

## APPENDIX 2

COUNCIL

25 SEPTEMBER 2019

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – END-OF-TERM REPORT (2015-2019)

#### IMPACT

The Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report, provides a broad summary of the work of the Council's scrutiny committees between 2015 and 2019. The report includes key achievements during the course of this four-year period, and demonstrates how the work of the overview and scrutiny function has met the four principles of effective public scrutiny:

- Provides a constructive 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- Amplifies the voice and concerns of the public
- Drives improvement in public services
- Is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role

Scrutiny reviews undertaken by the five Select Committees are highlighted and outline the main focus of a review, who was involved and a selection of recommendations that culminated from the evidence received. This additional paper has been devised to show the impact of some of these reviews, and supports comments from the Corporate Peer Review team (who visited SBC in early-September 2019) who felt that readers would benefit from a greater understanding of how the work of the overview and scrutiny function has led to real and positive changes in service provision across the Borough.

It should be noted that it is difficult to ascertain impact until a Select Committee has initiated or completed the monitoring process referenced on page 21 of the report. As such, the examples provided below are taken from progress updates provided to Select Committees following Cabinet's endorsement of a final report and the recommendations.

#### Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

A key issue for the review of [Access to Services for People with Learning Disabilities and / or Autism](#) during **2015-2016** was the low uptake of annual GP health checks for local people with learning disabilities. Prior to the review, 39.6% of eligible people had a health check against the national target of 80%. Members recommended the local NHS take steps to remedy this, including closer monitoring and improved leadership on this issue.

GP development time-out sessions have been held with best practice shared by Practices performing well, and the Primary Care team visiting supporting individual Practices to provide support. The Committee also encouraged each Practice to have a named clinical lead for Learning Disabilities, something which all Practices now have, as well as the CCG. As a result of this work, there was a rise in annual health checks and the issue remains on the CCG work-plan for 2019-2020.

In relation to universal and community services, a number of improvements in terms of access and reassurance have been made, including a review of the Safe Place Scheme, autism awareness training for library staff, and liaison with transport providers to ensure awareness of journey assistance cards.

The **2017-2018** review of [Defibrillators](#) examined existing provision, funding opportunities, and good practice for publicly accessible defibrillators. The review concluded that the Council should install / assist the installation of defibrillators where significant gaps existed.

New defibrillators were subsequently installed at Stockton Town Centre near The Shambles, Stockton Central Library and Millbank Care Home in Norton (all registered with the ambulance service), and three training sessions were run by the ambulance service to supplement these additional units; volunteers were also recruited as defibrillator 'guardians'. The Committee encouraged existing holders of static AEDs across the Borough to make sure their locations were registered with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS); this took place with the Catalyst Voice Forum, and a briefing note was also disseminated to local businesses via the Better Health at Work Award. The existing defibrillator at Thornaby Town Centre is now registered with NEAS.

Another key recommendation was to increase public awareness of the importance of first aid for cardiac arrest, and increase public confidence in the use of CPR and defibrillators. Examples of progress included advice and support provided to local resident groups about CPR and defibrillator installation, six training sessions on CPR and defibrillator use delivered to SBC staff and Councillors in 2018, and further promotion of BHF, CPR and defibrillator use via social media. Two sets of CPR training kits are available at the Public Health Resource Library to support the community and Council in this work.

### **Children and Young People Select Committee**

The **2015-2016** review of **School Organisation and Admission Arrangements (Phase 2)** requested that further work be undertaken with secondary Head Teachers and Principals to plan for the increasing pressure on secondary places. As a result, three positive meetings were undertaken in Billingham, North / Central Stockton and South of the Borough, which led to a range of options for expansion being put forward. Another recommendation asked that timely reporting on admissions numbers and preferences be agreed with Head Teachers. This resulted in regular information being shared with Head Teachers throughout the admissions process for September 2017, and a commitment to continue this approach for every admissions round going forward.

A further outcome from the review was that workshops with parents should take place to explain the equal ranking system at Children's Centres, nurseries and schools as part of an improved programme of communication with parents. This led to a significant drop in the number and type of parent / school queries during the 2017 admissions round.

The review of **Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB)** during **2016-2017** recommended that the format of Board and sub-group meetings should continue to be reviewed to focus discussion on key issues and strengthen the co-ordination, challenge and change functions. An Executive was established to drive the agenda for the Board and its sub-groups, and was incorporated into the design of the new Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP).

The high-profile **2017-2018** review of **Inclusion in Schools** was concerned at the increase in fixed-term and permanent exclusions from school. It culminated in a number of recommendations aimed at lobbying for change at local and national level, challenging and developing local school behaviour policies, supporting parents and carers, and developing alternative provision.

The Committee's report has been circulated to a wide range of stakeholders, and assisted Local Authority lobbying efforts in relation to seeking increased funding from the Government and seeking to influence practice in local schools. Circulation has included the Secretary of State, the National Schools Commissioner, local schools and Academy Trusts, and Members of Parliament.

The Council has produced a Behaviour Statement setting out the preferred approach to behaviour management, including the support available to local schools. A primary Pupil Inclusion Panel has been established, complementing the approach in secondary schools, and these Panels seek to understand individual cases from a holistic viewpoint. Annual reports from the PIPs are to be produced.

Training for Governors continues to be offered, and exclusion data is now published online through the Council's Local Offer. Parents are provided with additional information through a new leaflet, and the

service is now providing more advice to parents. Initial progress reporting indicates that fixed-term exclusions in secondary schools have reduced. In relation to Elective Home Education (EHE), a new EHE Multi-Agency Group has been established, enabling better overview of the context of each case.

