

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

At a Meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 22 March 2016 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Armstrong (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors P Stradling, E Adam, A Batey, R Bell, H Bennett, D Boyes, K Corrigan, R Crute, S Forster, B Graham, J Hillary, P Lawton, J Lethbridge, M Nicholls, C Potts, L Pounder, M Simmons, W Stelling, J Turnbull, S Wilson and G Holland (substitute for A Hopgood)

Also Present:

N Foster

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Hopgood, T Nearney, J Robinson and A Shield.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor G Holland, substitute for Councillor A Hopgood.

3 Minutes

With the addition of the following amendment to item 4, paragraph 2 of the minutes from the meeting held on the 19 February 2016, the minutes of the meetings held on the 12 and 19 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman:-

“The Chairman referred to a request from Councillor M Wilkes asking if the Committee would consider an additional paper at the start of the meeting on his suggested proposals on savings within the budget report. The Chairman advised that this additional paper could not be considered, but that this information would be passed to the Cabinet portfolio holder following the meeting”.

Referring to points raised from the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 February 2016, the Head of Planning and Performance provided the following updates:-

- Item 6 paragraph 8 – regarding delays to EU funding, an agreement had now been signed and work would start to promote and deliver the youth initiative employment programs;

- Item 8 paragraph 5 – an update on the County Durham was scheduled to be presented to Cabinet on 6 April 2016 and the timetables and process would be presented to Cabinet in June 2016.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update on the progress made at the end of December 2015 on the delivery of the 2015/16 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP5) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Policy and Communications reported that the MTFP5 was agreed by Council in February 2015 and for 2015/16 the savings target was just over £16m. This forms part of the overall savings target for the period from 2011/12 to 2019/20 of around £257m.

By the end of December 2015 over 90% of the savings target for MTFP5 had been met with £14.6m of savings having been achieved which amounts to the total savings delivered since April 2011 to over £151m with £1.7m left to achieve by the end of the year.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report and the progress made in delivering the MTFP5 be noted.

6 Update on the Future Arrangements for the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update on the implementation of future arrangements for the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) collection. A presentation was given by the Head of Culture and Sport (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

The Head of Culture and Sport gave a detailed presentation highlighting the following areas:-

- Previous Decision and timetable;
- Delivery of MTFP Savings;
- Building Decant Progress;
- Staffing Update;
- Development of Agreements and Partnership;
- Management of Risks;
- Update on New Offer;
- Future Programme and Next Steps.

The Head of Culture and Sport responded to a question from the Chairman regarding plans for securing the building. He explained that the process would be in two phases, the

first stage would be to close the building to the public but still allowing staff access to remove collection items. Once all the items were cleared, the building would then be secured.

In response to a query from Councillor R Bell, the Head of Culture and Sport advised that members would have an opportunity to tour the research and study facilities and added that they would be invited to events such as the Somme exhibition and would be able to take part in dress rehearsals for the WW1 experience.

The Head of Culture and Sport replied to concerns from Councillor R Bell regarding the storage of fabric items. He advised that textile items go through a professional cleaning and freezing process before being stored. He added that the facility had operated and stored other collection items for many years and assured that objects being stored met an accreditation standard.

Councillor Boyes expressed concerns regarding value for money during the cross over period. He commented that he had recently visited the DLI Museum and found that a number of items were not working and some rooms had been closed, however, visitors were still charged full price. He asked that a reduced rate be considered. The Head of Culture and Sport advised that he would look into the matter as it was intended for the facility to be operating fully, with the only unavailable objects being those used for the Somme exhibition.

In response to a query from Councillor Holland regarding the contents of the art gallery and the commemorative stone, the Head of Culture and Sport advised that the grounds would remain in situ and the gallery, which was a fully funded art programme, would be found a permanent location as well as having the opportunity to take exhibitions around the County. A programme was expected to be announced by July 2016. Councillor Foster added that once the building was vacant it would be declared surplus and would then be offered to other services. He assured that there were no plans for a hotel or housing development on the site.

Responding to comments from Councillor Hillary regarding invitations to events, Councillor Foster explained that the aim was to reach out to as many people as possible and confirmed that ex-servicemen, the DLI association and save the DLI campaigners would be invited to preview events.

