

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 20th November, 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 Evaline Cunningham (Sub Cllr Lisa Grainge), Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Paul Weston (Sub Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E), Cllr Maurice Perry (Sub Cllr Tony Hampton), Cllr Stefan Houghton (Sub Cllr Matthew Vickers), Cllr David Wilburn, Peter Snowden, Mrs Neelam un Kabir

Officers: Ian Coxon (F&BS), Jamie McCann (CS), Julie Danks, Judith Trainer, Sarah Whaley, Gary Woods (DCE)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr Barry Woodhouse,

ESC 36/18 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

ESC 37/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor David Harrington declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 'Council Plan' particularly the Arts Leisure and Culture section which referenced 'Tees Valley Library Services' and a new 'Short Story Competition'. Cllr Harrington was an employee of Tees Valley Libraries and members of his family had entered the Tees Valley Libraries Short Stories competition.

Councillor David Harrington also declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 'Scrutiny Review of Parking on Grass Verges' as he was an employee of Middlesbrough Borough Council.

Councillor Paul Weston declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in relation to the Select Committee Chairs Updates, Place Select Committee Scrutiny Review – Consolidation of Thirteen Housing Group, as he was an employee of Thirteen Housing Group.

AGREED that the declarations of interest be noted.

ESC 38/18 Minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee which was held on the 23rd October 2018

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting which was held on the 23rd October 2018 for approval and signature.

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed and signed as a correct record by the Vice-Chairman.

ESC 39/18 Council Plan

Members were asked to note the Mid-Year Update of the Council Plan 2018-21

The Deputy Chief Executive presented Members with the Executive Summary contained within the report and opened the meeting up for questions under each stream. These could be summarised as follows:

Economic Regeneration and Transport

Questions were raised in relation to the delay of the refurbishment of the Globe Theatre and if this would have a negative impact on occupancy of the Hampton by Hilton Hotel.

Officers explained that there was no formal impact statement, however the progress of the Globe and Hotel was periodically reviewed. It was also explained that the business case for the Hotel did not rest on the Globe Theatre being re-opened but on current demand and therefore no negative impact was expected. The newly appointed Sales Manager for the Hotel was already proactively contacting local businesses within the Borough with a view to future occupancy.

It was explained to Members that the Hilton Group operated a loyalty scheme known as the 'Hilton Honours Loyalty Scheme' which had a vast number of business members signed up. It was expected that businesses already signed up for the scheme would automatically look to use Hilton in Stockton.

Members raised questions in relation to the Local Plan. Officers explained that the Local Plan was still with inspectors, however, was on schedule for approval by 30th January 2019 Council.

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee, Councillor David Harrington, felt that the Economic Regeneration and Transport stream of the Council Plan lacked consistency in terms of detail contained within the report. Other areas of the Council Plan included the current situation and future ambition. Officers agreed to include more 'we are' statements to illustrate forthcoming action and aspirations in future updates.

Environment and Housing

Questions were raised relating to the period during the year green recycling occurred. Some residents were still experiencing the need to recycle green waste after the last date for green waste collections due to the amount of leaves they had in their gardens. Officers were asked if it would be possible to have a one-off collection for those who still had a lot of garden waste at the beginning of November for example.

Officers were aware of the issue. In the past, the green waste collection was provided for 30 to 32 weeks, however, this had now reduced to 26 weeks, which gave the Council an annual saving of £50,000. Any changes to the current arrangements would need to be fully funded. There was a facility at Haverton Hill where residents could take the recycling. There could be a possibility that an additional one-off collection could be funded from the Community Participation Budget.

Discussion took place as to how cost-effective not collecting the additional

green waste was as residents were putting it into their general waste bins.

Officers felt that, at the moment, the issue seemed to be localised to the Hartburn area, and if a one-off collection was made after the cut-off date, then this would have to be provided Borough wide. The best thing for residents to do was compost it.

Members asked that information be provided as to how many increased fines for fly tipping at £400 had been issued. Officers agreed to confirm this by email.

Concerns were raised surrounding street cleaning and the difficulty faced removing fallen leaves due to parked cars. Members suggested the possibility of putting a note through resident's doors to move parked vehicles to assist with this. It was explained that if a note dropping exercise was to be introduced this would have to be programmed in; the Council had tried this in the past but not all resident's moved their cars. The Council was having to manage with reduced resources whilst trying to meet all Members' aspirations. The best option was to compost green waste or to use recycling facilities.

