

Progress against SIPs during 2006/07

<p>SERVICE GROUPING: Law and Democracy</p>
<p>To implement the new and improved co-ordination arrangements for Scrutiny</p> <p>New scrutiny arrangements were implemented from April 2006 including a Scrutiny Liaison Forum, an Executive Scrutiny Committee, 11 in depth reviews conducted by the six thematic Select Committees, increased staffing to support the scrutiny process and the development of a Scrutiny Toolkit.</p> <p>A review of the new arrangements took place in the Autumn of 2006 involving an all Member survey and discussion groups and an improvements plan is being developed for consideration by Executive Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p>To implement the recommendations of the Elections Review</p> <p>Key recommendations implemented and progress made including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring of Electoral Services team, seeking and applying good practice on election administration • Provision of regular election updates to Members and the Senior Management within the Council. • Improvements to the annual canvass and election delivery • Better recruitment, training and deployment of elections staff • Better arrangements for the election count including room layout and use of "grass skirts" • the development of a robust system to deal with the registration, verification and processing of postal votes; purchase of specialist election equipment. • Polling station review
<p>To develop understanding of the Constitution and deliver the decision-making processes in a professional manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to Constitution introduced following consultation with Members Advisory Panel/Cabinet/Council; • Members Induction Programme delivered introducing members to key components of Constitution; • Guidance on Council Procedure Rules; including 'easy to read' supporting document, provided within Members Handbook; • Devolved scheme of Officer Delegated Officer Decision Making included within each Service Group; • Guide to Officer Delegated Decision making made available to officers on Intranet; at Democratic Services Open Day and in one to one sessions with co-ordinating officers from service groups; • Increased number of officer decisions recorded and published via E-Genda system; • Improvements to Internal Forward Plan process developed; with guidance on use to follow ; • Draft protocols for attendance at meetings by officers/members and public prepared and consulted upon, with a view to introduction in June 2007; • E-Genda system implemented for all Committee Administration; support/coaching provided for officers and members regards report writing, minute retrieval etc.; • Democracy Diary published and procedures promoted at Open Day and on regular basis with officers; • Corporate Policy Review Select Cttee completed review of venues for meetings and recommendations approved;
<p>To enhance Member Development and Information Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning & Development Strategy for Members reviewed and published; • Commitment given to achieving best practice Charter Status accredited learning and development;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role Guide for Members developed by Dem Services and rolled out to NE Region; as well as being made available to existing and prospective elected members; • In House Support & Development Programme for Members prepared; • External funding obtained to deliver Personal Support Plan interviews for all members; • Increased Member awareness of electronic Committee Administration system delivered; • IT Members Casework system developed for members in readiness for roll out 2007/08; • Office and Electronic Members Library facility introduced for members; • Members Information service reviewed and commitment given to produce Democracy Newsletter; • Guidance for Members serving on Outside Bodies produced in consultation with Members Advisory Panel; • Initial requirements for development of Member Training Database identified
<p>To review all Civic functions</p> <p>Most significant impact on the Civic function was the introduction of the Mayor's 'blog' on the Council website. This was used to increase awareness of the Mayoral role; provide an up to date diary of the Mayor's engagements; generate interest in Stockton's history; encourage & motivate people to become 'active citizens'; raise the profile of local community & voluntary groups; generate publicity for local events; acknowledge and recognise the massive contribution made by individuals, groups and organisations to the quality of life for people living & working in Stockton.</p> <p>Improvements have been made in the planning, organisation and management of events including stronger links with other departments, increasing the variety of entertainment options at civic fundraising events, and strengthening the relationship and links with the University of Durham were strengthened. There was stronger publicity and marketing through the council's website, the Mayors blog, Stockton News and leaflets and posters. A review of catering arrangements led to the use & promotion of Fair Trade products; a 'basic' level of refreshments for Town Hall tours/visits to minimise expenditure; and development of a wider choice of menu options for major civic events;</p> <p>The Citizenship Ceremony was relocated from the Registry Office to the Town Hall adding greater value, meaning and significance to the occasion.</p>
<p>To raise the profile of Democratic Services</p> <p>Wide range of activities undertaken to raise the profile of Democratic Services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Open House' event; "Democracy News" issued quarterly; . • Linking with the work of the Mayor to promote Open days and tours at Town Hall for general public, community groups, and school groups. • Provision of support to primary schools to set up school councils; Creation of 'Count De Voters' character; provision of citizenship classes for secondary schools. • Presentations about decision making process made to variety of community & school groups. • Continued roll-out of e-genda; development of electronic members library • Commendation received from Municipal Journal for Democratic Services Guide to Member Roles; increased profile within NE Region following SBC lead in developing such guidance.
<p>Corporate and ethical governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ethical governance audit was undertaken, including a light touch health check facilitated by the IDeA. Action Plans have since been developed based on the outcomes of the audit. The Action Plans are being implemented on an ongoing basis.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution was again reviewed and revisions/updates were publicised. This process is a continuing one. • Appropriate guidance was provided for Town/Parish Councils; the Council's Officers and Members, and for the Standards Committee. Preparations were also made for post elections induction training and training on the new code of conduct for members. • The joint working arrangements with the Tees Valley Authorities were reviewed and re-established.
<p>To implement Single Status Agreement</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice is continuing with regard to the process for JE and the pay and grading structure. • Pay modelling and the sore thumbing exercise has begun. • The position with regard to associated companies and partners has been clarified and agreed. • All equal pay/equal value claims have been determined and 2 staged settlements have been made covering the period up to 31.3.06. Appeals have been determined.
<p>Re-align resources to deliver key Council priorities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and service provision to Tristar Homes Ltd has ceased. Tees Active Ltd continue to use legal services on an ad hoc basis subject to capacity being available in house. • The gaps in service provision and staff resources have been identified and partly filled. A second recruitment exercise will be taken forward with regard to Procurement and Contract related work. • Capacity has been increased by the appointment of two external partners, Ward Hadaway and Dickinson Dees (joint tender with the 5 Tees Valley Local Authority Legal Teams). Joint working initiative introduced between the 5 Tees Valley Legal Teams.
<p>Deliver major regeneration projects and initiatives in partnership with external legal advisors</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPO for Mandale confirmed. • Contribution Agreements for Northshore Footbridge completed and a successful tenderer appointed for construction. • Statutory Instrument for Bridge Order confirmed. • Parkfield Phase 1 completed. • Sale of Billingham Town Centre ongoing. • Elderly Persons Stock Transfer to Erimus ongoing following successful ballot. • Mandale and Hardwick buy backs and land acquisitions ongoing. • Thornaby Town Centre Development Agreement implemented. • Land Acquisitions for Southern Gateway completed. • Dedicated support to the Planning Team provided to ensure national planning targets are met. Legal support and guidance provided for BSF
<p>To provide an on line Local Land Charges Register</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Transfer for Standard Searches completed. • NLIS Level 3 software installed. Implications of HIP Regulations considered