

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**5<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2014  
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 in February 2014 that provided an update on the outcome of the Ornamental Areas Bedding Review and the implications for parks, flower beds and open spaces across the Borough.

**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 TOPIC COVERED IN FEBRUARY 2014**

3. The review of Ornamental Areas has identified a budget saving with a reduction in machinery, watering programmes, staffing and planting arrangements. Principles protecting the key gateways into the Borough of Stockton on Tees, retaining 60% of existing ornamental beds, supporting tree planting schemes, bulb planting, one off investments in roundabout improvement schemes and further exploring partnership opportunities will help to maintain the high standard of planting and visual impact that exists across the borough.
4. The presentation set out for members' areas where existing planting will be retained and areas that will see a reduction in some planting, reducing impact where possible with lower maintenance planting solutions, developing more perennial areas and tree planting programmes.

5. Pride in the Borough's appearance and a committed workforce will continue to deliver a significant programme of planting with a 146,000 spring and 146,000 summer bedding programme planned for this year. Further work will continue to engage with partners like Vela Group, Schools and community groups to develop planting programmes, wild flower areas, lower maintenance/ improved appeal, across the Borough.
6. The 2014/15 programme is currently being developed and will continue to inform members of key policy changes and implications for local government and public sector partners.
7. A regular update report on member's seminar events 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.

Julie Danks

Corporate director of Resources

[Julie.danks@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.danks@stockton.gov.uk)

Tel number 01642 527007

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.