

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

19th May 2006

Present:

Councillor: Marjorie James (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Gerard Hall, Ann Marshall, Arthur Preece, Carl Richardson and Jane Shaw

Resident

Reps: Evelyn Leck, Linda Shields and Joan Smith

Officers:

Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Graham Frankland, Acting Director of Neighbourhood Services
Dave Stubbs, Acting Director of Neighbourhood Services
Stuart Green, Head of Planning and Economic Development
Chris Little, Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Alan Dobby, Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services
Peter Turner, Principal Strategy Development Officer
David Hunt, Strategy and Performance Officer
Sajda Banaras, Scrutiny Support Officer
Rebecca Readman, Temporary Research Assistant
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

222. Councillor Stanley Fortune

The Chair addressed the Committee in terms of regret at the very recent death of Councillor Stanley Fortune. All present stood and observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

223. Councillors John Cambridge and Bob Flintoff

The Chair wished to pass on the Committee's thanks and best wishes to ex-councillors John Cambridge and Bob Flintoff for all their effort and hard work during their membership of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

224. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Stan Kaiser, Geoff Lilley and Edna Wright

225. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

226. Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2006

Confirmed

227. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

228. Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny Reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members

No items.

229. Forward Plan

No items

230. Corporate Plan (BVPP) 2006/07 (Assistant Chief Executive)

The report set out the draft Corporate Plan (BVPP) for 2006/07. The plan was submitted to Cabinet earlier in the week and there were no additions or amendments suggested. The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee had received an early draft of the Plan on 24th February and had agreed the general themes for inclusion.

Officers across the Council had been working and drawing together the key Performance Indicator information for inclusion within the Plan. This information was shown under each of the Corporate Plan sections attached by way of an Appendix. The remaining non-key Performance Indicator information was also included where available, although by necessity, some Indicators would not be available until June.

There was a statutory requirement to publish the final Corporate Plan by 30th June and as the Plan formed part of the Policy Framework, final approval would rest with full Council.

Members were concerned that some of the Performance Indicator information was unavailable, particularly the financial information. Officers indicated that this information would not be available until early June.

The Committee went on to consider the Corporate Plan 2006/07 dealing with each of the sections based around the community strategy themes separately. In relation to each of the individual sections, Members made the following comments as detailed below:

Jobs and the Economy

- Under the jobs and economy theme (Ref – JE1), Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee queried the accuracy of measuring new business start-ups according to VAT registrations. A Member suggested that form CWF1, which is used to register businesses with the Inland Revenue would be a more accurate tool by which to measure small business start-ups.
- Officers accepted that VAT registrations are not the most accurate method by which to measure new business start-ups however, the approach adopted reflected one used nationally. Members were informed that locally, this issue has been highlighted with GONE (Government Office North-East) and the Inland Revenue and is in the process of being reviewed. Meanwhile, the committee was informed that proxy measures are in place to ensure an accurate record of business start-ups is maintained.

Lifelong Learning and Skills

- No comments.

Health and Care

- No comments.

Community Safety

- Members asked how they would be kept informed of any up to date information. The Assistant Chief Executive indicated that quarterly reports would be produced in line with the quarterly budget reports and submitted to Cabinet followed by this Committee. The first report would be produced in August.

It was noted that the Crime and Community Safety Partnership was currently undertaking consultation with residents about safety issues. The results of this consultation will be utilised to inform the Community Police Teams and so enable them to target more effectively the concerns expressed by residents.

Environment and Housing

- No comments.

Culture and Leisure

- No comments.

Strengthening Communities

- No comments.

Corporate Performance

- Members raised concerns about the content of the Forward Plan and how this informed Members. The Assistant Chief Executive indicated that he had contacted the Corporate Management Group about ensuring the content of the Forward Plan was more informative and indicated the links to the Neighbourhood Forums more clearly.

The Committee endorsed the Corporate Plan on the understanding that the outstanding performance indicators would be produced, to enable them to be considered prior to the final decision making at Council.

Decision

- The Corporate Plan was endorsed on the understanding that any outstanding performance indicators be provided for consideration, prior to the final decision being made at Council on 22nd June.

231. Consideration of Financial Monitoring/Corporate Reports

No items.

232. Items for discussion

No items.

233. Call-in Requests

No items

234. Any Other Business

The Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum indicated that she had received a telephone call from the Head Teacher of High Tunstall College of Science commending the Forum's inquiry into involving young people. The Head Teacher had also indicated that she was keen to work together with the Forum in the future.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee welcomed the comments and again expressed their support for the excellent work carried out by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum over the past municipal year.

MARJORIE JAMES

CHAIR