

Scrutiny Liaison Forum

A meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum was held on Wednesday, 8th March 2006.

Present: Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Cains, Coleman, Cook, Cunningham, Dixon (vice Councillor Mrs Womphrey), Fletcher, Mrs Fletcher, Gibson, Johnson, Leonard, Lupton, Mrs O'Donnell, Mrs Rigg and Woodhead.

Officers: G.Garlick, Ms J Haworth (CE); T.Beckwith (CESC); N.Schneider (DNS); D E Bond, G.Birtle, Ms S.Connolly, N Hart, Mrs M Waggott (LD); Mrs J.Danks (R).

Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive be appointed Chairman of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kirton and Mrs Womphrey.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of discussion regarding Tees Active Limited as a result of her role as a Council representative on the Management Committee.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of discussion regarding energy costs as a result of his employment.

Councillors Fletcher and Mrs Fletcher declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in respect of discussion on the future of Billingham International Folklore Festival as a result of their friendship with one of the organisers of the Festival.

Terms of Reference

The agreed Terms of Reference of the Forum were noted as follows:-

1. *To provide a Forum to foster and develop a closer, more constructive working relationship between the Cabinet members, the Corporate Management Team and Scrutiny chairs and thereby assist in the efficient and effective working of scrutiny and the scrutiny work programme in order to deliver the Council's key priorities and secure added value.*
2. *To receive briefings from Cabinet Members/Corporate Management Team and Executive Scrutiny Committee Members on emerging policy development areas.*
3. *To consider the current scrutiny work programme position and progress in delivering its aims. .*
4. *To consider and ensure support for the current scrutiny work programme and its delivery.*
5. *To consider any special issues which may require urgent policy development advice or scrutiny work.*
6. *To undertake appropriate liaison with the Executive Scrutiny Committee on future policy development issues and review topics.*

AGREED that the Terms of Reference be noted and meetings of the Forum be held as and when required and on at least two occasions per year.

Select Committee Review Topics

The Forum was invited to consider a submitted schedule of potential topics for scrutiny review by Select Committees in 2006/2007; which had been identified by both Select Committees; Cabinet and Corporate Management Team. It was the aim of the Forum to identify common themes amongst those submitted for each Select Committee with a view to them being forwarded to the Executive Scrutiny Committee for approval on the 28th March 2006; along with a supporting Business Case Framework for each topic.

The following topics emerged as those supported by the Forum for further consideration by the Executive Scrutiny Committee:-

Adults, Leisure & Culture Select Committee

- Preston Hall Park & Museum Strategy;
- Performing Arts/Leisure Publicity/Festivals (inc SIRF, BIFF etc);
- Adult Protection/ Vulnerable Adults (examining potential areas that could usefully be reviewed);
- River Based Leisure Facilities

Children & Young People Select Committee

- Teenage Conception/Pregnancy Rates in Stockton Borough;
- Obesity (inc sport & leisure activities; diet and nutrition, school dinners);
- Educational Attainment of Looked After Children
- Youth Matters Policy (examining potential areas that could usefully be reviewed)

Health Select Committee

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
- NHS Dentist Provision in Stockton Borough
- Implications of Darzi decision
- Other Statutory referrals; eg from Strategic Health Authority, Primary Care Trust etc.

Environment & Regeneration Select Committee

- Street Lighting/Energy Costs
- Cemeteries & Memorials
- Follow-ups of previous reviews: Waste Issues, Planning Improvements as programmed
- Concessionary Fares .

* It was noted that the suggestion made at the recent Special Budget meeting of Council on the 1st March 2006 regarding the principle of disaggregating funding for Environmental Improvements to each ward within the Borough would be better considered firstly at meetings of the Members Advisory Panel.

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

- Tristar- (But need to discuss with officers re feasibility, so as not to clash with preparations for inspection in July 2006)
- Housing -Nomination & Allocations/Support for Homeless & new tenants
- Community Wardens/Anti Social Behaviour Enforcement
- Traveller provision.

Corporate Policy Review Select Committee

- Consultation

*It was noted that officers could undertake a relatively quick exercise to review the meeting venues currently used by the authority and provide this information to the Committee; which in turn could assist their future review of consultation when considering this particular subject.

AGREED that:-

1. The topics identified above in respect of each Select Committee be submitted by this Forum for further consideration by the Executive Scrutiny Committee.
2. The remaining further action suggested be progressed.

Next Steps

It was suggested that it would be useful to the process of scoping potential scrutiny areas for review for Scrutiny officers, Chairs of Select, Cabinet members, Corporate Directors and the relevant link officers to discuss jointly the remit of such reviews prior to their submission to the Executive Scrutiny Committee; and that copies of the scoped reviews be circulated to all members for information.