

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO COUNCIL

28 NOVEMBER 2012

**REPORT OF THE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

MEMBERS POLICY SEMINAR PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an overview of content from the Members Policy Seminar held in October 2012 which provided updates on the recently published consultation on Fluoridisation of water, Reducing Excess Winter Deaths and Increasing Resilience to the Cold, a presentation from the Managing Director of Tees Valley Unlimited to outline recent developments and their future work programme. The session ended with an overview of the consultation paper and current thinking around the revised Proposals for School Funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council are recommended to:

1. Receive this report and note its contents.

BACKGROUND

1. Members Policy Seminars are an important vehicle for both informing and consulting with Members on a variety of topics from Policy and Legislative changes, contributions to Government consultations, and providing an update on local service provision from partner organisations. They have been in place since January 2009 and are particularly useful for those issues which are of importance to the Council or partners but are in the early stages of development, or those which will be of interest to Members, out with the usual reporting arrangements.
2. A programme of seminars is set annually with events planned on a monthly basis. Topics are reviewed monthly by the Corporate Management Team to ensure issues are current and discussions and information provision is timely. Special, additional seminars are arranged as required.

SUMMARY OF THE SEMINAR HELD SINCE LAST COUNCIL IN OCTOBER 2012

3. There has been one Member Seminar since the last report to Full Council. The October seminar provided an opportunity for members to be briefed on the consultation arrangements around fluoridisation of water, work ongoing within the council and with partners to reduce excess winter deaths, an update on the work of Tees Valley Unlimited and the current thinking and development of a response to the government consultation on future proposals to school funding arrangements.

4. The Director of Public Health, Peter Kelly briefly updated members on the recent consultation on the process local authorities will use to conduct consultations on fluoridation of drinking water. A response to this consultation will be submitted with an opportunity at a later date for members to contribute to the actual consultation on the fluidisation proposals. This is expected some time in the New Year.
5. Stockton currently experiences 15% (70) more deaths during the winter caused by respiratory diseases, heart attacks and strokes mainly by those most at risk which include the elderly, those with underlying health conditions, those in poor housing, fuel poverty, living alone, the very young and those with a learning disability. This presentation identified the various initiatives being undertaken by the council, its partners, including a specific initiative by the Fire Brigade, to help reduce the numbers who die as a result of the cold weather. The scope of the initiatives ranges from major insulation projects to the issuing of blankets, safe fire appliances, benefit maximisation checks and social care referrals where necessary. These initiatives have been very well received by residents and in some cases won awards for the positive outcomes they have achieved.
6. Stephen Catchpole, Director of Tees Valley Unlimited provided an update on the work of Tees Valley Unlimited identifying recent changes to their organisation, successes, policy changes and their impact and future challenges the organisation and the local area face. The presentation touched on the work and success of the LEP, recent grant awards, strategic planning initiatives, links with local and nationally business and ongoing changes and initiatives at a European level. The presentation identified an understanding of the positive opportunities within the Tees Valley and also the challenges we still face. TVU have a Business Plan and Statement of Ambition that they are working to, progress against which, is monitored and reported regularly.
7. A presentation on the current consultation of the future of School Funding provided some background to current arrangements and identified the proposed changes that the government is currently consulting upon. Details of the three new categories and 11 funding factors were explained, identifying the impact these changes would have on funding for individual schools within Stockton and provided an outline of the suggested response following consultation with governors and Head Teachers. The response deadline was early November with the outcome of the consultation expected to align with the budget setting process for 2013/14. .
8. All slides, agenda and supporting material from the seminars can be accessed at <http://kyit.stockton.gov.uk/members/policyupdatesessions>
9. A regular update report on members seminar events held will be provided to Council at each meeting going forward.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

11. There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

Legal

12. There are no legal implications arising as a direct result from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

13. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14. This report is not subject to Equality Impact Assessment as it makes no proposals for service development or policy change.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

15. Members Policy Seminars help the Council achieve all its objectives as outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

16. No external consultation has taken place on this report.

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Background Papers

Slides/ Presentation from the member seminar programmes.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Members Policy Seminars affect all wards in the Borough.

Property

This report has no implications for the Council's Capital Programme and Asset Management Plan.