

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 **Tuesday 17 June 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, A Bonner, R Crute, B Graham, K Henig, A Hopgood, P Lawton, J Lethbridge, T Nearney, M Simmons, R Todd, J Turnbull and S Wilson

Faith Community Representative:

Reverend K Phipps

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Alderson, D Boyes, J Chaplow, H Liddle, C Potts and A Shield.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman referred to item 6 of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2014 and gave an update on the Combined Authority. He informed the Board that he and the Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny both attended the North East Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the 12 June 2014 where he was appointed interim Chairman. Members would appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2014/15 at the next meeting. The Committee would focus on areas such as investment, regeneration plans, transport network plans, European funding and employment, a dedicated work programme would be produced once a range of items had been identified.

The Head of Planning and Performance referred to item 9 of the minutes and reported that the Annual Overview and Scrutiny report would now be presented to County Council on the 23 July 2014.

Referring to item 12 of the minutes regarding site visits, the Head of Planning and Performance informed the Board that local members would be invited to site visits and any other members interested in a particular site visit should contact the relevant officer.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Update on the Delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 3

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update on the progress made at the end of March 2014 on the delivery of the 2013/14 to 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP3) and provides a summary over the past three years of the MTFP savings made (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Policy and Communications reported that the MTFP4 had been agreed by Council and the overall savings target for the period from 2011/12 to 2016/17 was now estimated at around £224m.

Delivery of the MTFP programme continues to be very challenging, however the council has been able to continue to meet the savings targets set so far and the target for 2013/14 has now been fully delivered with a total of £20.87m being saved during that period. £113m of savings have now been made since April 2011 which equates to just over 50% of the savings target we estimate will be required by the end of 2017.

Councillor R Bell referred to the 2016/17 targets and asked if there was anything that could be done to ease the pressure on the council. The Head of Policy and Communications responded that there may be changes after the forthcoming general election but they would not be in a position plan anything until then so the austerity programme would continue.

Reverend Phipps commented that the council would not be able to make the same reductions in 2015/16 that had been made previously. The Chairman added that there would be further public consultations and even more difficult decisions would have to be made.

Councillor R Todd requested further information on where the cuts had been made and which services had been most affected. The Head of Policy and Communications would produce a summary to be included in a future report.

Councillor J Lethbridge expressed his concern that the Council could not continue to make cuts without performance been affected and services being reduced.

Councillor R Bell highlighted that redeployment figures were very positive. The Chairman agreed that redeployment had been managed effectively, he added that the Council's assertive approach had been recognised by being shortlisted for a major industry award.

Councillor B Graham referred to the Equality Impact Assessment of changes to leisure centres and informed the Board that the new multi-sensory facilities at Spennymoor would be officially opened on the 25 June 2014. She suggested that a site visit be arranged through Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny for members to view the new state-of-the-art facility.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and the progress being made in delivering the MTFP be noted.

6 Implications for Durham County Council of the Government's Policy Programme

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update on the implications of the Government's policy programme, major policy developments and announcements and provided an analysis of the implications for the Council and County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Policy and Communications highlighted the most significant announcements since the last report to Members which relate to the following:

- The Budget;
- Welfare reform;
- National minimum wage;
- Transformation Challenge Fund;
- Transparency in local government;
- Public Services (Social Value) Act;
- Vocational qualifications and apprenticeships;
- Planning;
- North East Local Enterprise Partnership and North East Combined Authority;
- Regional Growth Fund;
- Local bus services;
- Community energy;
- NHS, public health and care and support reform;
- Community safety;
- Free school meals for infant pupils;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Child poverty strategy.

The Chairman asked if there had been any announcement on who would be leading the LEP. The Head of Policy and Communications responded that an announcement would be made shortly.

Councillor R Bell referred to the Regional Growth Fund and requested that a cumulative figure be provided.

Councillor T Nearney referred to the Welfare Reform and asked if there was a formal structure for partnership working with AAPs and housing providers. The Head of Policy and Communications responded that a steering group had been set up that would then feed into further groups to ensure that all parties work collectively to provide a single approach. The Council also work closely with social housing providers to help identify those people in need of extra support. He added that the approach had been successful in joining services together to be able to manage Welfare Reform.

Councillor Wilson requested further information on the provision of free school meals in particular the figures to support the scheme and questioned whether it would be enough to cover every school in the county. Councillor Hopgood added that all school kitchens in County Durham are up to standard from the previous pilot therefore would not receive any additional funding allocated to expand kitchen and dining facilities. The Chairman suggested that the matter be referred to the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services to provide a breakdown of figures.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report and the actions taken to anticipate and respond to the government's reforms be noted.

7 Quarter 4 2013/14 Performance Management

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented a summary of the council's performance for the 2013/14 financial year. A presentation was given by the Head of Planning and Performance (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

Councillor T Nearney referred to page 48 of the report and queried why only 22% of the Altogether Greener target had been completed. The Head of Planning and Performance responded that the 3 year rolling document had longer term targets set within the theme, with 67% of the targets ongoing for future years.

Councillor Todd commented on the increase in fly tipping and asked if there was any correlation between the increase and the charges. The Chairman responded that the relevant scrutiny committee will look into fly tipping performance.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

8 County Durham Partnership Update

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including key issues from the Board, the five Thematic Partnerships and all Area Action Partnerships (AAPs). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the County (for copy see file of minutes).

The Principal Partnerships and Local Councils Officer highlighted work carried out within the County Durham Partnership in recent months and the priorities and changes that have taken place over the last five years in the areas that AAPs have focussed on and why these changes occurred.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

9 Notice of Key Decisions

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

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported that since the last update there had been the following movement in items being considered at Cabinet:-

- Camera Enforcement of parking and bus lane contravention, and the parking strategy were listed however have now been removed due to changes in government legislation.
- Gypsy Roma Traveller allocations were listed for June however it had been removed from the notice as it would be dealt with under delegated powers.
- New to the plan for 10 September were items on Housing Stock Outcome of the tenant ballot and next steps in the transfer process, and also an update on Welfare Reform and the council tax reduction scheme.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

10 Update in relation to Petitions

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

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported that since the last update, 7 new paper petitions had been received and 9 had completed the process.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

11 Appointment of Co-optees

The Head of Planning and Performance reported that interviews for Co-opted members had taken place at the beginning of June 2014 and appointments were made to the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees:-

- **Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny**
Keith Gilfillan and David Kinch
- **Environment and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny**
Tom Bolton and Pam Spurrell
- **Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny**
Tony Cooke and Jim Welch
- **Adults, Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny**
Rosemary Hassoon and Betty Carr
- **Economy and Enterprise**
Ian McLaren and Ted Henderson

Councillor A Hopgood commented that she had been unable to take part in the interview process due to the date changes and would be interested to know the number of minority party representatives that were on the interview panels. The Head of Planning and Performance responded that the date changes were due to the applicants' availability and she would provide Councillor Hopgood with the information requested.