

Corporate & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 6th November, 2007.

Present: Cllr David Coleman (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Roy Rix

Officers: J Danks, R Holland (RES); S Daniels (DNS); S Johnson, J Trainer (LD)

Also in attendance: Cllr Terry Laing

Apologies: Cllr Mick Womphrey

CSI 15/07

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CSI 16/07

Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

CSI 17/07

Theatre Subsidy Final Report

Members considered the final report for the Review of Theatre Subsidy.

Members discussed how the Forum Theatre accommodated those with specific access needs and agreed that this should be publicised more widely. It was agreed that Recommendation Two would be amended to include publicising how the Forum Theatre accommodates audience members with specific access needs. It was also agreed that related supporting information would be included in the main text of the final report.

CONCLUDED that the final report for the Review of Theatre Subsidy be agreed subject to the amendment identified above, and be forwarded to the next meeting of Cabinet for consideration.

CSI 18/07

Update on Joint Scrutiny of Stockton/Darlington Partnership

The Corporate Director of Resources presented a report to Members that provided an update on the joint scrutiny of the Stockton/Darlington Partnership.

On 19 June, the Committee received a report proposing the establishment of a sub group of Stockton and Darlington Councils to undertake a piece of joint scrutiny work.

It was explained that Cabinet had already received reports on 1 December 2005 and 1 February 2007 and approval, in principle, had been given for the Partnership to commence, subject to the preparation of a business case which would be reported to the respective Councils in November 2007.

A Gateway (0) Review had already been undertaken to ensure the evaluation/decision-making process was robust. It was proposed that the joint sub group

should review the Gate 1 Review ahead of decisions being made by respective Cabinets linking to the Gateway review exercise.

The Committee had nominated Councillors David Coleman, Jean O'Donnell, Roy Rix and Mick Womphrey to the sub group.

The Committee was advised that the Sub Group had met twice. Following an initial meeting on 16 July 2007 where the Group received presentations providing background to the project, the Sub Group met again on 19 September 2007 to consider the Outline Business Case and the Gate 1 Review for the proposed Darlington and Stockton Partnership.

It was reported that the Gate 1 Review had been undertaken to establish that the business case for the project was robust ie that, in principle, it met the business need, was affordable and achievable with all appropriate options explored and likely to achieve value for money.

Members were advised that a number of recommendations were included in the Gate 1 report and an Action Plan detailing the recommendations, together with the proposed actions was also circulated to the sub group.

It was noted that during discussion, particular references were made to the Governance Arrangements and the work being undertaken on the Heads of Terms; risk management arrangements in place; the benefits realisation programme; how the project would help deliver on the corporate goals of each Council; improved linkages with service delivery plans; the accuracy of the projected savings of the Project in the early years; and the membership of the Partnership Consultative Panel.

The sub group also discussed the number of staff who would be affected by the proposals and how both Councils would manage the staffing issues which would arise. Members of the sub group particularly referred to the effect the proposed partnership would have on the morale of staff and the need to ensure effective management of change including making re-training/skilling opportunities available to them.

It was reported that the staff affected and the Trade Unions had been involved and consulted on all the details of the proposals and that various staff briefing sessions were currently being held to outline the structures/gradings and ring-fencing arrangements.

Members were advised that the sub group supported the Business Case for the Project being taken forward to both Council's Cabinets.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CSI Progress Report on the Implementation of the Meetings Venues Review

19/07

Following approval of an action plan, Members of the Committee received a progress report for the Meetings Venues Review which had previously been carried out by the Select Committee.

The Acting Administration Manager, the Corporate Director of Resources and

the Cabinet Member were in attendance to answer questions from the Committee.

The Acting Administration Manager gave a presentation to Members of the Committee on the progress to date in implementing the recommendations. It was explained that a spreadsheet had been published on the Council's intranet which displayed information on all Council meeting venues and a selection of external meeting venues including details on who to contact to book venues, access information and equipment availability. The spreadsheet also included links to public transport websites and location maps. It was also advised that a brief guide to booking a meeting room was displayed on the intranet which encouraged officers to use internal venues instead of external venues and an important message for the meeting organisers to stress that evacuation in an emergency was the responsibility of the meeting organiser and that reasonable adjustments should be made to conform with DDA requirements where possible.

