

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 19th February, 2019.

Present: Cllr David Harrington(Chairman), Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr David Wilburn

Officers: Julie Danks, Peter Mennear, Judy Trainer, Sarah Whaley (DCE)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Barry Woodhouse,

**ESC
57/18** **Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

**ESC
58/18** **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**ESC
59/18** **Draft minutes from the Executive Scrutiny Committee which was held on the 15th January 2019**

Consideration was given to the Draft Minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee which was held on the 15th January 2019 for approval and signature.

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

**ESC
60/18** **Scrutiny Work Programme 2019-20**

Members were presented with a report which detailed the proposals for the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20.

The report identified the first review topic for each Select Committee with a view to revisiting the full work programme in the new municipal year.

The Scrutiny Team Leader brought Members attention to the current programme (including in-year referrals) which was summarised in the main report. All reviews had reported to Cabinet by February 2019.

In terms of the topics chosen for 2019 - 2020 Vice Chair, Councillor Sylvia Walmsley felt that the 19 topics suggested were good, varied and very interesting.

Suggestions had been prioritised ahead of the local elections with a view to Executive Scrutiny Committee agreeing the first topic for each Select Committee in 2019/20. Following the May elections, the Executive Scrutiny Committee would be asked to review the full work programme for the remainder of the year.

Members, Officers and key partners had been contacted in relation to the topics picked, and each topic had been prioritised using the PICK system, however this was not in any way binding.

In addition review topics had been received from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees CCG as detailed within the report, but further information was required. Officer's informed Members that they would re visit the topic suggestions after the May elections to see if the topics suggested warranted a review.

The topics for the initial reviews and to be considered today had been recommended at the Scrutiny Liaison Forum (SLF) Committee Meeting which had met on the 7th Feb 2019.

Some Members supported the proposed topic of 'Planters in Residential Streets' and whether there should be a planned, scheduled and budgeted removal of planters in each ward, as many attracted antisocial behaviour such as rubbish dumping and vandalism. Some Members also supported a higher priority for the Planning Enforcement topic.

In terms of the initial topics a suggested for each Committee a suggestion was made that the proposed review for the Area Transport Strategy include the Boundaries of the Area Transport Boards as they were currently not evenly spread across the Borough.

It was highlighted that there had been a spate of burglaries in the borough recently where the elderly and vulnerable had been targeted. Members asked if an emergency scrutiny review topic could be considered prior to the end of the municipal year as it was felt that to leave such a review until after the May elections was too late. Other concerns were also raised about levels of crime and disorder in some areas of the Borough.

The Scrutiny Team Leader confirmed that an emergency review could be added to this year's review topics and it was agreed that the issue be referred to Crime and Disorder Select Committee to look at safeguarding the vulnerable elderly.

AGREED that;

1) A review of protection of vulnerable older people be undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Select Committee as detailed above;

2) The first topics for Select Committee scrutiny in 2019/20 be as follows:

- Care Home for Older People (Adult Social Care & Health Select Committee)
- Careers Provision (Children & Young People Select Committee)
- Roadside Advertising (Crime & Disorder Select Committee)
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme (People Select Committee)

- Area Transport Strategy (Place Select Committee)

3) Executive Scrutiny review the remaining topics for the 2019/20 work programme in June 2019.

ESC 61/18 People Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce (Final Report for information)

Members were presented with the final report of the People Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce.

The key topics discussed could be summarised as follows;

- The proposal to scrutinise Under-representation of BME Communities in the Stockton Borough Council (SBC) Workforce had partly come from the staff at the BME forum had questioned if there was a sufficient number of BME staff proportionately working at SBC compared to rest of the Borough.
- The views of young people and what they thought about working at the council were investigated.
- The findings suggested that under-representation was prevalent across many publicly ran services.
- It was recognised and highlighted that SBC employees from BME communities felt they were well supported at work.
- Councillor Norma Stephenson informed the Committee that she had undertaken a piece of work on proportionality in the workforce at the request of the Tees Valley Combined Authority, Mayor, Ben Houchen. Councillor Stephenson agreed to share those recommendations with Members once the findings had been presented to the Board.
- Questions were raised in relation to how the response Stockton Borough Council had to the employee survey compared with other Councils? Officers agreed to follow this up after the meeting.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Louise Baldock thanked officers and partnerships for the work which had been undertaken.

