

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 30th January, 2018.

Present: Cllr David Harrington(Chairman), Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr David Wilburn, Peter Snowden

Officers: Neil Schneider(CE), Julie Danks, Judy Trainer, Gary Woods, Kirsty Wannop(DCE), Martin Gray(CHS), Garry Cummings, Ian Coxon(F&BS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: None

ESC 41/17 **Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ESC 42/17 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Norma Stephenson Declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 as she was thirteen tenant.

ESC 43/17 **Minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2017**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2017.

AGREED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

ESC 44/17 **Council Plan 2017-20 - Mid-Year Update Report**

Consideration was given to the Council Plan 2017-20 Mid-Year Update Report. Members were reminded that as this was the mid-year update the information was slightly out of date (information correct as of the end of September 2017).

Members were given opportunity to ask questions/make comments that could be summarised as follows:-

- The wording on the report regarding Community Impact Implications needed to be looked at.
- Did the Council help local business export? The Council encouraged local business to be in the best possible position to compete for work. A market place event was held in January aimed at recruiting local businesses to apply for tenders for the Hilton Hotel, Globe and Ingleby Barwick Leisure Centre. Businesses were also directed to the NEPO portal.
- What was the 'Made in Stockton' brand about? It was about capturing and celebrating the diverse range of business and work done in the Borough.
- Employers in the Borough needed to work with young people to help develop career paths that will allow them to stay and work in the Borough.
- When tenders were being considered, was weight given to local companies? It was explained that any applications had to be assessed in the

- spirit of what was trying to be achieved. The Council did work with local companies to give them the knowledge to be able to put the best possible bid in.
- Had there been talks regarding the proposal of a cinema being brought into the town centre? There had been discussions regarding a different type of cinema experience to those already in the Borough and it was being actively pursued.
 - The community buses were extremely well appreciated. Charging has previously been looked into due to sustainability issues, but had this been revisited again to make sure it continued?
 - It was felt that name badges would be good for Members when travelling to different external events representing the Council.
 - The report stated there was a weekly litter pick across residential streets, was this correct as it seemed a lot? Clarification would be sought on this and circulated to members.
 - What happened with regard the non-residential streets and street cleansing? Clarification would be sought and circulated to Members.
 - Issues regarding repairs in Thirteen properties. It was explained that a Members seminar was planned with Thirteen where Members could challenge Officers with any issues.
 - Had the possibility of using household waste to generate electricity been given some thought? Yes this had been looked at and there had been two feasibility studies with resource committed to one. Further reporting on these would be done through Cabinet and Council when appropriate.
 - The community energy switch was fantastic and needed to be kept going.
 - There was a number of racist incidents in the high street. Was CCTV used to identify people in incidents? Also could the hate crime reporting information be sent to Councillors? The list of reporting centres would be distributed to Members..
 - How successful has the fly tipping enforcement been?
 - There was no reference in the Health & Wellbeing section to alcohol abuse or dementia. It was acknowledged that work was being done but it needed to be referenced.
 - With regard to the regional peer challenge in Children's Services, what were the outcomes from this? There were areas for improvement and a report would be coming to Cabinet soon.
 - All the Spark of Genius joint venture care homes were good or outstanding.
 - Could postal votes be an opt-out service rather than opt-in? Clarification would be sought and distributed to Members.
 - Could more be done to publicise the Credit Union?
 - The Council should be proud of its Local Joint Consultative Panel and the positive relationships it has with Unions.
 - What was the preparedness of the Council for the GDPR and the implications for the Council and Members? It was explained that there was a Members seminar set up to discuss the implications and an Officer working group to discuss what the Council needed to do.

AGREED that the information be noted and further information be brought back.

**ESC
45/17**

Financial Update and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Committee considered a report that presented the financial performance

and position at the end of the second quarter of the 2017/18 financial year and updated the Medium Term Financial Plan accordingly.

Details of the following as at the financial position to 30th September 2017 were provided:-

- General Fund
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2018 – 2022
- Current Capital Programme

The Committee was advised that there would be Member drop-in sessions for the coming MTFP. Members were also provided with an addendum that was presented at Cabinet in December 2017.