Members asked if every Ward had a cleaner picking up rubbish. Although Grangefield Ward had one, rubbish around local schools was a mess.

Members acknowledged how hard the street cleansers worked and how each one had to cover many Wards.

The Chair asked if Stockton was the only Authority that currently offered free green waste collection. Officers were not aware of anyone in the Tees Valley charging for this service, however, it could be charged for. Hartlepool had looked at charging, however, did not follow through with it.

Community Safety

Members discussed concerns relating to Cleveland Police and the lack of police presence.

Officers informed the Committee that Chief Constable of Cleveland Police, Mike Veale, had attended a Safer Stockton Partnership meeting and highlighted some of the issues facing Cleveland Police such as staff sickness, lack of resources, etc. There had been a recent news article highlighting the lack of Police Officers on the street in Hartlepool. There were expectations of change as the Chief Constable was implementing new ideas including restructuring. Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council were working closely with the Police and would pass on Members' concerns.

Chair of the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Norma Stephenson, had agreed to run a Members' seminar, where the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police would address Members.

Members heard that Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council had recently invested in additional high quality CCTV which was working well.

Discussion took place around the collaborative working between Trading Standards, Enforcement Teams and Police.

Enforcement Officers had voice and video recording as a safety precaution.

Members raised concerns in relation to members of the public accessing inappropriate material on the internet in public venues at neighbouring authorities, such as libraries. Officers stated that safeguards were in place and that this was not a particular issue in Stockton.

In terms of Licensing, Members heard that seven businesses had signed up for the new initiative 'Setting the Bar', however, there were still a lot of meetings scheduled with licensed premises, and therefore an increase in the number of businesses signing up was expected.

Health and Wellbeing

Members were concerned that this section did not appear to include any references to mental health. Officers agreed to recognise this significant element in future Council Plan updates.

In terms of issues relating to mental health, the Authority had connections with TEWV (Tees, Esk, and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust) entry level mental health services relating to drug and alcohol abuse. The Authority was working with other providers and would include more information at the next Committee meeting.

Children and Young People

Members were continuing to see a rise of children in care and asked for comparative figures regarding this from other regions. In addition, information was also requested as to the number of children from Stockton which were being looked after outside of the Borough and vice versa. Comparative figures were available annually, however, it depended on how quickly other authorities reported.

The Chair requested an update on the Virtual Family Hub. Scrutiny Officers agreed to provide this via email prior to the next Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Strong Communities

The information was noted.

Adult Services

The information was noted.

Arts Leisure and Culture

Members expressed their delight at the Council securing funding from DCMS to further developing the Digital Offer.

It was highlighted that attendance at a number of events within the Borough was referred to which had been held throughout the year, however, some had been

missed (e.g. KAPOW, Dementia Cafes, and Return to Work Programmes, how to use libraries and public venues, etc.). It was agreed these figures would be included next time.

Our Council

Discussion took place around the programme management framework instilled for managers when dealing with capital programmes such as the Hampton at Hilton Hotel, Globe Theatre and Ingleby Barwick Leisure Centre.

Members noted the good work the Audit Service had done.

The implementation of GDPR and how it had been embedded into the Authority including risk assessment was highlighted. Officers explained that Stockton had started from a position of strength as IT security and records management was already good, therefore much of the work currently being undertaken was centred on checking the already robust systems in place were still robust.

Members requested an update on how well the delivery of 'Stockton News' had been to residents using Royal Mail delivery.

AGREED that the report be noted and that further information requested be provided to Members.

**ESC
40/18 Scrutiny Review of Parking on Grass Verges - Final Report - For
Information**

The Chair of the Place Select Committee Task and Finish Group, Councillor Louise Baldock, presented the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Parking on Grass Verges to Members prior to it being presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee were thanked for putting forward the review of 'Parking on Grass Verges' to the Place Select Committee.

Much evidence from neighbouring Authorities had been gathered, and it was felt Middlesbrough Borough Council had an effective approach where offending drivers were sent letters asking them to refrain from verge parking and recouping repair costs if the verge parking continued. Inconsiderate parking usually stopped after the first stage letter.

