

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday 15 November 2022.

Present: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley (Chair), Cllr Maurice Perry (Vice-Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Barry Woodhouse,

Officers: Julie Danks (MD), Martin Gray (ChS), Reuben Kench (CS.E&C), Chris Renahan (F,D&R), Jonathan Nertney, Judy Trainer, Gary Woods, Rebecca Saunders Thompson, Rachel Harrison, John Devine (CS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Laura Tunney

1 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 October 2022 for Approval

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 COUNCIL PLAN 2022/25 UPDATE

Members were presented with an update on the implementation of the Council Plan and the priority actions for 2022/25.

Officers highlighted key areas of the report to Members, some of which were as follows:

- Priority 9: which outlines the Councils plan to work with partners in the VCSE sector and Community Partnerships to tackle food poverty in the Borough.
- Priority 19: The new Employment and Training Hub which opened in August 2022 had had over 1000 registrations with over 130 going into employment.
- Priority 23: which was related to the continued redevelopment of Stockton Town Centre and demolition of Castlegate and development of the Urban Park.

Members discussed with officers the priority 21 update which stated that the Portrack Relief Road project had been put on hold due to a significant budget gap and asked when an improvement in the funding situation was likely. The

gap was explained as a funding issue through the Tees Valley Combined Authority scheme and the project being more costly than anticipated. Officers assured Members that talks were to be held to secure the extra funding and that additional information could be provided after the meeting.

Priority 29, the programme of road and pavement maintenance and repairs, was discussed, with Members querying the selection criteria and process of the scheme. Officers stated that more detailed information could be provided if Members had any particular areas of concern.

Members questioned officers around priority 23, and if a transport plan had been made for the part of the high street impacted from the demolition work. Officers explained that the transport plans had been included in the overall plans for the redevelopment but would make sure that Members were aware of any ongoing transport plans to be implemented.

Members asked officers about the development of the Dunedin House timeline (priority 34) and if the impact of the cost-of-living crisis had affected the project. Officers acknowledged that there would be an estimated 20% increase in funding pressures for the project which had been set in 2020. However, officers would look at the scope of the scheme to potentially cut back on costs. The plans for when officers would be moved over to Dunedin House would be finalised in the early part of 2023. Officers explained further that the move to Dunedin would take place in stages.

Members expressed concern around priority 36 (Add New features and functions to the Council website and improve online services for customers) and if it would impact on the Council's telephone services. Officers informed Members that the improvements done to the website would not impact on the coverage of telephone lines, and though it was acknowledged that wait times had increased, this had been due to the demand increasing and changing. Staffing levels and training would be increased to deal with the more in-depth and varied issues those who used the service had.

Some Members expressed concern around the implementation of the flexible working scheme outlined in the report (priority 38). Officers explained that the flexible working scheme had been piloted in places where appropriate, and that consultation had and would continue to take place prior to any formal implementation. Officers agreed to circulate information to Members following the meeting on the implementation of the flexible working Scheme.

AGREED the report be noted.

5 Scrutiny of Crustacean Deaths

Officers presented an update on the proposed joint working arrangement with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council in relation to their motion concerning crustacean deaths off the Northeast Coast.

Redcar & Cleveland's Adults, Wellbeing and Heath Scrutiny and Improvement Committee had proposed an informal joint arrangement, whereby political and

officer representatives from each Council would meet to provide an opportunity to share collective insight and evidence and pool resources in terms of taking the issue forward. The progress of the joint arrangement could then be fed back into each Councils own formal governance arrangements.

It was proposed that the Chair of the Place Select Committee would be the most appropriate Member to represent Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in any joint arrangement.

Members voted in favour of the recommendation outlined in the report.

AGREED that –

1. The report be noted
2. That the Chair of the Place Select Committee (with substitute permitted) be appointed to the informal joint scrutiny arrangement looking into crustacean deaths off the North East Coast.

6 Select Committee Chairs' Updates

Members were provided with updates from the Chairs of each Select Committee. Updates and discussion included:

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee –

Members continued to have significant concerns around the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV). Members would look into the possibility of sending another letter to the Secretary of State to outline the Committees' ongoing concerns.

Children and Young People Select Committee –

Members noted the update from the Children and Young People Select Committee Chair.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee –

The Bonfires on Public Land review had been completed and presented to Cabinet in September 2022. All the recommendations had been endorsed with an action plan submitted to the Committee in November 2022 which was then approved.

The Vice-Chair made an appeal to Members to complete a survey for the Tree Asset Management review.

People Select Committee –

Members noted the update from the People Select Committee Chair.

Place Select Committee –

Members noted the update from the Place Select Committee Chair.

AGREED that the update and discussion be noted and actioned as appropriate.

7 Forward Plan of Key Decisions

AGREED that the Forward Plan was noted.

8 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme

AGREED that the work programme be noted.