

# **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 **Friday 24 March 2017 at 9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor J Armstrong (Chairman)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors E Adam, H Bennett, K Corrigan, R Crute, J Hillary, J Lethbridge, T Nearney, M Nicholls, N Martin (substitute for A Hopgood) C Potts, L Pounder and J Turnbull

### **Faith Community Representative:**

Mrs M Elliott

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Stradling, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, D Boyes, B Graham, K Henig and P Lawton.

### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillor N Martin, substitute for Councillor A Hopgood.

### **3 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on the 13 February 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 13 February 2017, the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager provided the following updates:-

- Item 9 paragraph 3 regarding the Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy – a response had been received from the Head of Planning and Assets who advised that two stakeholder events and a targeted consultation had been arranged to ensure it reflected a broad partnership approach. The draft strategy was then subject to a full and formal public consultation. The council were still in the process of considering the large number of detailed representation made as part of the full consultation and there would be an opportunity to share the outcome of the consultation and the associated strategy with local members prior to its approval. The Spatial Policy Team would arrange a session when in a position to provide feedback from the consultation.
- Item 9 paragraph 3 regarding Aykley Heads Preferred Options – the date had moved and would now be considered by Cabinet in September 2017. Local members would be engaged before being approved.

#### **4 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5 Update on the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 6**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided an update on the progress made at the end of December 2016 on the delivery of the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP6) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Policy and Communications reported that for 2016/17 the savings target was just over £28 million, which forms part of the overall savings target for the period from 2011/12 to 2019/20 of around £250 million.

It was reported by the end of December 2016, over 91% of the savings target for MTFP6 had already been met with £25.6 million of savings having been achieved with an increase of £3.1 million on the figure last reported at the end of quarter 2. The total savings delivered since April 2011 was over £183 million.

#### **Resolved:**

That the information contained in the report and the progress made in delivering the MTFP6 be noted.

#### **6 Quarter Three 2016/17 Performance Management**

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 third quarter of the 2016/17 financial year, covering the period October to December 2016. A presentation was given by the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

Councillor Nicholls highlighted the increase in suicides across the county and questioned if drugs and alcohol were a contributing factor. He asked if there were pockets of areas where suicides were more common and if drugs and alcohol were issues in those same areas. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager responded that Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee were currently carrying out a suicide rate review that aims to examine incidences, policies and investigate how intervention and support could be improved in identifying individuals who need support in terms of mental health issues.

In response to a query from Councillor Nearney, the Chairman confirmed that training in relation to responsibilities of a corporate parent would be provided to all members following the election in May.

Councillor Nearney thanked the Head of Technical Services and his team for the excellent project application submitted to the Department of Transport's local highway maintenance challenge fund for the resurfacing of strategic roads in County Durham.

With regard to fly tipping, Councillor Lethbridge stated that there were a number of incidences of where disused furniture could be found in residents' gardens and back yards. He queried whether the £15 collection fee charged by the council could be contributing to this. The Chairman reiterated that the charge could be shared by a number of neighbours wanting to dispose of bulky household waste, the use of household waste recycling centres for the disposal of domestic waste is free and there are a number of charities that will collect items of furniture free of charge for reuse or upcycling.

Councillor Hillary referred to the unemployment figures and queried the large percentage gap of people not accounted for. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager advised that a breakdown would be provided to Councillor Hillary. Councillor Hilary also observed that there had been a 15% reduction in antisocial behaviour but a 19% increase in alcohol related antisocial behaviour and said that he found this unusual.

With regard to the anti-social behaviour statistics, Councillor Hillary enquired if figures included domestic violence incidents. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager clarified that domestic violence is classed as violent crime. Anti-social behaviour figures included noise nuisance incidents such as loud arguments, disputes, use of foul language and other similar related complaints.

Councillor Martin welcomed the new arrangements for the Corporate Parenting Panel and asked that meetings not coincide with full County Council meetings as they have done in the past.

Referring to the 65% of secondary schools judged outstanding or good by OFSTED, Councillor Martin was concerned with the remaining high percentage of schools not performing as well. He asked what the breakdown of the 35% of secondary schools which were not judged to be good or outstanding, whether they were maintained schools or academies and asked what the council were doing with regards to academies. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager advised that he would contact the education support team to provide further information to Councillor Martin. With regard to performance in terms of repairs to highways defects, Councillor Martin said that from personal experience, he was impressed by response times to potholes that he had reported to the council.

Councillor Lethbridge asked if a breakdown was available regarding the age and profile of shoplifters and the nature of items stolen.

Mrs Elliott informed the Board that the Chief Constable and the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner introduced a scheme to tackle the motives leading to shoplifting and advised that if offenders plead guilty, they could join the scheme to help better manage their financial affairs. Councillor Nearney added that in addition to the judicial scheme, the Checkpoint programme had also been very successful which aims to reduce the number of victims of crime by reducing reoffending.

#### **Resolved:**

- i) That the council's performance at quarter three be noted;
- ii) That the changes to the Council Plan outlined in the report be noted.

## **7 Update in relation to Petitions**

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 see file of minutes).

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported that since the last update, 1 new paper petition had been received and had completed the process. 4 new e-petitions had been submitted and currently there was 1 live e-petition on the council's website collecting signatures relating to limiting North Road works to daytime hours that would run until 9 April 2017.

### **Resolved:**

That the information contained in the report be noted.

## **8 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, the Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy had moved from April and would now be considered by Cabinet in June 2017, as the meeting scheduled for April had been cancelled.

### **Resolved:**

That the information contained in the report be noted.

## **9 Information update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

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

### **Resolved:**

That the information contained in the report be noted.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank all members and officers involved in the scrutiny process over the years for their valuable input and offered his best wishes to those councillors seeking re-election in May and to those who were not seeking re-election.