The main recommendation was for the Council to adopt the flowchart contained within the final report which set out steps to be followed when a service request in respect of verge parking was received.

There was also a variety of legislative tools which could be used such as Community Protection Notices, Public Space Protection Orders and Traffic Regulation Orders.

In addition, Councillor Louise Baldock informed the Committee that she was looking to speak to the planning department in relation to reviewing

'Supplementary Planning Documents' to incorporate detailed guidance and standards on visitor parking for new housing developments.

A social media campaign was to be developed with the Communications Team who would liaise with the Place Select Committee in relation to how it would look.

Discussion took place around current car parking issues experienced in various wards, from narrow streets resulting in residents and visitors parking on pavements, to tradesmen parking on grass verges and their reluctance to move vehicles when asked unless threatened with enforcement.

Questions were raised as to whether a facility existed where residents could ask the Council to pave over a grass verge at the residents own expense to create parking. Officers undertook to clarify this option following the meeting.

Some Members felt that a large chunk of money would be spent on grass verges and therefore there would be nothing left for other causes.

In some Wards, grass verges had been replaced with hard standing.

In terms of the Community Participation Budget (CPB), it was highlighted that this had limitations. Some Wards spent nearly all their budget on grass verges and some spent theirs on CCTV. If CPB was not available in future, then central funds would have to be looked at.

There were some tradesmen who agreed to put verges right after they had churned them up.

Members discussed the cost private companies charged versus that of the council when repairing grass verges. It was however noted that the standard of work could differ as Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council had strict guidelines which would need to be adhered to.

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee congratulated the Place Select Committee for a really good piece of work.

The Final Report would be presented to Cabinet at their December meeting.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**ESC
41/18** **Statutory Forward Plan**

Members considered the Council's Statutory Forward Plan for 1st November 2018 - 28 February 2019.

AGREED that the Statutory Forward Plan be noted.

**ESC
42/18** **Select Committee Chairs Updates**

Members considered the Select Committee Chairs' Updates.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Updates were noted.

Children and Young People Select Committee

The Chair of the Children and Young People Committee informed Members that in relation to the Scrutiny Review of the Child's Journey, the Committee were visiting Eastern Ravens Trust to talk and listen to young carers.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee informed Members that following such a large amount of evidence, the Hate Crime scrutiny review would be brought to a close at the November meeting of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee. The Committee heard that the meeting would include a presentation from 'Show Racism the Red Card', and would be followed by an informal session for the Committee to discuss draft recommendations.

People Select Committee

The Chair of the People Select Committee highlighted that in terms of the Digital Optimisation scrutiny review, the Committee had received excellent contributions from Newcastle City Council, Wigan Council (LGC Digital Council of the Year 2016) and Milton Keynes Council (LGC Digital Council of the Year 2018) with regards their digital journeys, approaches and experiences.

Two site visits to Stockton Customer Service Centre had been undertaken to observe assisted customer self-serve. These visits were excellent and extremely informative.

In relation to the Scrutiny Review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce, the final report was on schedule for February 2019 Cabinet.

Place Select Committee

The Chair of the Place Select Committee explained to Members that due to Thirteen Housing Group withdrawing from the Tees Valley-Wide Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, the final report of the review was not presented to Cabinet in October 2018 as scheduled. It was therefore proposed that a further evidence gathering session be held to understand the decision and its impacts.

Members were updated with the Scrutiny Review of Bring Sites (Recycling), and it was highlighted that Officers had reported that some of these sites resembled landfill. Further recommendations were to be made at the next Place Select Committee.

Members requested that Officers look back at scrutiny reviews over the last 4 years to see what had been achieved from the Scrutiny Committees recommendations.

AGREED the updates be noted.

**ESC
43/18** **Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme**

The next meeting of the Executive Scrutiny was scheduled for the 15th January 2019

It was felt that the 'Constitution Update' item which was scheduled for the 15th January was no longer required to come back to the Executive Scrutiny Committee as Members had received updates via Members' Seminars.

Issues regarding reports contained within the agenda papers were highlighted in relation to page numbers of reports overlapping the page numbers within the agenda print pack. It was agreed that the Governance Officer would contact all Personnel Assistants in relation to rectifying this.

AGREED the information be noted

**ESC
44/18** **Scrutiny Developments**

There were no updates provided.