

## **Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee**

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Thursday, 1st December, 2011.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell(Chairman), Cllr Mark Chatburn, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Ray McCall, Cllr Mick Womphrey

**Officers:** Jayne Robins(DNS), Jane Humphreys, Shaun McClurg(CESC), Judith Trainer, Sarah Whaley(LD)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Eileen Johnson

### **1 Evacuation procedure**

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 Minutes for signature - 13th July 2011**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting which was held on the 13th July 2011.

AGREED that the minutes be signed.

### **4 Minutes for signature - 7th September 2011**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting which was held on the 7th September 2011.

AGREED that the minutes be signed.

### **5 Draft minutes - 26th October 2011**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting which was held on the 26th October 2011.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

### **6 EIT Gateway - Registration & Bereavement Services**

Following the Scope and Project Plan which was presented to members on the meeting of the 15th June 2011, and the Baseline information which was presented on the 13th July 2011, the Committee considered possible options for the EIT Gateway Review of Registration & Bereavement Services, which included the following:

Bereavement Service Options:

l)Recombine operational element with administrative/technical role i.e. transfer

Bereavement Services to CFYA.

II)Commission burial service to external provider.

III)Deliver burial service in conjunction with neighbouring authorities.

IV)Review existing structure with a view to further improvements.

Registration Service Options:

I)Consider shared services & joined-up working arrangements.

II)Transfer service to Customer Contact Centre.

III)Cease provision of non-statutory services i.e. Naming, Renewal of Vows & Civil Funerals Ceremonies.

IV)Efficiencies through improved working practices i.e. scheme change in consultation with HR & General Register Office, the decommissioning of the statutory marriage room, implementation of Tell Us Once Service and opening service all-day Saturday.

The main points discussed were as follows:

- Option 4 was the preferred option by the review team, and for both Bereavement and Registration would achieve the 15% savings and continue to deliver the service to the current standard.

- 15% cost savings which was split between Registration at £18k and 26K for Bereavement Services.

- Stakeholder Consultation concluded 18th October 2011 and highlighted a favourable response to the suggested Saturday openings of the Registration and Bereavement Service and the feasibility of an on-line, out-of-hours, funeral booking service, providing the current service levels were maintained.

- on-line survey where 93% of those who completed were in favour of Saturday openings.

- Improved marriage facilities, including a new marriage room and toilet facility.

- Tell us once Service, with additional financial benefits being realised elsewhere within the Authority.

The Registration/Bereavement Services Manager informed Members that questionnaires would be sent to residents who had used the Tell us Once Service approximately 1 month after registering a death (due to the sensitive nature of the subject) to ask users for feedback.

Members requested, further information be provided on the level of savings associated with all the options. Officers advised that this would be included within the more detailed report at the next meeting.

Members would receive the final options at the next meeting.

AGREED that:

- 1) the information be noted and that the final options be presented to the January meetings of the Committee.
- 2) further information be provided as requested.

## **7 EIT Review of Children's Social Care**

Members received a presentation outlining base line information from the EIT Review of Children's Social Care.

The main issues discussed were as follows:

- The broad areas the Service covered and how it was heavily regulated.
- Statutory nature of the Service.
- That there was limited scope to achieve cash savings however it was the expectation that the review would identify efficiencies and improvements.
- How Stockton had managed to retain and recruit Social Workers even though the industry had faced negative press due to high profile national child abuse cases which had had a negative impact on recruitment of staff nationally.
- The baby Peter Connelly effect, upsurge in referrals resulting in workload increases.
- The positive results of the development day which staff attended on the 18th November 2011.
- Possibility of a discrete team to focus on the children who lived away from their families on a permanent basis.
- Family Support - to deploy unqualified, highly skilled and experienced staff at an early intervention stage to prevent as many children falling into the 'looked after' or 'child protection' categories.
- Social Work Teams – to review focus which would create possibility of newly qualified staff having early experience of specialist work.
- New Structure - The Committee voiced concerns that the new structure should not impact on the quality of Service currently being delivered.
- Current use of Agency staff and cost to Service. If this cost could be reduced then money could be spent elsewhere within the Service.
- Members asked about the possibilities of joint working with neighbouring authorities. Although this had been looked at, it was stressed that staff needed a local knowledge of the borough to work as effectively as possible. It was also

noted that the out-of-hours emergency service was already provided as a joint arrangement.

Members requested that the notes from the staff away day be distributed to the Committee.

AGREED that:

- 1) the information be noted.
- 2) further information be provided as requested.

## **8 Quarterly Progress Updates on Previously Agreed Recommendations**

Consideration was given to progress of the implementation of previously agreed recommendations. there were outstanding recommendations from the reviews of:

- Highways, Lighting & Network Management.
- Review of Tees Active.

The Committee requested a site visit to the White Water Course be confirmed in the near future.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Progress Updates be noted.
- 2) the site visit to the White Water Course be confirmed.

## **9 Work Programme**

Members were reminded which topics would be reviewed at the next future meetings of Arts Leisure and Culture as follows:

4th January 2012 - Registration and Bereavement - Final options.

15th February - Children's Social Care - Options.  
- Q3 Monitoring Report.

Members were also reminded to submit any further suggestions for future topics to the Scrutiny Team Leader.

AGREED that the information be noted.