
CABINET PORTFOLIOS AND STRUCTURE FOR SCRUTINY

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor John Williams, Leader
Responsible Director – Ada Burns, Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To present proposals for revised Cabinet portfolios that reflect the most effective way of ensuring that the executive is structured to deliver on the new corporate plan and in line with Leading Edge.

Summary

2. Each year the council makes appointments to Cabinet portfolios and scrutiny committees. In Darlington the main structure of the portfolios and scrutiny committees has remained essentially the same for seven years. This report argues that there is a strong rationale for changing portfolios to reflect the council's new direction.

Information and Analysis

3. Choices of portfolios and scrutiny committees are for local discretion based on overall rules brought in at the time of new political management arrangements in 2000. There are a number of issues that provide the context for consideration of member structures:
 - (a) Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) – there is long-standing evidence that authorities that have strong correlation between member structures and community strategy themes score higher than others in factors such as prioritisation, performance management etc. in corporate assessment;
 - (b) Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) – roles for certain Cabinet portfolios for example community safety, children's services and the Leader are now spelled out in LSP guidance and good practice. There is an argument that the closer a member's portfolio to the remit of an LSP themed group, the greater the accountability of members to the LSP;
 - (c) place-shaping – since councils are expected to have greater external focus, it should follow that members' responsibilities and duties reflect this e.g. by encompassing issues such as health;
 - (d) Local Area Agreements (LAAs) – all of the above would mean that there would be strong, justifiable rationale for closer engagement of members in future LAA programmes. This is essential considering that many decisions and key consultations on the allocation of public sector resources will be made in LAAs;

- (e) white paper – scrutiny committees are expected to conduct more strategic reviews in the future, including scrutinising the activities and performance of the LSP. There is also a need to ensure that they are fit for purpose for introducing community calls for action.
4. Objective analysis of the existing portfolio and scrutiny structure highlights the following problems:
- (a) There are few clear linkages between community strategy themes, LSP themed groups, portfolios, scrutiny committees and departments. It is important to point out that the arrangements have shown that they work on the ground but it appears that they work in spite of the complexity;
 - (b) Some are not easy to understand from a resident’s position e.g. community protection;
 - (c) There are some areas which are of increasing importance within our business, for example health improvement, which have no Cabinet leadership;
 - (d) Changes we have made to organisational delivery arrangements, for example, on Street Scene, are not reflected within the portfolios (e.g. there is no single leadership to present as a single service);
 - (e) Not future proof in respect of new requirements of the white paper;
 - (f) While we are doing more to deliver services coherently within communities, e.g. Street Scene, youth service, policing, there is no Cabinet leadership on how to develop our locality focus.

Current Structure

5. The listing of current arrangements is shown below, from which it is immediately apparent that there are few overlaps between Cabinet portfolios, community strategy themes, LSP themed groups, scrutiny committees and departments.

Cabinet Portfolios	Community Strategy Themes	LSP Themed Groups	Scrutiny Committees	Departments
Leader	Economy	Economy & Environment	Environment	CEO plus D&E
Consumer & Environmental services	Social Inclusion	CDRP (fire)	PPCP	D&E plus Community
Children's Services	Education	Children's trust & CDRP	Lifelong Learning	Children's Services
Adult's Services	Health	HISIG	Social Affairs & Health	Community Services
Transport	Transport	Economy & Environment	Resources	Development & Environment
Regeneration & Planning	Environment	Economy & Environment	Environment	Development & Environment
Community and Public Protection	Community safety	CDRP	PPCP	Community Services & CEO
Leisure	Leisure	Learning & Culture	Environment	D&E plus Community
Resources			Resources	Corporate Services & CEO

Proposed Structure

6. The following is proposed as a pragmatic solution to ensuring that portfolios are fit for purpose with the least upheaval.

