

# Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 24th September, 2013.

**Present:** Cllr Ken Lupton(Chairman), Cllr Miss Tina Large(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

**Officers:** Mike Chicken(DNS), Judith Trainer, Margaret Waggott, Sarah Whaley(L&D)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing

## **1 Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th July 2013**

The Chair signed the minutes as a correct record.

## **4 Draft Minutes from the Meeting held on 30th July 2013**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting which was held on the 30th July 2013.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

## **5 Street Cafes and A Boards Advertising**

The Executive Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider a referral from the Urban Environment Task group(UETG)regarding the issues surrounding cafe seating areas on footpaths and the use of A-board advertising.

The Built & Natural Environment Manager gave the Committee an overview of the issues which had been highlighted by the UETG which was chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety and attended by several Cabinet members.

The Committee discussed that A-boards and cafe seating areas were, in places, causing obstruction on public pathways which made it difficult for the public to manoeuvre around. Some businesses had used as many as 3 A-boards outside their premises on public footpaths.

A study had also taken place by a consultancy highlighting the difficulties cafe seating areas and A-boards presented to the disabled and partially sighted.

In addition to the issues caused by A-boards and street cafes cluttering the

footpaths, the Built & Natural Environment Manager highlighted conflicting issues surrounding the sale and consumption of alcohol in public places in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour spilling out onto public footways. Although bordered seating could be used for street cafes to contain customers, there would still be cluttered footpaths continuing to cause obstruction.

Members recognised and discussed the importance of business advertising especially for those businesses which were situated off the main pathways down the wynds of Stockton and Yarm.

It was agreed that with consultation and evidence gathered from sectors of the community, the issue of street cafe seating areas and A-board advertising would be added to the scrutiny work programme.

The committee would be tasked with developing a policy to ensure that A-boards and street cafe seating areas were positioned in the most appropriate areas within local town centres. The Committee recognised that it was especially timely to develop a policy with the redevelopment of Stockton Town Centre.

AGREED that the issue of cafe seating areas and A-board advertising on footpaths be added to the scrutiny work programme and referred to Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee, once it had completed its review of North East Purchasing Organisation.

## **6 Report on Chairs Updates**

Members were provided with an update from each of the Select Committee's Chairman.

The main issues discussed were as follows:

The Chair of Arts Leisure and Culture Select Committee informed members that during the current review of Child Poverty the extent of child poverty within Stockton had stunned committee members.

It had also been highlighted that there was large amounts of unclaimed benefits, and initial findings seemed to indicate that people did not know what they were entitled to claim and were put off by the complexity of claiming. Members heard that advice services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau were inundated with people seeking help.

Positive feedback was shared with the Committee about the Billingham International Folklore Festival and an open day which had been held on the River Tees.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee informed members that the review of Employment and Education was focusing on whether education and training matched the needs of the industry and growth sectors. The Committee heard that the next meeting would be held at Stockton Riverside College where the two sixth form college principals would be in attendance.

AGREED that the information be noted.

## **7 Forward Plan**

Members were provided with the statutory forward plan for the 1st October 2013 to the 31st January 2014.

Members asked for more detailed information in relation to the item entitled Tees Valley City Deal.

AGREED that the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development provide additional information to the Committee at a future meeting regarding the Tees Valley City Deal.