

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 13th October, 2020.

Present: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley(Chairman), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Julia Whitehill (Sub Cllr Tony Hampton), Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Hilary Vickers (Sub Cllr Tony Riordan), Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Laura Tunney

Officers: Peter Bell, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Judy Trainer, Margaret Waggott, Sarah Whaley, Gary Woods(MD)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Tony Riordan

ESC 1/20 Councillor Julia Cherrett

The Committee observed a minute silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Julia Cherrett.

ESC 2/20 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

ESC 3/20 Minutes from the Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting which was held 23rd June 2020

Consideration was given to the Executive Scrutiny Committee minutes from the meeting which was held on 23rd June 2020.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

ESC 4/20 Scrutiny Work Programme Update 2020/21

Members of the Committee were presented with a report which detailed the Scrutiny Annual Report (infographic) for 2019/20, feedback from the North East Regional Scrutiny Officers Network Meeting and proposed changes to the work programme for People Select Committee.

The Committee heard that despite the work programme being stopped in March 2020, seven reviews had been completed during the year.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 7 of the report where it was highlighted that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had held 15 scrutiny meetings since the beginning of the pandemic period and one Task and Finish Group meeting which compared well with other North East Councils. Members were also informed of the different approaches Scrutiny Committees had undertaken to carry out reviews such as utilising remote meeting technology, written submissions and on-line surveys which had been utilised and evidence

which had been collected, for example, using photographic evidence. These new approaches were helping the Council to deliver the same programme albeit in different ways.

The People Select committee which had been carrying out a review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, however, due to complexities which had arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was proposed that the draft scheme proposals were paused and developed once there was a greater understanding of those complexities. The next review for the People Select Committee would have been the Tees Credit Union, however, as the Tees Credit Union were still recruiting a new Chief Executive, it was proposed the next review undertaken by the People Select Committee was the review of Carbon Monoxide Awareness, with the review of Tees Credit Union taking place afterwards.

The Chair of the People Select Committee was happy to accept the review of Carbon Monoxide Awareness as its next review and it was also agreed that the Cleveland Fire Authority would be added to the scope.

Members queried why information had not been provided detailing the number of scrutiny committee meetings held by Middlesbrough Borough Council during the COVID-19 pandemic. Officers noted that information regarding other Councils was requested by the Regional Scrutiny Officers Network (not SBC), and that Middlesbrough's data may have been delayed for some reason - Officers agreed to investigate further and circulate the necessary information to the Committee if available.

A brief discussion was had surrounding the initial actions and outcomes arising from the current Select Committee reviews which included the following

- 'Smarter Working in Stockton' - Accommodation & Buildings' questions were raised as to whether this review would need revisiting due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 'Domestic Abuse and its Impact on Children', it was suggested that this required improved collaboration between partners such as Police and Schools, working more closely and sharing information with key staff.

- 'Area Transport Strategy' discussion took place in terms of the accuracy of the data used for the review and whether data from the 2011 census was out of date. The Chair of the Place Select Committee confirmed that the latest population statistics were used to make the recommended annual ATS funding allocation fair across all wards.

- 'Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home'. Some Members felt this should be a priority due to the current situation with the Pandemic. The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee explained that the Action Plan in relation to the review's agreed recommendations had been delayed due to challenges in obtaining required input from key partners due to COVID-19, however the Action Plan had now been received at its October meeting and a progress update regarding these agreed actions would be considered at a future Committee meeting.

-‘Obstructive and illegal parking around Whitehouse Primary School’, it was disappointing that progress following the completion of this review had been delayed, however now schools had reopened a draft Action Plan would be presented to the committee at its November meeting.

-‘Care homes for Older People’ consideration needed to be given to those closest to residents in care homes as a matter of priority.

-‘Careers Provision’ young people were our future and it was important that all available opportunities were taken advantage of.

Officers informed the Committee that all the reviews were at differing stages and would continue to be monitored until all actions could be signed off as fully achieved.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the proposed changes to the work programme for the People Select Committee set out in paragraph 11 of the main report be endorsed.

**ESC
5/20** **Forward Plan**

The Statutory Forward Plan was noted.

**ESC
6/20** **Select Committee Chairs' Updates**

Members considered the Select Committee Chairs' Updates.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee;

The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

The Hospital Discharge review was going well. Two evidence gathering sessions had been held in September 2020 which considered evidence in relation to phase 1 (discharge to care homes). Information was received from North Tees and South Tees NHS Trust’s as well as the Local Authority. In terms of care homes themselves, a survey had been collated and sent to all care homes across the Borough in order to obtain written submissions

Children and Young People Select Committee;

The Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

The Committee had gathered a lot of evidence for the ‘Cost of School Uniform’ review. An informal session was to be held to consider all the information and look at possible recommendations. Initial findings had highlighted that some Schools didn’t appear to pass on information to parents on how to get help with the cost of school uniforms; although there was help available within the community and voluntary sectors, there needed to be something for everyone.

Where second-hand uniforms were available, it was highlighted that some families felt upset and embarrassed to receive them. There was also a private members bill currently going through parliament.

The Committee heard that some trade unions provided help to low income trade union members with the cost of uniforms.

Questions were raised relating to the 'Domestic Abuse and its Impact on Children' review and how quickly information had been shared with schools during lockdown. Officers agreed to chase Children's Services for an update and circulate to Members.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee;

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

In terms of the 'Fly Grazed Horses' review, although this had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been meetings with Council Officers and Cleveland Police. There was also to be further meetings with Land and Property which had been delayed as they had recently had a new team and structure implemented. There were also several horse owners engaging well and the review was now getting back on track.

People Select Committee;

The People Select update report was noted.

Place Select Committee;

The Chair of the Place Select Committee, gave members a brief update highlighting the following;

The 'Business Support and Engagement' review was making good progress and was on track.

The Business Support and Enterprise team had supported local businesses to the value of £32m in business grants during COVID-19 which was fantastic news. The Chair of the Place Select Team congratulated the Team.

Cllr Lynn Hall requested additional data in terms of the progress of the review of 'Bring Sites (Recycling)' as there had been an increase in fly tipping within the Borough. The Chairman of the Place Select Committee agreed to circulate the relevant data to Councillor Hall.

The updates were noted.

AGREED that the reports be noted.

The Chair gave thanks to Cllr Chris Clough for the work he had undertaken during his time as Vice Chairman of the Executive Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee agreed that the executive summary of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committees review of Hospital Discharge (phase 1) report would be presented at the Executive Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 10th November 2020.

AGREED the information be noted