

# **Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee Agenda**



**9.30 am Thursday, 14 March 2019  
Committee Room 2, Town Hall,  
Darlington, DL1 5QT**

**Members of the Public are welcome to attend this  
Meeting.**

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on :-
  - (a) 20 December 2018 (Pages 1 - 4)
  - (b) 31 January, 2019 (Pages 5 - 6)
4. Performance Indicators Q3 2018/19 –  
Report of the Managing Director  
(Pages 7 - 12)
5. Work Programme –  
Report of the Managing Director  
(Pages 13 - 20)
6. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this  
Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting
7. Questions



**Luke Swinhoe**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Wednesday, 6 March 2019**

**Town Hall**  
**Darlington.**

**Membership**

Councillors Haszeldine, Carson, Cossins, Coultas, Crichlow, Johnson, Marshall,  
Mrs H Scott and C Taylor

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Shirley Burton, Democratic Services Manager, Resources Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays E-mail: [shirley.burton@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:shirley.burton@darlington.gov.uk) or telephone 01325 405998

## **EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 20 December 2018

**PRESENT** – Councillors Haszeldine (Chair), Carson, Cossins, Coultas, Crichlow, Johnson, Marshall, Mrs H Scott and C Taylor

**APOLOGIES** –

**ABSENT** –

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** –

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Elizabeth Davison (Assistant Director Resources), Anthony Sandys (Head of Housing and Revenues), Barbara Copson (Performance Manager) and Shirley Burton (Democratic Manager)

### **ER17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **ER18 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER, 2018**

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 8 November, 2018.

**RESOLVED** – That, with the deletion of 'Crumbie' and the insertion of 'Cossins' in the list of those Members present at the meeting, the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

### **ER19 COUNCIL TAX RECOVERY**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) providing an overview of the Council's Council Tax recovery process and collection performance.

It was reported that the collection of Council Tax, which was a key priority for the Council, had been particularly challenging over the last few years with the difficult economic climate and the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2013, however, overall collection performance was good and the collection of arrears was well managed, with dedicated recovery staff actively pursuing the higher debts and those who deliberately avoided paying.

Discussion ensued on the collection of Council tax for those in receipt of support and it was reported that this was generally successful, with in-year collection for these people being around 80 per cent; the income received from Council Tax; and the continual process to chase historic arrears, taking into account the likelihood of recovery in the most economical way, with the resources available.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

## **ER20 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS Q2 - 2018/19**

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) together with information on the Quarter 2 performance against those key performance indicators for 2018/19 which were within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

Particular reference was made to the performance information in relation to sickness absence figures within the Authority which were on track at the end of quarter 2 to achieve the year-end target and discussion ensued on the proactive work undertaken by the Human Resources Division in relation to this and the various health and well-being initiatives in place.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

## **ER21 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2019/20**

Submitted – A report (previously circulated) of the Chief Officers Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 December 2018, in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019-20 to 2022-23 and proposing a 2019/20 to 2022/23 capital programme for consultation.

It was reported that the delivery of the core offer which was agreed in 2016 remained extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth, the Council could still deliver the agreed balanced plan and extend the MTFP. A further £0.600 million had also been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.

Particular reference was made to a number of risk pressures which had been identified, however, it was reported that it was not clear at this stage whether they would definitely come to fruition. The Assistant Director Resources advised us that, given the potential impact if they did, it had been considered prudent to recognise them in the budget and, following a review of the risks, it had been recommended that a prudent level would be to include 60 per cent of the total value in the risk contingency line.

Discussion ensued on the savings which had been achieved in Adult Social Care; the current position in relation to school transport which was currently overspending and which was subject to a review with the aim of reducing the current projected overspend; the use of reserves to balance the MTFP; and the risk contingency going forward.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That Members notify Officers of specific areas they would like to look at further within the MTFP and a further special meeting be arranged if necessary.

(b) That a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee be held, prior to Cabinet on 12

February, 2019, to formulate a response on behalf of all Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the MTFP.

## **ER22 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Committee and to give consideration to any additional areas Members felt should be added to the previously approved work programme.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 31 January 2019

**PRESENT** – Councillors Haszeldine (Chair), Carson, Cossins, Coultas, Johnson, Marshall and C Taylor

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Mrs H Scott,

**ABSENT** – Councillor Crichlow

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors Knowles and Newall

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Elizabeth Davison (Assistant Director Resources), Shirley Burton (Democratic Manager) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

### **ER23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **ER24 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2019/20**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of all of this Scrutiny Committee's which had been held to discuss the proposals contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan, which were within their individual remits.

