

Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 18th September, 2013.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chair); Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Eileen Johnson (Vice Chair), Cllr Alan Lewis and Cllr Ray McCall.

Officers: S Bowman, Z Greeves, M Reilly (Public Health), K Fulton (Resources), V Housley, A Jaab, S McLurg, S Shutt (CESC), S Oliver (DNS), Catherine Godon (TVU), M Jones, J trainer (LD).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Andrew Sherris and Cllr Mick Womphrey.

ALC 25/13 Committee Briefing

Members agreed their approach to the meeting.

ALC 26/13 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ALC 27/13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest declared.

ALC 28/13 Minutes from the meeting which was held on the 5th June 2013.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

ALC 29/13 Draft minutes from the meeting which was held on the 24th July 2013.

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2013.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

ALC 30/13 Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty

Members received information regarding the services provided by both the Council and Public Health to tackle Child Poverty. The main issues discussed were as follows:

Children Social Care and Youth Directions

*A single agency would become involved with a child from level two of the Continuum of Need spectrum, several agencies would be involved and a Common Assessment Framework would be developed if a child entered Level three of the spectrum, and social care intervention began at level four.

*Any support offered at levels two and three would be dependent on parental consent, and that would include consenting to the sharing of information.

Consent would not be needed at levels three, four or five.

*Schools and health services could be involved and information shared with them.

*Two case studies of social care involvement were discussed, and the financial support and help offered to the families noted.

*It was noted that the care group to support the family could include social worker, school, health visitor etc., and families would be monitored.

*Training and support in finding employment could be included in support offered to families.

*Youth Direction would be involved, particularly at levels one to three.

*Youth Directions had a Risk of Not in Education, Employment or Training assessment.

Public Health

*The average rate of child poverty in Stockton Borough was the same as the National level, however there were huge differences between wards.

*Child poverty was linked to unauthorised attendance at school, and those that would most benefit from school were not attending.

*Child poverty was due to increase and those most at risk were families with more than three children and those living in private rented accommodation.

*There was approximately £20 - 30 million of unclaimed benefit and both the stigmatisation and complexity of applying for benefits was discussed.

*The Committee discussed how those not assessed as being in need found out about benefits that they were entitled to. Providing 'one stop shops' for advice and help on benefits was raised.

*SBC Public Health commissioned services and work with partners to tackle the effects of poverty, which included Warm Homes Healthy People that focused on fuel poverty; the Young Person's Substance Misuse Services (which also linked with the Youth Offending Service); a risk-taking behaviour toolkit and roadshow to support schools and youth settings around sexual health and risk taking behaviour and self-esteem; and services targeting childhood obesity such as the MoreLife weight management service.

Strategic Approach

*There was no longer a statutory requirement to have a Sustainable Communities Strategy, however it was felt that there was still a need to have key strategies that protected the vulnerable, reduced inequalities and targeted those most in need.

*Many of the Councils strategies included the need to focus resources more effectively to support those most in need. These included the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and A Brighter Borough for All – Tackling Family Poverty amongst others.

Children Centres

*The centres worked with and received referrals from a range of agencies, including schools, midwives and police, used local intelligence to target areas that could be in need, and were also approached by individual families for help.

*There were several programmes for children and families which helped with behaviour issues, life skills such as looking for employment, budgeting, and cooking etc., and home safety equipment loan schemes etc.

*Children centres also worked with nurseries and helped to make sure that

children were ready for school.

*Referrals were made to other agencies, had links with local food banks and credit unions, and also invited Tristar Homes and Stockton & District Advice & Information Service to hold sessions in their premises.

*It was noted that while there was a level of targeting resources, it was also important that there were universal services to ensure that children centres did not become stigmatised.

*Case studies of how the centres had helped individual families were noted.

Pupil Premium

*Schools received funding for each pupil in their school who were registered, or had been registered as eligible for free school meals within the previous six years; pupils who had been looked after by the local council for more than six months continuously; and pupils who were children of service personnel.

*A Pupil Premium analysis was carried out by schools and the LA to measure the progress of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium against other pupils in the school and national benchmarks.

*The use of Free School Meals as a criteria to analyse achievement was discussed. It was noted that there were many children who claimed free school meals that were high achievers, and also some who did not claim free school meals that needed support, and that aspirations needed to be high for all children; no child should be left behind.

*Members queried whether the funding received via the Pupil Premium had to be spent only on those children that met the criteria. It was explained that it would be difficult to ensure that the funding only benefitted specific pupils within a school, although schools needed to provide data on the progress of pupils receiving the premium against those not covered by the criteria and how the funding had impacted on their achievement.

*It was additionally noted that three schools in the borough had received the highest Inclusion Quality Mark: Gold level.

AGREED that the information be noted.

ALC 31/13 Marketing of Stockton Borough Council:Initial Progress Update

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Marketing of Stockton Borough.

It was noted that the development of the Heritage website was on track and a demonstration of the site would take place at the next meeting.

Copies of BQ magazine, which promoted businesses and life in Tees Valley, were tabled and a video used by Tees Valley Unlimited to promote the area via social media and key note events was viewed.

AGREED that the Progress Update be noted and the assessments for progress be confirmed.

ALC 32/13 Work Programme

The work programme was discussed and it was noted that the next meeting would focus on the Voluntary and Community Sector.

AGREED that the information be noted.