### **Crime and Disorder Select Committee**

A central recommendation from the **2015-2016** review of **River Tees Crossing Infrastructure** was for a robust asset management plan to be developed for the bridges and structures in Stockton Borough. An Asset Management Policy and Strategy was therefore completed with a Forward Plan of general and principal inspections implemented. In addition, a Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) was established.

The review of **School Parking** in **2016-2017** recommended that, when requested by individual schools, the Council should consider site specific improvements or changes to assist with enforcement or education of drivers to reduce the impact of school parking. The Committee were later informed that three schools had approached the Council, with investigations underway, and measures implemented at The Glebe Primary School.

As part of the outcomes for the **2017-2018** review of **Security at Preston Park**, the Committee asked that its final report informed the development and implementation of the Masterplan for the Park. A subsequent progress update provided assurance that work was progressing towards Masterplan delivery and the Select Committee work was informing this. The main focus had been sourcing capital funding. In order to support funding bids, the existing Masterplan was being strengthened with the visual concepts. As highlighted by the Select Committee report, the areas of focus within the plan such as toilets, cafes, car parking and paths were all being developed with the consideration of improvements to the safety and security of the park and the visitors.

### **People Select Committee**

The **2017-2018** review of **Sickness Absence** asked that all steps should be taken to ensure staff are clearly aware of the wide range of support that the Council makes available for them to access. This led to Attendance Management Training (including employee support available) – 19 sessions had been delivered since January 2018 and a further four sessions were planned. Intranet pages will be updated when the new intranet is available and intranet promotions continued to be delivered – banners / KYIT. Posters and leaflets on employee support had been distributed across Council buildings. Flu vaccinations were promoted at Setting the Standard in autumn 2017 – this led to the largest take-up of flu vaccinations in late-2018 with 700 vaccinations administered. Information on employee support continues to be provided at employee induction sessions.

Another outcome was that, given that it already meets the criteria, the Council signs up to the TUCs Dying to Work campaign which proposes that Employers sign a voluntary charter to provide additional protection from dismissal for any person with a terminal diagnosis because of their condition. The Dying to Work Pledge was adopted and signed up to at the Council meeting on the 12 December 2018.

Additionally, the Committee recommended that management training in mental health awareness to aid early intervention is made available. As a result, MIND were engaged to deliver mental health awareness training for Managers as it was recognised that Managers / Supervisors are key to promoting good mental health at work. This training course would help Managers gain a wider understanding of some issues surrounding mental health and how to effectively support employees who are experiencing mental health. Sessions has been scheduled for delivery in 2018-2019. An e-learning module had also been developed in partnership between ACAS and Mindful Employer (an employer-focused initiative run by Workways Devon partnership NHS Trust).

## Place Select Committee

The Committee's **2016-2017** review of **Flooding Resilience** requested that the Council further develops the expertise of the operatives currently engaged in dealing with flooding issues. Future ways of working were therefore discussed with staff via the Staff Forum, and a request for staff to volunteer to be part of the specialist team was issued and a number of people asked to be part of the team. Discussions took place with a potential training provider and a training programme agreed. Work was underway to review all risk assessments in line with the current Flooding Policy.

The review also recommended that the Council produce a formal programme of replacement for older style gullies within the Borough in line with the principals of asset management and routine maintenance. This resulted in older style gullies being considered in line with the maintenance programme and risk assessed, any liable to flooding being replaced as part of the resurfacing scheme.

The urgent **Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings (Task & Finish)** review undertaken in **2017-2018** following the Grenfell Tower fire recommended that landlords ensure the maintenance and upkeep of fire risk assessments, including that the building itself meets fire risk assessment standards, and that the responsibility of tenants in maintaining robust fire safety measures and timely reporting of any areas of concern to their landlord is reinforced. This led to Thirteen Housing Group re-assessing all their fire risk assessments, with tenants being fully informed of changes to any procedures. Concierge's had also been provided with further training to ensure floor sweeps of the building at regular intervals, ensuring there are no events that could create risk to the tenants.

The Committee was also strong in advocating the installation of sprinkler / misting systems in all high rise residential buildings across Stockton-on-Tees. A subsequent update informed Members that Thirteen Housing Group were in the process of providing suppression systems (sprinklers) to all their high rise properties, and that work at Priory Court was already underway. Applications and information for the designs to Kennedy Gardens, Nolan & Hume House had also been received.

An important outcome of the **2017-2018** review of **Asylum Seeker Services** was for a clear pathway and information about what asylum seeker services are on offer in Stockton-on-Tees should be provided. This led to the production of a directory of services offering information, advice and support for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. In addition, the Council were working very closely with Bill Williams' strategic RAS group in Stockton in developing a strategic Action Plan for the Stockton Migration Partnership (SMP) to be developed and delivered throughout 2019-2021.

Enhanced links with refugee-led community organisations (RCOs) via the Regional Refugee Forum North East to increase understanding of asylum seeker issues/concerns were urged. Subsequently, the Regional Refugee Forum (RFF) North East were now delivering training sessions to Social Workers in partnership with the British Red Cross on the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children – it covers a wide range of topics including the asylum process, age assessment, trafficking, rights and entitlements, and adopting a culturally sensitive approach to support.

The Committee also recommended that information-sharing between agencies needed to be strengthened to ensure joined-up processes. Members were assured that improved communication between contract provider and Local Authority were now in place, and that property procurement information was provided to Local Authorities for authorisation / consultation along with weekly 'move in, move out' information. Key information on asylum numbers, trends and emerging issues was also provided to lead Officers and Members at the quarterly meetings, and future representation from the Home Office and the contract provider at local migration operational meetings had also been agreed.