

Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 29th July, 2009.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chairman), Cllr Hilary Aggio, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Mick Womphrey

Officers: Tony Montague, Gavin Morrigan,(RES) Russell Smith,(DNS) Sarah Whaley, Graham Birtle (LD)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Kath Nelson

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

2 **Review of Property and Facilities Management**

Members were asked to consider, comment and challenge the interim baseline information that was provided by the officer project team which were undertaking the review of Property and Facilities Management.

The Consultancy Practice Manager presented the interim baseline report to the Committee explaining that the report gave an overview of how Stockton Borough Council's Property and Facilities Management was currently operating and what assets were currently held. It was also highlighted that a lack of consistency existed for the maintenance to buildings owned by Stockton Borough Council as alternative approaches were used depending on which Service area was responsible. Members were informed that each type of building may require differing levels of maintenance especially when asbestos, legionella etc. was identified. It was also stated that maintenance inspections needed to be done on a regular routine basis.

The Consultancy Practice Manager drew Members attention to the level of expenditure for 08/09 and that a possible contributory factor could be the large number of suppliers used across the authority. It was suggested that by reducing the list of suppliers there was a potential of savings to be made by reducing the back office processes required to administer and maintain the current suppliers. It was also suggested that bulk discounts may be sought if the supplier list was reduced. Members discussed necessary certification required by some suppliers such as adequate insurances and qualifications to carry out work they would undertake. It would also be necessary for Criminal Record Bureau(CRB) checks to be carried out especially where buildings had child occupancy.

Members and officers discussed the fact that the Children Education and Social Care department was already following good practice in relation to their Facilities Management and it was suggested that this could be implemented across the rest of the authority.

Comparison's with other local authorities were presented regarding spatial planning and cost reduction. Members heard that Essex Council had relocated

staff from one building, the proceeds from its sale was then reinvested in a regeneration project. It was agreed that the Consultancy Practice Manager would provide the Committee with a summary of the Essex project.

Members also discussed the possibility of creating an inventory of all office equipment enabling the utilisation of available resources. The possibilities of shared options across the Tees Valley was also discussed although it was highlighted by the Consultancy Practice Manager that this may have risks associated with it and would need further investigation. Cllr O'Donnell commented that North East Purchasing Organisation(NEPO) was to investigate working with neighbouring authorities in relation to this type of review.

The Committee also looked at other options such as:

1)Should all assets be centralised with an asset management team?

2)Does every employee need a dedicated computer and desk? This is to be examined by the Work wise initiative.

Members asked how schools managed their facilities to which the Senior Finance Manager confirmed that schools have a degree of autonomy in this respect. Secondary schools generally have greater facilities management resources than primary schools and therefore place less reliance on Council services.

The Consultancy Practice Manager informed the Committee that his report was from two weeks prior to the meeting, since when numerous meetings had taken place to enable an action plan to be formulated which would be presented at a future meeting of the Committee.

CONCLUDED that the Action Plan for this review be brought back to the next meeting of this Committee on 26th August outlining and addressing the issues raised as detailed above.

3 Work Programme

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed with the Committee that the next meeting of the 26th August would deal with the next stage of the review of Property and Facilities Management.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.