Members were given opportunity to ask questions/make comments that could be summarised as follows:-

- There was a clear overspend in Children's Services particularly LAC and Children's Services. It looked that the increase in numbers was only around 6-8 children yet the cost seems to be a lot more - why was this? It was explained that the range in costs from different children varied depending on placements (i.e. residential in-house foster care and agency foster care). This could make the costs fluctuate. It was also explained that there was going to be a national review around the care system as there has been a major increase in care applications and children coming into care. In Stockton there had been a huge amount of activity in managing the costs and also lots of work in prevention. To date there was 455 LAC in Stockton. It was also highlighted that the Edge of Care service was being launched today.
- There was a focus on how spending could be reduced, but was there any way in which we could increase income? It was explained that all income avenues were looked at and where incomes streams were coming in the fees and charges were in line or above average.
- Had the Spark of Genius initiative brought children back into the Borough as anticipated? It had brought some of the children back into the Borough and also prevented others that would have gone out of Borough to stay.
- Was there plan to upgrade the Council computer operating systems, and if so, what was the anticipated cost? Negotiations were underway to upgrade to Microsoft 365 but the cost was unknown.
- It was requested that when breaking down costs into directorates that Xentrall be split from Administration and Democratic Services in future.

AGREED that

1. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the current level of General Fund balances be noted.
2. The emerging issues for the MTFP including the significant increase in costs to support our Looked After Children to the point that costs were now over £20 million per year be noted.
3. The revised Capital Programme attached at Appendix A be noted.
4. Costs would be split into directorates for future reports.

**ESC
46/17** **Scrutiny Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure**

Consideration was given to the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure from the Place Select Committee.

A question was raised around the current duration of the Billingham International Folklore Festival (BIFF), and whether this was still an appropriate length of time. Members were reminded that BIFF has to adhere to CIOFF guidance which sets out how long such a festival should run for.

AGREED that the final report be approved and forwarded to Cabinet for Approval.

**ESC
47/17** **Statutory Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the Statutory Forward Plan.

AGREED that the Statutory Forward Plan be noted.

**ESC
48/17** **Select Committee Chairs' Updates**

Members considered the Select Committee updates.

Members were given opportunity to ask questions/make comments that could be summarised as follows:-

Adult Social Care and Health

- When discussing gambling issues and individuals seeking advice, we need to make sure that the right expertise were asking the right questions.
- Members discussed wards being closed on weekends at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust. It was explained that some wards were closed to allow a deep clean for infection control.

Crime and Disorder

- Had any issues regarding school crossing patrols been raised in terms of safety and drivers not stopping? This had not been raised at the Select Committee Review focussed on school parking.
- It was questioned how School Crossing Patrol Officers were funded?

People

- With reference to the ongoing Mental Health and Wellbeing review, the efforts of teachers for their non-teaching (pastoral) work needs to be recognised.
- Considerations around funding for mental health services should be part of the ongoing review.

Place

- In relation to the ongoing Disabled Parking review, issues around North Tees hospital were noted, and it was felt that clear guidance was needed regarding where blue badge users can park if all disabled bays are already being used.
- Concerns raised in relation to recycling rates in light of recent national focus.

AGREED that the information be noted and further information requested be provided.

**ESC
49/17** **Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Chair welcomed Peter Snowdon who has just joined the Committee as Diocesan Rep for C.of E. Mr Snowdon was made welcome by everyone attending.

On behalf of Executive Scrutiny, the Chair welcomed the return of Councillor Sylvia Walmsley following her illness. The Chair thanked Councillor Gillian Corr who acted as Interim Vice-Chair during this period.

The Chair reminded Members of the specific areas of the Constitution referring to Executive Scrutiny and Select Committee's with specific reference to behaviour and comments made at the last meeting. The Chair would send a copy of the particular part of the constitution relating to chairing meetings to all Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

AGREED that the information be noted.

**ESC
50/17** **Scrutiny Developments**

There were no scrutiny developments.