It was reported that all of the Scrutiny Committees had supported the proposals in relation to the proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99 per cent and the proposed increase in fees and charges within their own remits. Each of the Scrutiny Chairs presented, at the meeting, the outcomes of their Scrutiny Committees.

In presenting the findings of the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee, the Chair of that Scrutiny Committee also advised Members of the discussion which has taken place in relation to the Council's Housing Review Account (HRA) and particular reference was made to the welcome lift by the Government of the borrowing cap on the HRA which would enable the Council to increase its housing capital programme by around £12 million.

The Chair of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee reported that that Scrutiny Committee had requested further information in relation to the allocation of the £501,000 which had been identified for winter pressures and it was reported that that money had now been allocated and would be reported to Members.

In relation to Children's Services, reference was made to the significant pressures in Children's social care and the demand pressures on external residential placements and independent fostering placements, together with the cost of SEND school transport which was subject to a review to reduce the current projected overspend.

Discussion ensued on the potential significant financial risks which could occur over the lifetime of the Plan which were difficult to predict at this time, particularly in relation to Brexit outcomes and it was highlighted that further discussions around how

the Council would address these issues and the subsequent financial implications were needed. Some unease was raised about the Council agreeing to a four-year plan which could not be quantified at this stage in view of the uncertainty, however, the Assistant Director Resources reported that the Council had a long established process of operating a medium term approach to its financial planning and to only look at one year would not be prudent. In recommending the Plan to Members it had been accepted that the Council was carrying a significant risk in terms of the need to reduce expenditure, however contingencies had been put in place and the plan was based on the most accurate reflection of the Councils financial position.

It was reported that the Council had just been advised that it was to receive funding of £210,000 over the next two years to help it with its preparations for Brexit and that this funding would be put into reserves until called upon.

Reference was made to the role of this Scrutiny Committee in monitoring the MTFP over its life.

**RESOLVED** - That, in relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan, Cabinet be advised that :-

- (i) the response of this Council's Scrutiny Committee is to support the proposed increase in fees and charges and the proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99 per cent for the next financial year; and
- (ii) in considering the proposed four-year MTFP, the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee wishes to highlight its concern in relation to the potential significant financial risks over the lifetime of the plan, which are difficult to forecast at this time and that the Council's Statutory Chief Financial Officer be formally requested to highlight these concerns to Cabinet



## Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee

14 March 2019

ITEM NO. ....

---

### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS Q3 2018/19

---

#### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with Quarter 3 performance data against key performance indicators for 2018/19.

#### Report

##### Performance summary

2. This report provides performance information in line with an indicator set and scrutiny committee distribution agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group on 4 June 2018, and subsequently by scrutiny committee chairs.
3. The indicators included in this report are aligned with key priorities and the majority are used to monitor the Corporate Plan 2017/21. Other indicators may be referenced when appropriate in narrative provided by the relevant assistant directors, when providing the committee with performance updates.
4. Ten indicators are reported to the committee, all on a quarterly basis.
5. Targets have been set for six of these indicators for which data is available at Q3:
  - a) Five of these indicators are on track at the end of Q3, to achieve year-end targets:
    - FHR 001 – Sickness absence
    - HBS 002 – Council Tax arrears collected
    - HBS 003 – Housing Benefit overpayments recovered
    - HBS 009 - % of Council Tax collected in year
    - HBS 010 - % of Business Rates collected in year
  - i. It is particularly encouraging to see the year on year improvement in FHR 001, sickness absence, which is 0.75 days per F.T.E. better than 2017/18. HR have been working with managers targeting areas of concern ensuring all long term cases are managed appropriately and reviews are taking place for short term absence. It is also thought the Wellbeing campaign which has been running over the last couple of years is improving the overall health of the staff. Whilst it is difficult to prove a direct correlation between flu jabs and a reduction in influenza it is hoped this initiative will contribute to a continued reduced absence in the final quarter.

- b) One of these indicators is not on track at the end of Q3, to achieve year-end target:

LGP 008 – Contracted spend as a % of total non-salary spend

The contracts register is used to identify the percentage of contracted non-salary spend. The actual figure of contracted spend is likely to be higher as the contracts register may not be capturing all contracted spend. As spend below £10k does not involve the Corporate Procurement Team, some of this spend may not be entered on the contracts register. The Corporate Procurement is doing ongoing work to raise awareness with officers of the need to update the contract register with details of sub £10k spend. In addition, some contracted spend may not be being identified because of differences with the suppliers listed on the contracts register and the details appearing on Agresso. Further work is being done by Corporate Procurement to manually check that ensure suppliers are correctly identified.