Members of the Committee questioned Officers and the Cabinet Member on transport links, wheelchair access and evacuation procedures. Billingham Council Chamber was also raised and the Corporate Director of Resources indicated that she would find out whether this venue was part of the current Accommodation Review.

Members of the Committee considered the detail of the progress report and gave their views on the assessment of progress. The assessment categories were as follows

1 Achieved (Fully) - The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.

2 On Track but not yet due for completion - The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.

3 Slipped - The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped.

An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay.

4. Not Achieved - The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved.

An explanation for non achievement of the recommendation should be provided.

A summary of the points raised by the Committee is set out below:

- Recommendation 1 - Meetings venues on Intranet – Members queried some of the information relating to hearing loops; officers undertook to check the accuracy of the information included. The Corporate Director of Resources undertook to check that the access audits which were taking place in the Council's buildings would include meetings venues. Members agreed that the assessment of progress should be amended to category 2 as there was still further work to do in relation to this item

- Recommendation 2 - Information on front page of meeting invitations - The Committee were satisfied with the evidence provided and agreed that this should remain as category 1

- Recommendation 3 - Use of internal meeting venues – Members felt that more action was needed to encourage officers to make full use of internal meeting venues before this could be signed off as fully implemented. The Committee noted that more publicity was planned and it was therefore too early to assess whether there had been any impact on as a result of the review. Members asked that the booking of external meeting venues should be monitored and the outcome reported back to the Committee in 6 months to see what impact the review had made. Members agreed that assessment of progress should be amended to category 2

- Recommendation 4 - All meeting venues on Outlook – The Committee were satisfied with the evidence provided and agreed that the assessment of progress should remain as category 1

- Recommendation 5 – Telephone conference calling/ video calling – The Committee noted that conference calling and other phone features had been publicised and agreed that the assessment of progress should remain as category 1. As the pilot scheme for video calling was still in progress, the Committee agreed that the assessment of progress in relation to this part of the recommendation should be amended to category 2 and asked for feedback from the pilot to be presented to a future meeting

- Recommendation 6 - Emergency evacuation arrangements – The Committee were not satisfied that the progress fully addressed the issues raised in the Committee’s original report. Members also questioned whether the fire risk assessment briefing provided to the Community Centre Forum would need to be provided to all Community Centres as some might not have attended and whether the generic emergency evacuation procedures had been circulated to all Heads of Service. Members discussed the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in relation to the Accommodation Review and requested that a further report on the issue be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. The Committee agreed that assessment of progress should be amended to category 3.

- Recommendation 7 – Conference Room Guide and information to meeting organisers - The Committee were satisfied with the evidence of progress and agreed that assessment of progress should remain as category 1.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress report be revised to take account of the views of the Committee.

2. The Corporate Director of Resources advise Members whether Billingham Council Chamber is included in the Accommodation Review.

2. A further report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on DDA requirements and the work being undertaken in relation to emergency

evacuation arrangements and the other detailed points raised in relation to the progress report.

3. A report be presented to the Committee in 6 months time to monitor whether the review recommendations had made an impact on the booking of external meeting venues.

**CSI
20/07**

Work Programme

Members of the Committee discussed the next review topic of the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The Chairman of the Committee advised Members that he would be unable to take part in the review due to having a prejudicial interest.

The Committee discussed the various options in which to carry out the review. It was agreed that a task and finish group, which would report back to the full Committee, would be the best way to carry out the review. Members agreed this option subject to advice being sought from the Director of Law and Democracy on the extent of Members' interests.

RESOLVED that the review of the Community and Voluntary Sector be carried out by a task and finish group, subject to advice being sought from the Director of Law and Democracy on Members' interests.