

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday, 18th November, 2010.

Present: Cllr Julia Cherrett(Chair), Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: Beccy Brown, Debbie Hurwood(RES), Sue Daniels(DNS), Tony Beckwith(CESC), Sarah Whaley, Graham Birtle(L&D)

Also in attendance: Rosanna Turton(Unison), Mark Buckley(CID)

Apologies: Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Liz Nesbitt

HCS 35/10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

HCS 36/10 **Draft Minutes from the meeting which was held on 21st October 2010**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting which was held on the 21st October 2010.

CONCLUDED that the minutes be approved.

HCS 37/10 **Quarterly Progress Updates on Previously Agreed Recommendations**

Members were asked to consider the assessments of progress contained within the attached Progress Updates on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations. There were outstanding recommendations from the review of Choice Based Lettings and Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and CCTV.

The Chair highlighted to Members that 'the possibility of introducing a sub regional Disabled Persons' Housing Service be further investigated by the Tees Valley CBL partnership' as the anticipated completion date recorded was April 2009 however there was still further investigation to be carried out and therefore was still ongoing. Members requested a new completion date be given.

The Committee discussed the progress made on closer working between the Police and the Council's Community Protection Services in relation to ensuring that when non-emergency calls are received by either Cleveland Police or the Council's Community Protection services, if necessary they are transferred to the correct service for action, thereby improving customer service;. The Committee heard that the Head of Community Protection had received no response from Police Headquarters and had asked the Committee whether to investigate improvements in customer service with Steria. The Detective Inspector for Stockton CID informed Members that it would be a good time to contact Steria as they had now been in place since September 2010. Members agreed that the Head of Community Protection further investigate the issue with Steria.

The Chair brought members attention to 4a and 4c of the attached report in

relation to Neighbourhood Watch, to which members expressed that the progress made was unsatisfactory. Members informed the Detective Inspector for Stockton CID that more good news should be communicated via the Ringmaster system. The Detective Inspector agreed that the ringmaster system was not being used to its full potential and would take the comments back with a view to improve the service further. The Committee had also asked that the sending of texts be looked into as a means of communicating with residents however the Detective Inspector confirmed that the current technology being used for the ringmaster service did not lend itself to texting and that the voicemail and e mails were an adequate means of communicating.

The Committee were then asked to look at the new application form to receive Neighbourhood Watch messages, where improvements had been made to enable residents to select locations they wished to be informed about. The Detective Inspector asked members to make any additional suggestions or changes prior to it being produced and distributed in bulk. Members were to receive scanned copies and reply by an agreed deadline.

CONCLUDED that

- 1) the progress reports be noted.
- 2) the Head of Community Protection investigate further, closer working and improvements to customer service between the Police and the Council's Community Protection Services.
- 3) the Detective Inspector revisit improving good news being communicated to residents using the Ringmaster service.
- 4) the new Neighbourhood Watch form be distributed to Members for comments and returned back to the Detective Inspector by a given deadline.

HCS 38/10 EIT Gateway Review of Administration, PA Support, Business Support and Performance Management

Members were asked to consider and comment on the Options Report of the EIT Gateway Review of Administration, PA Support, Business Support and Performance Management.

The Administration Review - Programme Manager presented the report to the Committee highlighting each option identified for each strand of the review. Members heard which options were the preferred options and that if the Committee agreed to these the targeted 15% saving would be achieved. Members commented that without the savings being identified against each option it was difficult to make a decision on which options were the best, however as the report had already been presented to the Council's Corporate Management Team. Members were happy that this would in fact be achieved. The Administration Review -Programme Manager confirmed to members that a breakdown of savings would be presented in the final report which was due to be presented at the next meeting of Housing and Community Safety which was scheduled for the 13th January 2011.

The Head of Customer Services & Taxation presented all of the options for the General Administration strand of the review and explained that the preferred options were option 1 and option 3, using the hub and spoke model as contained within the report. It was explained that given the scale of change, option 1 would probably be more lengthy to implement as a phased approach would have to be considered, meaning that savings would be realised gradually but would produce the biggest savings overall. Members were aware that these options would impact on the reduction of staff and that proposals in relation to redundancies would be presented at the January meeting.

Members heard the options proposed for the Personnel Assistant(PA) Support strand as contained within the report, and it was explained that currently there was a mean average of 1 PA to every 1.37 Head of Service/Director. It was suggested that this be reduced to one PA to every 2 Heads of Service/Director. This would result in the reduction of 6 PA's. Heads of Service had considered adopting a "pool" or "team" working model across the Council however this would result in some specialised knowledge of the Service and portfolio being lost.

Members were presented with the Technical Administration Strand as contained within the attached report. The Committee heard that initial investigation had taken place to see if this strand of the review could be brought in line with the General Administration review however it was thought that there was too much technical knowledge required here.

Members were provided with a brief overview of the Business Support and Performance Management part of the review which was contained within the attached report, Members were informed that the preferred option was no.2. This Option would bring together all the functions listed within the report, with a concentration of expertise in the 2 main operational Service Groupings which would also maintain the wide variety of specific knowledge required for these groupings. The Central service would provide the support for the Resources Service Grouping as well as leading corporate-wide policy and performance co-ordination.

The Committee then heard how consideration had been given to the use of New Technology which could improve the delivery of administration, support and performance functions across the authority. The conclusion from the investigations was that sufficient technologies currently existed to support effective working. Once however preferred options had been delivered and current technologies used to their full potential further investment in new technologies could be explored in the future. There was however exceptions to the above where officers had identified the immediate use of a document tracking system used to support general administration and also increased use of electronic notepads and/or digital recording being explored in services with significant non-office based data recording.

Officers stated that further work would be carried out on the detail of the identified preferred options as per the Corporate Management Team and would be re presented at the next Housing and Community Safety Select Committee Meeting which was to be held on the 13th January 2011.

CONCLUDED that

- 1) the options report be noted.
- 2) The preferred options be agreed as detailed above.

**HCS
39/10**

Any other business

Following the previous meeting of Housing and Community Safety Select Committee which was held on the 21st October 2010 it was recommended at 2.5 of the Executive Summary contained within the report that it be re worded from 'The Committee recommend that the final determination of fees be delegated to the Council's Licensing Committee', to, 'The Committee recommend that the final determination of fees be delegated to the Cabinet if six or more objections are received.' The Committee had received further instruction from the Director of Law and Democracy that the original wording be re introduced as this was not a Cabinet decision. The following would now be the correct recommendation:

'The Committee recommend that the final determination of fees be delegated to the Licensing Committee if six or more objections are received'.

It was also agreed that the Taxi Trade be informed of the decision.

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that he had received good feedback from the Taxi Trade complimenting the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee about the good work which had been carried out during the Taxi Licensing Review.

Members also learned that there would be a 13 week consultation looking into whether or not Taxi's would be able to use bus lanes. The results would be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.