

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 17th January, 2017.

Present: Cllr David Harrington (Chair); Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Philip Dennis, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Norma Stephenson (Vice Cllr Jean O'Donnell), Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers and Cllr David Wilburn.

Officers: Peter Bell, Graham Birtle, Peter Mennear, Judy Trainer (DCE).

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: Cllr Jean O'Donnell and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley.

1 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Philip Dennis declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School – Final Report as he was a governor at a school with the Borough.

Councillor Maurice Perry declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School – Final Report as he was a governor at a school with the Borough.

Councillor Gillian Corr declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School – Final Report as she was a governor at a school with the Borough.

Councillor Sonia Bailey declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School – Final Report as she was a governor at a school with the Borough.

Councillor Dave Wilburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School – Final Report as she was a governor at a school with the Borough.

3 Minutes - 25 October 2016 - For Signature

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2016 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4 Minutes - 29 November 2016 - For Approval

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 be approved.

5 Scrutiny Review of Flooding Resilience

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Place Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Flooding Resilience.

The Committee's report made recommendations to assist the Council and partner agencies respond to the number and level of flooding incidents that were of increased concern to residents.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comment on the report and recommendations. Some these questions and comments could be summarised as follows:-

- The Environment Agency had lowered the risk level in the Lustrum Beck area where work had been undertaken for the provision of flood defences
- With regard to Emergency Planning, Members could play a key role in signposting members of the public to services.
- The issue of contamination of water in Coatham Wood was raised and whether it was being dealt with. This would be reported back to the Committee.
- Northumbria Water prefer smaller gullies as this makes the water move quicker and prevents stagnation

Member noted the findings and supported the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted, and the information requested be provided.

6 Scrutiny Review of Dog Fouling Enforcement

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Crime and Disorder Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Dog Fouling Enforcement.

The Committee's report made recommendations to assist the Council in providing an appropriate response to the level of dog fouling incidents that were a regular concern to residents reported to Members.

The review was undertaken at the request of the Lead Cabinet Member initially to examine the use of dog DNA to identify dogs and subsequently their owners failing to dispose of the faeces responsibly. The review also scrutinised other aspects of enforcement.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comment on the report and recommendations. Some these questions and comments could be summarised as follows:-

- Many records of micro-chipping owners of dogs were out of date. It was felt that it would be helpful if the one-stop on the SBC website could include change of address details for dog owners or include a reminder.
- Funding was a big issue for the review. The Dog Welfare and

Enforcement Team were much stretched. New signage to cover legislation across the Borough would incur costs.

- Levels of dog fouling should be continued to be monitored by the Crime and Disorder Committee as part of its ongoing work.

Member noted the findings and supported the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted, and the Committee's suggestions be forwarded to the Service.
2. Crime and Disorder Committee monitor levels of dog fouling on an ongoing basis.

7 Review of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB)

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Children & Young People Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB).

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comment on the report and recommendations. Some of these questions and comments could be summarised as follows:-

- Details of the allowances paid to LSCB members would be circulated to the Committee
- The latest monitoring update in relation to the CSE Task and Finish recommendations would be circulated to the Committee

Member noted the findings and supported the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted, and the information requested be provided.

8 Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the People Select Committee's review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School. The main focus of the review was tackling disadvantage in the early years, including school readiness. The impact of disadvantage on a child's development and education was widely recognised, as was the crucial importance of the first five years of a child's life.

Some children in the Borough needed to be supported to catch up significantly on a range of factors such as socialisation. The review also intended to follow on from the review of Child Poverty and examine how Pupil Premium was being used in the Borough, and consider the role of the new Early Years Pupil Premium.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comment on the report and recommendations. Some these questions and comments could be summarised as follows:-

- The impact on universal school meals on free school meals should be circulated to the Committee
- Outreach workers were active in the community to increase take up of the funded childcare offer
- Free school meals was still the best indicator of deprivation
- The working poor may also qualify for free school meals
- Pupil premium can make a huge difference to the budget of a school
- An article advertising free school meal / pupil premium take up should be included in Stockton News

The Chair wished it to be recorded that the Select Committees were working exceptionally hard and producing some outstanding work.

Member noted the findings and supported the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted, and the information requested be provided.

9 Statutory Forward Plan

Members considered the Statutory Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that the Statutory Forward Plan be noted.

10 Select Committee Chair Updates

Members considered the Chairs' updates on Select Committees' reviews and other work.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

11 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Chair also reported that due to health issues of both himself and the Vice Chair, the Committee should look to appoint an interim Vice Chair. Councillor Sylvia Walmsley would still be the substantive Vice Chair.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that Councillor Gillian Corr be appointed interim Vice Chair of the Committee. This would be ratified by Council.

Members considered and agreed the Work Programme.

The Chair suggested that immediately prior to the next meeting that consider a six-monthly Council Performance report , the Committee should hold a pre-meeting to ensure best value from the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Work Programme be noted.
2. Pre-meetings be introduced prior to future consideration of Council Performance reports

12 Scrutiny Developments

It was suggested and agreed that future six-monthly Council Performance Reports be considered by each Select Committee following consideration by Executive Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported that the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was starting work to draft a self-evaluation framework for Council's to assess the operation of their scrutiny functions. Details were available on the CfPS website.

RESOLVED that Council Performance Reports be considered by each Select Committee following consideration by Executive Scrutiny Committee.