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for an excellent review.

AGREED that the report be noted.

ESC 62/18 Scrutiny Review of the Child's Journey

Members were presented with the final report of the Children and Young Peoples Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of the Child's Journey.

The Committee were informed that the report had been presented to Cabinet 14th February 2019 where the recommendations were approved.

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for an excellent review.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**ESC
63/18 Scrutiny Review of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households**

Members were presented with the final report of Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households.

The key topics discussed were as follows;

- The Committee focused on developing services for those most hard to house;
- Those that were hardest to house was often due to drug and alcohol related issues.
- Alternative models of delivery for those most 'difficult to house' had been explored throughout the review.
- Some national funding opportunities had become available during the period of the review. In addition to the funding that enable the work of the LGA Advisor the Committee considered a number of opportunities to bid for funds from central government. The results of these bids were not available during the period of the review but could be reported to the Committee at a future meeting.
- The Committee received assurance, including from the LGA, that the Council's approach was appropriate and customer-focussed, and met the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act. A number of improvements had also been identified and could be implemented in the short term.
- The Committee were informed that currently there was a low number of rough sleepers in Stockton.
- Members attention was drawn to the flow chart detailed within the main report which could help members in their roles as what action to take when helping the homeless in their wards.
- Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee Councillor David Harrington asked if there was any information available for dealing with the homeless during out of office hours. Scrutiny Officers agreed to circulate contact details to Members and to request that the Thirteen Housing Group display contact information for the homeless on their website.

The Chair of the Adults Social Care and Health Select Committee acknowledged the good work the Councils Housing Services undertook in

tackling homelessness.

The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee, Councillor Lisa Grainge gave special thanks to the Committee for delivering an excellent review in her absence due to ill health.

The Final report had been presented to Cabinet where all recommendations had been agreed.

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for an excellent review.

AGREED that the report be noted

ESC Statutory Forward Plan

64/18

Members considered the Council's Statutory Forward Plan for 1st February 2019 - 31st May 2019.

AGREED that the Statutory Forward Plan be noted.

ESC Select Committee Chairs' Updates

65/18

Members considered the Select Committee Chairs' Updates.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Updates were noted as detailed within the report.

Children and Young People Select Committee

Updates were noted as detailed within the report.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Updates were noted as detailed within the report.

People Select Committee

Updates were noted as detailed within the report.

Place Select Committee

Updates were noted as detailed within the report.

AGREED the updates were noted.

**ESC
66/18** **Work Programme and Chair's Update**

During an Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting which was held 21st November 2017, questions had been raised in relation to the accuracy of the satisfaction levels / value of visitor expenditure from the market research collected for SIRF17, and how reliable this was. Following the questions / allegations raised an investigation was undertaken to understand how the information was collected and if there had been any wrong doing by the marketing company as it was felt by some that the figures had been inflated. The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee requested that the conclusion of the inquiry be included within the minutes of this Executive Scrutiny Committee to allow the allegation to be brought to a close at the end of the current Council Term prior to the next Local Elections.

A summary of the conclusion following the investigation was detailed below:

Following the investigation with the market research company, the Council had been able to be fully satisfied with the veracity of the market research information provided for SIRF17. The Council reviewed the questions and processes and had no concerns at all. One of the main concerns raised related to the value of visitor expenditure at SIRF and a suggestion that the amount may be overstated as the researchers didn't clarify how many people the expenditure reported by the interviewee related to. The Council were satisfied that there was a very specific follow up question about this in the researcher's script and the reason that question wasn't asked in the instance raised was that the interviewee had already intervened to point out how many people the expenditure related to – thus making the question redundant. Had the interview progressed without this intervention the question would have been asked.

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee Councillor David Harrington thanked the Committee for their continued support over the last 4 years and thanked the Chair of each Select Committee for the fantastic work they had produced. The work programme had been heavy with extra items added. Thanks was also given to Vice-Chair Councillor Sylvia Walmsley and interim Vice-Chair Councillor Gillian Corr. Officers from Democratic Services, the Scrutiny Team and all officers who had taken part in each review including independent members, were also thanked for their hard work.

Agreed the updates be noted.

**ESC
67/18** **Scrutiny Developments**

There were no Scrutiny Developments reported.