6. Of the remaining four indicators for which a target is not set, comparison is made against the same time last year:

- a) Three indicators are showing performance better than at this time last year:

- FHR 003 Reportable accidents / ill health
- FHR 009 Number of complaints upheld by the ICO
- FHR 019 Staff turnover
- i. Our systems and processes are in place to try to prevent any accidents, so whilst unfortunate we have any reportable accidents it is pleasing to note the number at six is lower than last year. We have a strong health and safety culture in Darlington and all accidents are investigated thoroughly to see what lessons can be learnt to aid the prevention of future incidents.
- ii. It is pleasing to note the low staff turnover position of 5.2% at quarter 3. In general a level below 10% is considered healthy and shows an engaged workforce. This is in line with the latest staff survey results which were presented to this committee last year and noted a positive view across all themes including leadership, values and health and wellbeing.

- b) One indicator is showing performance not as good as at this time last year:

- FHR 008 Complaints upheld by the LG Ombudsman / Housing Ombudsman.
- i. Whilst there are three upheld decisions for the Financial Assessment process two related to clarity around aspects of the Adult Social care charging policy for non-residential services. This

has now been approved by Cabinet so should stop any confusion in the future.

7. A detailed performance scorecard is attached at Appendix 1.
8. This Scrutiny Committee performance report was compiled by Neil Bowerbank. All queries regarding the performance measures within this report should be addressed to the appropriate assistant director.

## **9. Recommendations**

10. It is recommended:

- a) that performance information provided in this report is reviewed and noted, and relevant queries raised with appropriate assistant directors

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

## **Background papers**

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

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder           | This report supports the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities   |
| Health and Well Being            | This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents   |
| Sustainability                   | This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities   |
| Diversity                        | This report supports the promotion of diversity  |
| Wards Affected                   | This report supports performance improvement across all Wards  |
| Groups Affected                  | This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups   |
| Budget and Policy Framework      | This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework   |
| Key Decision                     | This is not a key decision   |
| Urgent Decision                  | This is not an urgent decision   |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | This report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key outcomes |
| Efficiency                       | Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes.  |

This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank

---

## **EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME**

---

### **SUMMARY REPORT**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update on the current work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

#### **Summary**

2. Members will recall that, at previous meetings of this Scrutiny Committee, discussions have been held and agreement reached on areas where this Scrutiny Committee would like to focus its work. Work is currently being undertaken in relation to some of these areas of work is still due to commence on others.
3. The proposed work programme has been reviewed and revised to enable the Committee to analyse information for each topic area aligning it to the eight outcomes and three conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and relevant performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework.
4. The proposed structure of the work programme will provide Members with the opportunity to develop each topic through a series of questions and drill down to investigate particular aspects of extensive topics.

#### **Recommendation**

5. Members' views are requested.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

#### **Background Papers**

There were no background papers used in the preparation of this report.

Shirley Burton : Extension 5998

|  |  |
|--|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder                           | This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder   |
| Health and Well Being                            | This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.  |
| Carbon Impact                                    | There are no issues which this report needs to address.  |
| Diversity  | There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address   |
| Wards Affected                                   | The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.   |
| Groups Affected                                  | The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.  |
| Budget and Policy Framework                      | This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.  |
| Key Decision                                     | This is not a key decision.  |
| Urgent Decision                                  | This is not an urgent decision   |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed                 | The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the five themes.    |
| Efficiency                                       | The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers   |



## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. The format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
7. Each topic links to the outcomes and the conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy – One Darlington Perfectly Placed :-

| SCS Outcomes :   | Three Conditions :       |
|--|--------------------------|
| Children with the Best Start in Life<br>More Businesses more jobs  | Build Strong Communities |
| A safe and caring community<br>More people caring for our environment  | Grow the Economy         |
| More people active and involved<br>Enough support for People when needed<br>More people health and independent<br>A place designed to thrive | Spend Every Pound Wisely |

8. In addition, each topic links to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework (PMF) to provide robust and accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake.

### Forward Plan and Additional Items

9. Members wish to add any topics to the above, a Quad of Aims will need to be developed and submitted prior to the item being brought to Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that it does contribute to the strategic aims of the Council.
10. Once the Work Programme has been agreed by this Scrutiny Committee, any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims. A revised process for adding an item to a previously approved work programme, has been agreed by the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group.

