

Regeneration and Transport Select Committee

Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 19 October 2010

EIT Review of Events, Arts and Tourism

Update on Progress (including issues/problems/successes)

The Committee has received the following information during its baseline process:

2010 Events Programme and financial information for each event.
Events Delivery Framework which outlines key aims and roles & responsibilities of members to ensure events are co-ordinated and well-delivered. In addition it has received details on the 3 distinct aspects of the review as follows:

Arts

- The Arts team structure and operation.
- Funding received including Arts Council England grant and limited resources available in the Tees Valley from trusts and grant giving bodies attracting less per Capita due to the relative weakness of voluntary sector infrastructure in the cultural sector.
- Previous scrutiny report on Review of Festivals
- Value for money was determined by the satisfaction, spend and benefits for the local economy.
- Monies Allocated to Billingham International Folklore Festival, ARC and Tees Valley Music Alliance.
- Health benefits through Arts as GP's made referrals.
- Vibrant Stockton pilot evaluation report.

Tourism

- The Tourism team structure and operation. It was noted that a marketing budget was not held with the Tourism team as it was now part of the budget for the newly formed Communications team.
- Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy 2010 - 2015
- Noted that the team was benchmarked each year against other Councils.
- Tourist accommodation was limited in the borough, particularly in the Town Centre. The Committee was advised of the availability of the three Travelodge / Premier Inns in the area, and of proposed developments on North Shore.
- Direct funding was allocated to visitTeesvalley from ONE North East, which is then disseminated on behalf of the 5 Local Authorities. It was asked if Stockton was receiving its fair share and if this could be examined.

Events

- The Events team structure and operation.
- Although not a statutory service the low cost or free entertainment programme offers residents and families an affordable way to enjoy a variety of events in a local setting. Holding events such as the fireworks and SIRF also promotes Stockton regionally and nationally contributing to local economy.
- The Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) which continued to ensure overall event safety through consultation and joint working between the Council and it's partners. Members asked if it could be considered to include Member input into the ISAG meetings.

Resident Focus groups took place on 29th September to determine satisfaction levels, the range and types of events residents would enjoy and possible charging for events. Some of the key messages given were:

- The arts and events in Stockton Borough are held in very high regard with little cost to residents. Specific reference was made to the commitment of Stockton Council to the arts and events it is involved with helping to improve the quality of life for residents.
- The limited venue/facilities within the borough are well used and any additional venues would only strengthen the wide and varied programme.
- Not enough is made of Stockton's High Street especially considering its size. This could become more of a focal point within the borough for events.
- Stockton Council can not rest on its laurels as good as the events programme is. A regular refresh of the programme should be considered to continue to maintain the satisfaction levels currently enjoyed.
- Payment to see events is generally accepted so long as the price is commensurate with the event.
- Recognition is given to the difficult financial state facing the Council and events are likely to be affected but should, wherever possible, be retained to continue the enhancement of the borough especially for residents.

The Committee will begin to identify options at its next meeting.

Other Work

The Committee concluded its review of winter maintenance services. Its recommendations have been incorporated into the Cabinet report that will be presented in October. The Committee has ensured the retention of the salt bins in the borough with an amended refill schedule depending on the priority rating of the bin's location.

Monitoring

No monitoring due to be reported until 8th November meeting.