

# **Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee**

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 26th October, 2010.

**Present:** Cllr Mick Stoker (Chair), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Roy Rix

**Officers:** Mrs L King (PPC); Mrs D Hurwood, Mrs J Spittle (R); Mrs A Brown, J McCann (DNS); G Birtle, Mrs T Harrison, Miss M Jones (LD)

**Also in attendance:** No other persons were present

**Apologies:** Cllr Aidan Cockerill

## **1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **2 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2010**

Members considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2010.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2010 be agreed as a correct record and be forwarded to Council.

## **3 EIT Task and Finish Review of Customer Services and Taxation**

The Committee was presented with baseline information for the officer led EIT Task and Finish review of Customer Services and Taxation. Its purpose was to identify options for efficiencies, improvement and transformation within the service.

Members were pleased with the Council's telephone based contact centres but advised that face to face contact should remain as it was important that people had a choice to speak directly with an officer when seeking assistance.

Discussion took place regarding the manner and attitude of some bailiffs used by the Council. It was advised that bailiffs were monitored, officers occasionally went out with bailiffs and people could report inappropriate behaviour.

Members received details of the costs of the service and clarification on discretionary rates.

Discussion took place regarding the satisfaction figures compiled from the MORI survey.

Members were advised that the recommendations would be presented at the meeting on 7th December 2010.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

## **4 EIT Task and Finish Review of Human Resources**

The Committee was presented with baseline information for the officer led EIT Task and Finish review of Human Resources. Its purpose was to identify options for efficiencies, improvement and transformation within the service.

Members requested the financial savings made by the reduction of sickness absence be included in the next report to the Select Committee.

Discussion took place regarding manager responsibility and Human Resource roles in monitoring and dealing with sickness absence. Officers advised that in some instances it was appropriate for Human Resources to take responsibility. Training was available to managers.

Discussion took place regarding the service Human Resources provided to schools and other organisations at nominal costs. It was felt that the charges for this service should be reviewed, and officers should explore the opportunities to promote the service to other organisations, including other local authorities.

Members discussed flexible working and requested that they were kept informed about any redundancies from individual departments.

Members were advised that the recommendations would be presented at the meeting on 7th December 2010.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

## **5 Progress Updates on Previously Agreed Recommendations**

Members received the draft Consultation Strategy and draft Communication Strategy for comments, following the EIT review of Communications, Consultation and Engagement. Members had previously raised concerns regarding the number of jobs taken directly to print room and graphics rather than the communications team, and the Committee was informed that this had significantly reduced, however further efforts were being made to bring the figure to zero.

Concerns were raised that Review of Voluntary and Community Sector recommendation 4 regarding youth and community centres, that had an anticipated completion date of December 2009, had still not been achieved. Members requested that the officer led EIT Review of Building Assets, which was taking up this issue, be brought to this Committee and the assessment of progress be changed from 'on track' to 'slipped'.

Members were advised that recommendation 7 of the Older People Services Review now had a completion date of March 2011. Members requested further information regarding the meeting of Over 50's Assembly that discussed a 'drop in' meeting facility as stated in recommendation 20 and requested that the assessment of progress be changed from 'not achieved' to 'slipped'.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The progress reports be noted
2. The Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation Building Asset Review final report be forwarded to the Committee prior to submission to Cabinet and assessment of progress be changed to 'slipped' on recommendation 4 of the Voluntary and Community Sector.
3. Further information be provided on recommendation 20 of the Older People's Service and the assessment of progress be changed to 'slipped'.

## **6 EIT Reivew of School Catering**

Following Members request at the previous meeting further detailed analysis was provided on the following options:

Option 2 - Reduction of labour guide scales for staff hours.

Option 6 - Increase the cost of the school meal for those who paid

Option 7 - Do not carry out/reduce the "added value" work

Option 8 - Partnering with Darlington Borough Council

Officers noted that option 1 – reduction of kitchens had been discussed at a SLA Task Group which was attended by Head Teachers, and they raised concerns regarding this option. In addition, officers had investigated the cost of moving to production kitchens and found that it would be a considerable sum, without the guarantee that Head Teachers would buy this service.

Discussion took place regarding the proposal of combining options 2 and 7. Members requested further details on the implications of option 7.

Members discussed option 6. It was noted that there was temporary reduction of uptake in school meals when the cost of school meals increase, but this usually recovered. However officers advised that if the charge increased by too much there would be a significant reduction in take up which would not recover.

Members noted that in the minutes of the previous meeting it had stated that the Head of Direct Services had informed Members of an additional option to move to a different model of delivery which was being investigated and would be presented at a future meeting. Members advised that they did not require details of the additional model.

Officers noted that option 8 required further investigation and Members agreed that this should not be pursued by the Committee.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.