Councillor Lethbridge enquired if there would be similar facilities at the new location for visitors to contemplate and reflect on the many contributions and sacrifices that were made. The Head of Culture and Sport responded that the programme encouraged reflection and advised that there were a number of areas at the palace green location. He added that the research and study centre was child friendly and had designated areas to view collection items.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report and presentation be noted.

7 Quarter Three 2015/16 Performance Management Report

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators (PIs), Council Plan and service plan actions and reported other performance issues for the third quarter of the 2015/16 financial year, covering the period October to December 2015. A presentation was given by the Head of Planning and Performance (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Hillary regarding how the employment theme targets were determined, the Head of Planning and Performance explained that they were in the process of working with service areas to look at the range and balance of targets ensuring they were achievable as well as challenging.

Councillor R Bell referred to the obesity figures and asked if a breakdown could be provided on overweight, obese and dangerously obese figures.

Councillor Holland commented that sports and leisure should be accessible and affordable to all as this can save on health budgets in the long run, and that this should be embedded into the health programme. The Head of Planning and Performance responded that this is done to some extent in the Council Plan.

Councillor Adam enquired if the performance of NHS Health Checks was related to resources and asked if it was possible to be provided with an age group breakdown for suicide rates.

Councillor Wilson referred to Health and employment figures and noted that results were still below national average. In particular that children of deprived families were not eating adequately and asked if anything was being done regarding children receiving breakfast at school. Councillor Potts advised that breakfast clubs were well attended during term time but advised that there were issues during school holidays. Councillor Graham expressed concern for families having to rely on food banks that were not monitored for nutritional value. The Head of Planning and Performance advised that food bank interventions were intended as a short term solution and agreed that cheaper food was likely to be less healthy. The poverty working group were looking at holiday hunger and the link between diet and deprivation which also links into the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews of the take up of free school meals and holiday hunger.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

8 Council Plan and Service Plans 2016- 2019

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided a draft Council Plan for 2016-19 for consideration and comment before being submitted for approval by Council on 13 April 2016 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Planning and Performance reported that this year, as agreed in principle by Cabinet in November 2015, it was proposed that the existing three year Council Plan be updated and rolled forward a year, with a more fundamental review to take place next year in line with a refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

An additional theme of an Altogether Better Council had been developed for the Council Plan to capture the corporate initiatives that the council has identified that it wants to undertake in order to enable achievement against the five priority themes. A small number of additional changes brought forward by services and partnerships and the final framework were detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

In response to a query from Councillor R Bell regarding how the Combined Authority and EU referendum would affect the plan, the Head of Planning and Performance advised that the plan was a living document and would be adjusted as required.

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the draft Council Plan as approved by Cabinet on the 16 March 2016, prior to submission to full Council be noted;
- (ii) That the content of the draft service plans 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 decisions that 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:-

- The North East Combined Authority Devolution Deal - moved from the 16 March and would be considered at a special meeting on the 23 March 2016;
- The County Durham Plan – Next Steps report had been added to the plan for 6 April and members were aware that the Draft County Durham Plan was scheduled for June 2016;
- 2017/18 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget MTFP 7, Council Plan, Service Plans and Local Council Tax reduction scheme – new to the plan for July 2016.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

10 Appointment of non-statutory, non-voting Overview and Scrutiny Co-optees

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that requested to re-appoint the current serving non-statutory, non-voting co-optees for a further 2 years (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the extension of the term of appointment of existing non-statutory, non-voting co-optees for a further 2 years in accordance with paragraph 5 of the protocol in Appendix 2 of the report be agreed.
- (ii) That a fundamental review of the appointment arrangements for non-statutory, non-voting co-optees be undertaken in 2018 be agreed.

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 from February to March 2016 (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 items of business could be reported.

12 MJ Local Government Awards 2016

The Head of Planning and Performance informed the Board that Durham County Council had been shortlisted with 5 other Authorities for the MJ Local Government Awards for Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny.

13 Academisation

In response to concerns from Councillor R Bell regarding the recent announcement on enforceable academisation, the Chairman asked that the Head of Education provide clarification on government proposals and the future role of the local education authorities as there was a great deal of uncertainty. The Head of Planning and Performance advised that academisation would be included in the regular update report on implications of the government's policy programme.