

Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 20th July, 2010.

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

Officers: Mrs A Brown, P Diggins, J McCann (DNS); Mrs A Kelly (C); Mrs T Harrison, J Trainer (LD)

Also in attendance: B Holt and P Delaney (School Trust Fund)

Apologies: Cllr Mick Womphrey

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2010

Members considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2010.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2010 be agreed as a correct record and be forwarded to Council.

3 EIT Review of School Catering

Representatives from the School Food Trust attended the meeting to give a presentation to the Committee. Members were provided with an introduction to the School Food Trust and given a brief history of how school meals had developed since the Trust was established in 2005. The Trust received funding from the Department for Education and worked with Local Authorities, Schools, and Catering staff to transform school food.

A primary school study had been undertaken in 2009, the findings of which provided strong evidence that lunchtime food provision and food consumption in primary schools in England had changed substantially for the better since 2005.

The success in encouraging more pupils to take healthier items at lunchtime, and to take and eat more healthy lunches, was achieved through a combination of:

- legislation to change the balance of provision toward healthier options, and
- the work of the Trust to support the development of skills and to change attitudes across a wide range of stakeholders.

Further changes needed to be made to provide food and drink fully compliant with the standards and to encourage pupils to make consistently healthy choices at lunchtime. These included reducing the number of times that starchy foods cooked in fat and meat products were provided, finding more ways to include vegetables in recipes, and increasing the iron and zinc content of recipes and meals.

Members were provided with a copy of the Food for Thought document highlighting why healthy school meals were important. They were advised that 20% of children eligible for free school meals did not take a meal. Members discussed the stigma associated with free school meals.

Members noted that Local Authorities would need to find new and efficient ways to provide the service owing to increasing pressures on resources.

The Head Teacher of St Bede's addressed the Committee regarding the school's breakfast club. The club was attended by between 25 to 35 children every day at a small charge of 50p. This did not cover the costs of the club and the shortfall was subsidised by the school. It was noted that some other schools were charging £2.50 per day. The breakfast provided consisted of cereal, toast, spread and drink. A survey had been undertaken to discover the reasons why pupils attended the breakfast club and the main reasons were the club provided a safe environment and a breakfast for the children.

Members were advised that breakfast clubs were funded by the schools; the Local Authority did not provide funding. Pupils on free school meals were not eligible to have a free breakfast but this could be provided at the discretion of the school.

Members asked for further details of take up; including take up of free school meals by ward and a comparison with national take up levels.

Members requested that various efficiency options would be presented to the Select Committee in relation to how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council could achieve savings yet still maintain a quality service.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The presentations be noted.
2. Details on school meal take up, including take up of free school meals be provided.
4. Potential efficiency options be presented to the next Select Committee for discussion.

4 Monitoring of Previously Agreed Recommendations - Initial Progress Update

Members were provided with a progress report on the implementation of the EIT review of Communications, Consultation and Engagement. The Committee were advised that a centralised Communications Team had been established and a new Head of Communications was in post. Budgets had also been centralised.

Members queried whether there had been any redundancies in the establishment of the new team and were advised that there had been no redundancies; however a vacant position had not been filled.

Members were advised that a policy was now in place to ensure that all printing

was directed through the Communications Team. Members acknowledged that this was a new way of working for staff but that the recommendation was central to achieving the efficiency savings from the review and asked to be kept informed of the amount of print requests that had gone direct to design and print.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The figures of the amount of print requested that went direct to design and print be reported to the Select Committee.

5 Progress Updates on Previously Agreed Recommendations

Members discussed the outstanding recommendation from the Review of Meeting Venues regarding telephone conferencing. It was queried whether telephone conferencing could take place on existing telephones without the need to implement new technology.

Members requested that the final report from the Building Asset Review be presented to the Committee prior to submission to Cabinet, to enable the Members to provide any further comment.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The progress report be noted.
2. Officers to confirm whether telephone conferencing could be achieved through the existing telephone system.
3. The Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation Building Asset Review final report be forwarded to the Committee prior to submission to Cabinet.

6 Work Programme

There was nothing to report.