

POLICY AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

Day Services Review

Councillors Davies, Walsh, Oldfield and O'Keeffe are Members on the Committee's Sub Group. This is a legacy item following last years invitation by the former Executive Member for Adult Social Care to contribute to the Day Services Review including understanding customer needs and the range of potential personalisation options available/required particularly in relation to preventative measures including customer demand and the potential supply of services to meet that demand.

Alcohol and Joint Scrutiny Working Group on the Minimum Pricing of Alcohol

Following a report by the Director of Public Health on informal discussions he had held with Councillors Davies and O'Keeffe on the work of the Joint Scrutiny Committee the Committee agreed 5 interim recommendations. Councillors Davies and O'Keeffe continue to be this Council's representatives on the Joint Scrutiny Group with representatives of Blackpool Borough Council and Cumbria and Lancashire County Councils. Since this Committee's last meeting, the Group has met on 29th September. Councillors Davies and O'Keeffe attended the Group's half day stakeholder event at Blackpool Football Club on 11 October to seek views from a wide range of people on how harmful drinking within communities can best be reduced through the use of minimum pricing. Blackpool Council facilitated the event on behalf of the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Representatives attended from the health service, the On and Off Licence and Supermarket Trade, alcohol producers, voluntary support organisations.

Blackburn with Darwen is truly contributing to this joint scrutiny work topic. A number of young people from the borough aged 13- 19 attended the event through the Young People Services and the Reachout Groundwork (Pennine Lancashire) Group together with representatives of the Director of Public Health and the Head of Public Protection and the Healthy Schools Specialist – Drugs and Alcohol within our Children's Services Department. The Group's final meeting is on 10 November when Members from the 4 authorities will consider recommendations for submission to their respective Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It is anticipated a report will come to our next Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November.

Other work...in brief

The Committee have received a summary of the White Paper "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS" and a copy of the consultation paper "Local Democracy in Health". The Chair and Vice Chair sent a response on behalf of the Committee on that part of the White Paper by the 11 October response deadline.

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Information Technology (IT) Transformation Programme

The Director of Business Transformation and ICT attended the Committee meeting on 4 October. The next update is due to be reported to the 25 January 2011 meeting. Following a request by the Committee, Members will be invited to visit the new Data Centre at an appropriate time early in 2011.

More Budget Information

The Executive Member for Resources provided a brief overview of the budgetary position following the recent Council's change of political control. The Committee will receive further, more detailed information at its next meeting following publication of the Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October.

Procurement - non capital - (linked to the above budget and Capita items)
The Head of Procurement presented a detailed report on the current activities and future plans for the Strategic Procurement Team.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

The Deputy Head of Legal Services provided an update on the feedback and recommendations of the Report from the Office of Surveillance Commissioners following an inspection on 22 July 2010 by His Honour Norman Jones QC on the Council's use of RIPA. The Committee will continue to receive regular monitoring reports to ensure RIPA is being used consistently and undertake an annual review of the RIPA policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose. The Committee will not be involved in making decisions on specific authorisations. Members have requested that a Member Guidance Note on the use of the policy is produced.

Other Issues

Under the work of the Executive, information has also been requested:

- The number of vacant commercial Council properties in the borough's town centres to include rates and rent implications, implications of offering subsidised rents etc.
- On the proposed extent of the budgetary consultation with members of the public and service users, not just general consultation?
- For more information on the Corporate Property Investment (£300k 2010/2011) referred to in the Corporate Budget Monitoring report;
- On the Old Town Hall Stonework Restoration Project referred to in the Forward Plan, particularly any changes to the original proposed scheme.

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Revised Work Programme

1. Selective Landlord Licensing
2. Community Centres – provision and the way forward
3. Re-use of vacant houses and proactive action by the Council in returning houses to the market (supplementary topic to HMR)
4. Alley Gates – report on how effective they have been, are there too many in some areas, process for allocation

The Committee have requested regular updates on:

- Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programmes and the way forward (supplementary topic = re-use of vacant properties)
- Griffin Area progress – including a timeline
- Neighbourhood Boards
- Darwen Leisure Centre
- Turton Tower

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- Re:refresh
- Matching need/demand with supply

REGENERATION AND TECHNICAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cemetery Capacity.