This page is intentionally left blank

## EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME – 2018/19

| Topic                            | Timescale   | Lead Officer                 | SCS Outcome                     | Darlington Conditions    | Link to PMF (Metrics)  | Scrutiny's Role  |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Performance Management Framework | Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee.<br><br>13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018 (Quarter 1)<br>20 <sup>th</sup> December, 2018 (Quarter 2)<br>14 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019 (Quarter 3) | Relevant Assistant Directors | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely | FHR 001<br>FHR 003<br>FHR 008<br>FHR 009<br>FHR 019<br>HBS 002<br>HBS 003<br>HBS 009<br>HBS 010<br>LGP 008 | To provide Members with an update regarding the Performance Management Framework.    |
| Allocation of Section 106 Monies | To be programmed if needed.   | Dave Coates                  | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend every pound wisely | ECI 108<br>ECI 114<br>ECI 115<br>ECI 116<br>ECI 117<br>ECI 130   | To look at the information currently available in relation to Section 106 Agreements |

## ARCHIVED ITEMS

| Topic                               | Timescale   | Lead Officer                                    | SCS Outcome                     | Darlington Conditions    | Link to PMF (Metrics)  | Scrutiny's Role   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Sickness Absence Year-end out-turn  | 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2018   | Helen Whiting                                   | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely | FHR 001  | To consider the year-end figures  |
| Health and Safety Year end out-turn | 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2018   | Joanne Skelton                                  | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely | FHR 003  | To consider the year-end figures  |
| Medium-Term Financial Plan          | Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee<br><br>12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2018 (Quarter 1)<br>20 December 2018 (Quarter 2)<br>7 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019 (Quarter 3)                    | Elizabeth Davison                               | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely |  | To contribute and challenge the Medium Term Financial Plan and assist with the implementation and development of the required savings |
| Performance Management Framework    | Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee.<br><br>13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018 (Quarter 1)<br>20 <sup>th</sup> December, 2018 (Quarter 2)<br>14 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019 (Quarter 3) | Barbara Copson/<br>Relevant Assistant Directors | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely | FHR 001<br>FHR 003<br>FHR 008<br>FHR 009<br>FHR 019<br>HBS 002<br>HBS 003<br>HBS 009<br>HBS 010<br>LGP 008 | To provide Members with an update regarding the Performance Management Framework.   |

| Topic  | Timescale  | Lead Officer  | SCS Outcome                     | Darlington Conditions    | Link to PMF (Metrics)  | Scrutiny's Role   |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Schedule of Charges                                      | To be considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan proposals | Elizabeth Davison/<br>Relevant Assistant Directors  | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely |  | To review the current charges for services within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee      |
| Procurement  | 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2018   | Luke Swinhoe/Sarah Hutchinson                       | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely | LGP 008  | To look at how the Council procures its contracts and the processes and procedures in place |
| Capital Management, Procurement and Controls             | 13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018                                     | Paul Wildsmith/Dave Winstanley/<br>Pauline Mitchell | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend Every Pound Wisely | LGP 008  | To look at the controls in place  |
| Housing Revenue Account and the Housing Business Account | 13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018                                     | Pauline Mitchell                                    | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend every pound wisely | HBS 002<br>HBS 003<br>HBS 009<br>HBS 010                       | To receive a briefing on the HRA and Housing Business Plan                                  |
| Allocation of Section 106 Monies                         | To be programmed if needed.  | John Anderson                                       | One Darlington Perfectly Placed | Spend every pound wisely | ECI 108<br>ECI 114<br>ECI 115<br>ECI 116<br>ECI 117<br>ECI 130 | To look at the information currently available in relation to Section 106 Agreements        |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| FHR 001 | DBC number of FTE working days lost due to sickness (excluding schools)                         |
| FHR 003 | Number of reportable employee accidents / ill health  |
| FHR 008 | Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman                 |
| FHR 009 | Number of complaints upheld by the Information Commissioner's Office                            |
| FHR 019 | Staff turnover - Voluntary Leavers  |
| HBS 002 | Amount in £'s of Council Tax arrears collected  |
| HBS 003 | Amount in £'s of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered   |
| HBS 009 | % of Council Tax collected in year  |
| HBS 010 | % of Business Rates collected in-year   |
| LGP 008 | Contracted spend as a % of total non-salary spend   |
| ECI 108 | S.106 - Number entered into within current financial year                                       |
| ECI 114 | Total amount of S106 funding secured since 2010   |
| ECI 115 | S106 - Amount received [affordable housing/infrastructure/green space etc] since 2010           |
| ECI 116 | S106 - Total Amount outstanding [affordable housing/infrastructure/green space etc.] since 2010 |
| ECI 117 | S106 - Amount spent since 2010  |
| ECI 130 | % of Section 106 agreements signed within target time.  |