

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 12 March 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor J Armstrong (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors B Alderson, B Avery, A Bainbridge, J Blakey, D Boyes, M Campbell, J Chaplow, B Graham, M Hodgson, N Martin (substitute for A Hopgood), P Jopling, J Moran, E Murphy, D Myers, A Naylor, B Ord, C Potts, D J Southwell, P Stradling, R Todd, and A Willis.

Faith Community Representative:

Revd K Phipps

Co-opted Members:

Mr A J Cooke, Mr D Kinch

Also Present:

Councillors Batson, and Holland

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bell, A Hopgood, and G Huntington.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 December 2011 and 10 February 2012 were considered. With the additions to the minutes as set out below they were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman:-

- 21 December 2011- to include the apologies of Mr A J Cooke
- 10 February 2012- item 2 to include the objection made by Councillor B Ord, to the introduction of pest control charge on the grounds that most people will not report rats and it could lead to a rat explosion.

2 Declarations of interest

Councillor N Martin, in relation to item 8 petition 110, concerning his appeal to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Councillor D J Southwell, in relation to item 8 petition 42, as a Director of Durham Villages Regeneration Limited.

3 Items from Co-opted members or interested parties

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

4 Quarter 3 2011/12 Performance Management Report

The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that set out progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators and which reported other significant performance issues for the third quarter of 2011/12. The Head of Planning and Performance gave a presentation to Members which provided further detail on some of the issues highlighted in the report (for copy of report and sides of presentation see file of Minutes).

The Head of Planning and Performance advised that the key performance challenge relating to housing benefit payments, remains at an unacceptable level, although significant improvement had been made, and that further information would be provided to the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee on 16 March by the Revenue and Benefits Manager.

In response to Councillor Avery's question relating to the number of children involved in road traffic collisions, and whether this was due to an increase in the number of children having scooters, it was pointed out that this was for discussion at the next Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Committee.

The suggestion made by Councillor B Ord that more should be done to encourage the public to undertake their own composting, would be referred to the appropriate service.

Councillor C Potts, referred to the key performance challenge on the number of telephone calls unanswered within one minute, and advised of the frustration for customers when they are on hold and then sometimes cut-off. Members felt that much more needed to be done to address this, and a representative from customer services would be present at the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee on 16 March to provide further information.

At the Economy Scrutiny Committee on 29 March, information would be provided on the number and type of job vacancies that existed in the County, following the request of Councillor D J Southwell.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report regarding the Quarter 3 Performance Indicators and the actions to remedy under performance be noted.

5 Council Plan 2012-2016- Refresh of the Work Programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided members with information contained within the Council Plan 2012-2016 as agreed at the Council meeting on 22 February and to agree a process to refresh the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes to reflect the 5 objectives and subsequent actions identified within the recently agreed Council Plan for 2012-2016 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report together with the recommendations included therein be approved.

6 Forward Plan

The Board noted a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided details of the Executive forward plan of key decisions covering the period 1 March to 30 June 2012 (for copy see file of Minutes). Members noted the additional column that had been added to the Forward Plan which detailed scrutiny activity/involvement for each decision.

Councillor Martin queried the content of the Forward Plan, as there seemed very little information provided for the months of May and June. Although the amount of information on the Plan had improved in the past, it appeared that this may have slipped and the situation would be kept under review.

7 Petitions

The Committee Services Manager presented the report which updated Members on the situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Naylor, in reference to petition 61, questioned the length of time that the service had been dealing with this. The Committee Services Manager explained that services do provide regular updates on the position, however she would make further enquires on this and report back to the member.

Resolved:

That the updates on the status of petitions received by the authority be noted.

8 Information Update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Board noted a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update of overview and scrutiny activity from December 2011 to March 2012 (for copy see file of Minutes).

In order to keep members informed, the Chair reported on the next item.

9 Reporting at Cabinet

The Chairman explained that when a Chair or Vice Chair of one of the Scrutiny Committees presents a report on the findings of one of the scrutiny working groups to Cabinet, agreement had been made with the Leader of the Council, that if members present had any questions on the report these would be taken and responded to at the meeting, or later if that was more appropriate.