At their last meeting the Committee were informed of the issues relating to the capacity in the boroughs cemeteries and the availability of land in the near future. The committee looked at the specific issues relating to certain sections of the community. The Council were looking at ways of ensuring that the availability of land could meet demand in the foreseeable future all the communities needs. The Committee would receive reports on the issue when major decisions were to be made to ensure that a scrutiny input could be made. Members were concerned about the gaps between services at the crematorium and were informed that they were currently booked in for every 30 minutes. The executive member undertook to look into the timings of bookings and report back to the Committee.

Budget for the Regeneration and Environment Portfolio.

The Committee were also updated on the budget implications for the two portfolio that reported to the Committee. Members were informed that the standard spending assessments were to be announced on 20th October and following this the overall figures would need to be disaggregated and the implications evaluated and the overall priorities for the council assessed. Members of the Committee reaffirmed that the portfolio budgets be part of the committees work programme and that reports be submitted to each meeting setting out the budget position and implications of service reductions to meet the financial targets.

Market relocation.

At their last meeting the relocation of the Blackburn market was on the agenda. The Committee will continue to look at the issue of the relocation and the transfer to the mall including trader issues both in the new market and the existing market. Members were also keen to ensure that the council did all it could to ensure that vitality and viability of the existing market until the relocation. Regular updates are to be submitted to the Committee. Once the market has successfully relocated the Committee will look at the future uses of the site and the ways in which the redevelopment will enhance and improve the town centre shopping experience.

Priorities of the new Executive Members.

Finally, the Committee were informed of the priorities of the new executive members and how they would approach the issues. The Committee discussed these priorities and the committees existing work programme. Members agreed that the work programme agreed previously by the Committee would still accord with the priorities of the executive members and that they were happy to continue looking at the issues

of Budgets, Waste Procurement, Transport Infrastructure and the relocation of the market.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Gifted and Talented.

At their last meeting the committee received an overview of the provision for the "gifted and talented" young people in the borough. They were informed of the duties and responsibilities of the care team for the delivery and analysis of the skills and responsibilities that were needed to provide a service to the section of the community. They were also made aware that the provision was driven by the demand for the service however there was little guidance given to provision from the government. They agreed that the issue be led by a small team to look at our support and then report back to the main Committee. The group would look at the specific instances of provision and also how we compared with other authorities and good practice. We will visit the sites of provision and also look at how the young people receiving the service perceive the services they receive.

Building Schools for the Future.

The Committee have been updated on the progress and current work on the Building schools for the future programme. They were aware that the bid had been submitted to the government in a joint submission with Bolton MBC and Balfour Beatty. (This had been established as a Local education partnership.) The government had however halted progress of all BSF schemes that had not been agreed and reached financial closure in June. They were informed that the Blackburn element of the bid had been agreed however Bolton's schemes had not. This had meant that changes had to be made to the timetabling of the implementation of the schedules and negotiations were continuing with the Department of Education and also with the contractors who were partners in the scheme. Bolton remains a partner in the scheme as they are currently procuring two primary school capital projects through the LEP.

The Committee viewed the DVD of the artist impression of the walk through showing the lay out of teaching facilities and the school environment. The schemes had been assessed in terms of accessibility and would comply fully to current standards. Special facilities would also be available to ensure that people with special needs would also be accommodated. Members have agreed to continue to look at the progress of the BSF programme and receive regular reports on the key developments. Arrangements would be made for members to visit the sites of the schools and report back to the committee.

Work of the Youth Forum- Citizenship and Democracy.

The Committee received a presentation from members of the youth forum on their chosen work programme topic- "Citizenship and Democracy". The Committee were informed that they wished to examine

- What does it mean to be a citizen?
- How are young people taught citizenship and their role in society?
- What do councils have to do to educate young people about citizenship?
- How does this council do it?
- How do other local authorities do it?
- What do young people think and want to see done?
- How do we ensure that young people are educated to play their role in society and have a voice?

The Youth Forum will look at what is important relating to citizenship and young people and how this can improve and inspire them. The Committee will be presented with the findings of the Forum at regular intervals and also recommendations based on their findings. The Committee will work with the Forum to ensure that their work is as effective in adding value and making a difference as possible.

The Forum will also be encouraged to examine projects that are already run by the Council to seek to educate young people in citizenship. The forum was also informed that funding may be available from Tauheedhal or Beardwood High schools for a community project.

Priorities of the Executive.

The Committee received a presentation from the new executive member on the priorities for the future. She stated that the main issues would relate to the maintenance of services within budgets constraints. The Committee were informed that a number of reviews were underway and these would be reporting back to her in the near future. The findings would be reported to the Committee when available.

Jim Shorrock
Chair

Derek Hardman
Vice Chair

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