

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that informed members of the sign off by Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 19 February of the scrutiny review of Area Action Partnerships – 'Fit for purpose, Fit for the future' (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Lethbridge presented the report and advised that at the meeting on the 19 February, members indicated that, whilst they were mindful to sign off the AAP review, it would be necessary to continue to monitor the progress of addressing outstanding recommendations and also monitor the progress of the AAPs. It was agreed that this would be best done through the County Durham Partnership updates which would periodically be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, and include

regular information on AAP activity. These reports would provide an ongoing opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to monitor the progress of the AAPs and activity whilst also enabling the progress against outstanding AAP Review recommendations to be examined.

Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny members also expressed a continued desire to retain the AAPs on their work programme.

Resolved:

- That the contents of the report be noted;
- That the progress and performance of AAPs be monitored through the regular County Durham Partnership Updates presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;
- That Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee retain the AAPs on their work programme.

9 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013-2014

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided information on the work of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2013/14 with a view to presenting it to County Council on the 18 June 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Planning and Performance highlighted several key achievements from the scrutiny review activity and scrutiny site visits. She referred to the hosting of a delegation from Zhejiang Province, China which was part of a visit to Northumbria University to look at Government structure and scrutiny in the UK.

Resolved:

That the report be approved and be presented to County Council on the 18 June 2014.

10 Notice of Key Decisions

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

The Committee Services Manager reported that the only change to the schedule since the update at the last meeting had been the addition of the Councils approach to the 2015/16 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget, MTFP 5 and Council Plan and Service Plans which would be considered at Cabinet on the 16 July 2014.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

11 Information update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update of overview and scrutiny activity between March and April 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

The Chairman agreed that in order to keep members informed, the next item of business could be reported.

12 Any Other Business

Councillor M Simmons expressed that she would like the opportunity to attend certain site visits and become more involved in the scrutiny process. The Chairman responded that he would be happy for any member to attend site visits providing places were available.

The Head of Planning and Performance explained that site visits were linked to individual committees and focus was given on inviting Members of that particular committee, however, it may be possible to widen the invitation.

The Committee Service Manager added that all Members receive a copy of the weekly committee diary sheet that lists any site visits taking place. She advised if members were interested in attending a particular site visit, they should contact the relevant contact person who would also be listed on the diary sheet.

Due to the new co-optee arrangements effective from the 22 May 2014, Mr Kinch took the opportunity to thank the Board for an enjoyable 4 years. The Chairman also wished to thank all Overview and Scrutiny co-opted members for their valuable input and contributions throughout the years.