

## Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 20th September, 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 (Sub for Cllr Ken Dixon), Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mohammed Javed (Sub for Cllr Chris Barlow), Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees

**Officers:** Judy Trainer, Gary Woods, Rachel Harrison, John Devine (CS)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

### 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 26th July 2022 For Approval

Members thanked officers for circulating responses to the queries raised during consideration of the Council Plan. Further clarification was sought in respect of the following:

- There is currently no public transport going to Ropner Park. Will the Council be making plans for temporary parking provision for events, even within the park itself?
- Parking arrangements for holiday buses (that used to park outside the Swallow Hotel). The current arrangements are only temporary. What are the long-term plans?
- How many customers are phoning the council (rather than using the online option)?

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022

Members were presented with the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021 – 2022 which outlined the Scrutiny Reviews that had been completed in the 2021/22 period.

Members expressed their thanks to Select Committee Members and Officers for completing eleven scrutiny reviews in the year.

During the discussion of the Scrutiny Annual Report Members expressed an interest in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which was to be presented at the November meeting, but which Members felt would be more appropriate to bring forward due to recent information having been reported in the local press.

All Members expressed support for the idea of bringing the MTFP forward to a special meeting to scrutinise it.

AGREED that:

- 1) The report was be noted
- 2) An additional Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting be arranged, and is held before the next scheduled Committee meeting in November 2022, to consider updates in relation to the Council's MTFP

## **5 Crime and Disorder Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land (Executive Summary for information)**

The report presented to Members outlined the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's scrutiny review of Bonfires on Public Land.

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee informed Members that the review had focused on two aspects. The first had been to establish the extent of bonfire related activity and concerns across the borough. Secondly the Committee considered what would help strengthen the management of bonfire related matters in the October to November period.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

Whether the review could have been extended from the mid-October to mid-November period to also cover summer months, with an additional interest in dry land fires. It was noted that the agreed scope of the review had only been for the months previously stated.

Members also questioned the legality of bonfires not on private land and if Stockton on Tees Borough Council (SBC) gives permission or if SBC has a legal right to stop any bonfires on said land. The Committee's report provides details of the limited legislative powers available to Local Authorities and its partners in relation to bonfires.

AGREED the report be noted

## **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 –

Evidence gathering for the Care at Home scrutiny review was continuing and the last session had included the consideration of a Committee survey aimed at

service-users and their families / informal carers. It was noted that the number of responses was low with the only responses being submitted via the online link (despite hard copy versions being made available).

The responses which had come into the Committee highlighted that continuity of carers and good communication with and from providers were priorities, while noting that the level of care and kindness that had been shown to those accessing services was broadly positive.

Children and Young People Select Committee –

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

Crime and Disorder Select Committee –

The Tree Asset Management scrutiny review had begun by identifying the scope of the review, with evidence gathering to take place at later meetings.

People Select Committee –

The Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future Scrutiny Review was progressing.

Members expressed approval of the aims of the committee to encourage young people to consider education/ training and careers in new and expanding green industries.

Place Select Committee –

Members noted that the Fire Safety of High-Rise Residential Buildings review was still in the monitoring section of the update.

Officers explained that this was due to one outstanding action relating to completion of a Government public inquiry following the Grenfell Tower tragedy which had only recently been concluded. The final report was still available for circulation should any Members require it.

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

## **7 Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

AGREED that the Forward Plan was noted.

## **8 Executive Scrutiny Chair's Update and Work Programme 2022/23**

The Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee sought views about the possibility of a joint scrutiny investigation with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council into Crustacean deaths.

The request had been received following the approval of a Council motion by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council at its meeting held on the 14 July 2022. The motion related to the mass mortality crustacean event that had occurred along the length of the Tees coastline a few months ago.

Some Members expressed the opinion that the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) scientific case which had support from a range of other organisations was strong and there would be little benefit from further scrutiny.

However, other Members felt that there was sufficient research questioning the DEFRA findings that more scrutiny would be beneficial.

It was decided to wait for more information about the scope of the scrutiny enquiry before deciding on a course of action. All Members supported this.

**AGREED** that the discussion be noted and further information be sought on the scope of the scrutiny exercise.