Cabinet Portfolios	Community Strategy Themes	LSP Themed Group	Scrutiny Committee¹
<p>Economy</p> <p><i>Regeneration and development, town centre, city regions, business engagement, international partnerships, tourism</i></p>	Economy	Economy & Environment	Economy & Environment
<p>Neighbourhood Services & Community Safety</p> <p><i>Housing, community safety (inc DAAT, YOS), Street Scene, licensing</i></p>	Environment & Community Safety	Economy & Environment & CDRP	Neighbourhood Services
<p>Transport</p> <p><i>Highways, transport policy, bus services, parking</i></p>	Transport	Economy & Environment	Economy & Environment
<p>Children & Young People</p> <p><i>Education, children's social services, youth service, libraries, adult learning</i></p>	Education	Children's Trust	Children & Young People
<p>Health & Leisure</p> <p><i>Public health, environmental health, trading standards, registrars, leisure, culture, museum</i></p>	Health & Leisure	HISIG & Learning & Culture	Health & Well Being
<p>Adult services</p> <p><i>Adult social care, older people's engagement (GOLD)</i></p>	Health & social inclusion	HISIG	Health & Well Being
<p>Sustainable Environment & Climate Change</p> <p><i>Policy brief for climate change, waste reduction and recycling</i></p>	Environment	Economy & Environment	Economy & Environment
<p>Communities & Engagement</p> <p><i>Neighbourhood renewal, social inclusion, community partnerships, policy brief for localities, voluntary sector, welfare benefits</i></p>	Social inclusion	Board	Monitoring & Coordination ²
<p>Resources</p> <p><i>Organisational development, MTFP, corporate planning, performance management, efficiency, ICT,</i></p>	none	none	Resources

¹ If proposals adopted

² The group will consider which is the most appropriate committee(s) to scrutinise items on this portfolio.

<i>capital programmes, HR, property, legal, democratic services</i>			
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In relation to scrutiny committees, it is proposed that the name and remit of Committees should be amended at the same time to significantly strengthen the linkages with LSP theme groups and with the revised portfolios. The titles and themes for Scrutiny Committees would look as follows:

Existing Committee	Proposed Name	Linked themed group
Lifelong Learning	Children & Young People <i>Education, children's social services, youth service, libraries, adult learning</i>	Children's Trust
PPCP	Neighbourhood Services <i>Housing,²community safety (inc DAAT, YOS),Street Scene, licensing</i>	CDRP
Environment	Economy & Environment <i>Regeneration and development, transport, town centre business engagement, tourism, climate change, waste reduction</i>	Economy & Environment
Health & Social Affairs	Health & Well-being <i>Adult social care, Public health, environmental health, trading standards, registrars, leisure, culture, museum¹</i>	HISIG & Learning & Culture
Resources	Resources <i>As current</i>	-

7. Monitoring and Coordination Group have had discussions recently that enable a more effective overview to the work programmes and demands for the Committees, and would provide a forum to consider the most effective arrangements for specific issues that emerge over the year.

Conclusion

¹ Given the weight of issues emerging from ongoing changes in the NHS it is proposed that Health and Well-Being would consider leisure and cultural services from the perspective of the contribution they make to improving public health, but that reviews or issues relating to investment of the Councils leisure and cultural assets would be considered by Resources Scrutiny.

² Consideration is being given to the scope for the Tenants Board to have a more significant role in scrutiny of housing services.

8. Leaving cabinet portfolios and scrutiny committees largely unchanged since 2000 leaves us vulnerable in CPA. Out of an infinite number of permutations, a pragmatic suggestion has been made.

Legal Implications

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

11. The issues contained within this report will require approval by full Council.

Decision Deadline

12. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Recommendations

13. That the proposals be supported and it be recommended to Council that:-
 - (a) the new Cabinet portfolios described within paragraph 6 above, be approved;
 - (b) the new Scrutiny Committee titles and remit described within the report, be approved; and
 - (c) as cross-cutting issues, such as skills, will not fit neatly into any scrutiny committee's terms of reference and that the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group assign the appropriate scrutiny for such issues.

Reasons

14. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To ensure effective delivery of the corporate plan;
 - (b) To ensure that governance arrangements are fit for purpose.

Ada Burns
Chief Executive

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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