

Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 30th June, 2009.

Present: Cllr Mick Stoker (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Roy Rix,

Officers: Mrs B Brown (PPC), R Kench (CESC), Mrs T Harrison and Mrs J Trainer (LD)

Also in attendance: John Rylance (IDeA)

Apologies: Cllr Mick Womphrey, Mrs C Clark, Mrs T Fraser

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2009

Members considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2009.

A request was put forward for recommendation 12 of the Voluntary Community Sector review to be followed up at a future meeting.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2009 be agreed as a correct record and be forwarded on to Council for consideration.

2. Recommendation 12 of the Voluntary Community Sector review be followed up at a future meeting.

3 Scrutiny Review of Communications, Consultation and Engagement

- To receive baselining information and a presentation on Communications

- To receive information and a presentation from IDeA on alternative practice

Members were provided with a presentation which gave a description of the current services in relation to communication i.e. service providers, costs, performance, key challenges and outcomes of consultation regarding current services.

Officers advised that the Councils communications department were experiencing greater pressure to find alternative ways of communicating. Stockton Council were using new technologies such as Facebook and Twitter as alternative forms of communication, however this required development of the Councils Information Technology.

Discussion took place regarding the 'Branding' of the Council and the area; Officers felt this was essential to improving public perception and satisfaction,

inward investment and tourism. Members raised concerns regarding the potential cost of 'Branding', it was suggested that this be discussed further at another meeting.

Members observed that a great deal of information was sent out but it was also important to provide information and explanations when things had gone wrong or there was bad news to report.

The representative from the IDeA provided the following insights:

- Communication and engagement could not be separated.
- Communication was not just about press releases, it involved many elements including Council buildings, Councillors and employees.
- Improvements to core services would improve the overall opinion of the Council.
- Residents should be informed what the Council had and was continuing to do for them.
- The Council needed to decide how it wanted to be perceived and then make the necessary changes.
- Technology was important in relation to communication.
- Employees held a key role in communications and promoting a positive image of the Council.
- If the Council want further input from residents the Council needed to show that it had listened to residents.

The Chair requested that Members thought about things that could be done to improve communication for discussion at the meeting on 27th July 2009.

Members queried the number of times the Council had charged for providing information requested under the freedom of information act and asked for the information to be provided at the next meeting.

CONCLUDED that:

1. Discussion regarding 'Branding' to take place at a future meeting.
2. Members to submit suggestions to improve communication for the meeting on 27th July 2009.
3. Information be provided on the number of charges made for requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

4 Work Programme

- **To prepare for the next meeting**
- **To review the project plan in respect of the current review**

Consideration was given to the work programme and project plan. The next meeting would be 27th July at which Members would be provided with further baseline information.

CONCLUDED that the next meeting will be held on 27th July 2009.

