

# People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 21st November, 2016.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell(Chairman), Cllr Eileen Johnson(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley

**Officers:** Peter Mennear, Jenna McDonald (LDS)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:**

**PEO  
43/16      Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

**PEO  
44/16      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

**PEO  
45/16      Draft Minutes - 17th October 2016 & 7th November 2016**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2016 and 7th November 2016.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

**PEO  
46/16      Overview of Culture and Leisure, Environmental Health, and Licensing Services**

Members received an overview of the following services:

- Licensing
- Environmental Health
- Culture, Events and Leisure

In relation to the Licensing services, the following points were noted:

The Council had to adapt to funding reductions of £52 million over the last five years which resulted in delivering efficiencies and savings within the following areas;

- Digitalisation of front end services
- Streamlining processes
- Digitalisation and mobile working for officers

- Whilst SBC had a track record of sound financial management and had been dealing with these problems successfully for many years, it was noted that it

would not be easy to find the additional savings of over £20 million by 2019/20.

- The challenge for all Members was to ensure that decisions about the basis on which services would be delivered were within the resources available, taking account of a number of factors such as reduced budget allocation, changing demographics, increasing demand, new national legislation and policy direction. Members were reminded of the four policy principles that supported the Council's decision-making as follows:

Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention, particularly those people in our communities who were subject to, or at risk of harm, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and those who were financially excluded or whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention, specifically in relation to tackling health inequalities, meeting the skills gap and improving access to job opportunities, tackling fuel poverty, improving education and training opportunities, access to affordable housing and financial and digital inclusion.

Developing strong and healthy communities through the provision of mainstream and preventive services that were available to all those who choose to access them.

Creating economic prosperity across the Borough.

In relation to what had been achieved, the following points were noted:

- A firm policy foundation was established across all licensing areas upon which to build a forward thinking customer focused service.

- There was strong evidence that the policy foundation was leading to positive outcomes for example, since the introduction of The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy in January 2016 we have had 41 accident damaged vehicles removed from the fleet, trained 500 drivers in safeguarding, encouraged an additional 49 new vehicles to be registered that comply to Euro 5 emissions, and following intelligence and complaints 19 drivers/applicants have been revoked or refused licenses. In addition the service had identified several areas in which the policy could be improved e.g. having an age related policy for licensed vehicles as opposed to emission standards, computer based knowledge test for new drivers as opposed paper based and moving to annual online Disclosure and Barring Service check as opposed to a three year paper checking service and work has started on the implementation of those suggested improvements.

- The service had also undertaken a review of the fees for Taxi licensing and the formal process of consultation with Members of the Licensing Committee and the trade will now commence.

- Work continued to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of managing the issue of all licenses, permits and registrations, with work underway on improving the website as a proactive pre-application advice channel, and on-line application / payment portal. In order to support the vibrant night time economy

in the Town Centre targeted compliance activity based on intelligence is supporting our move to enable the consideration of developing a Stockton version of the purple flag scheme for Stockton's licensed premises within the Stockton Town Centre area.

- In order to support the vibrant night time economy in the Town Centre targeted compliance activity based on intelligence is supporting our move to enable the consideration of developing a Stockton flag scheme recognised outstanding practice across the licensed trade for Stockton's licensed premises within the Stockton Town Centre area.

- The Licensing Service continued to review the processes and procedures to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of managing the issue of all licenses, permits and registrations, with work now underway on improving the website as a proactive pre-application advice channel, and on-line application / payment portal.

- The Licensing service has undergone a challenging review during 2015/16 which resulted in hitting the required level of financial savings and most importantly achieving.

With regard to Environmental Health, the following points were noted:

- The Environmental Health Service consisted of a broad range of duties aimed at protecting the health of the public through both statutory and non-statutory responsibilities in the field of Environmental Health enforcement and various aspects of public protection.

- Environmental Health were responsible for the inspection of around 1400 Food Premises in Stockton, which were visited in accordance with risk and were allocated a Food Hygiene Rating based on the inspection. Officers also visited to investigate reported food poisoning, public complaint, food sampling programmes, food hazard warnings and to offer advice on request and to new businesses.

The Environmental Health Service were responsible for enforcement of health and safety legislation in around 4000 workplaces including commercial and retail businesses. Inspection programmes were limited to high risk premises. Enforcement in other premises was mainly through investigation of accidents and complaints and response to requests or advice by businesses, particularly on start up.

With regard to Air Quality it was noted that Environmental Health was responsible for inspection of around 70 industrial Processes to control emissions through the issue of permits.

Noise pollution

It was noted that Investigating officers dealt with around 900 noise complaints each year. Although the role was mainly reactive investigation of domestic noise complaints, it also included providing advice through Planning, Licensing and Noise mapping to avoid noisy environments.

Members noted that the service maintained a risk based register of about 1,300

potentially contaminated sites. Implementation of the Contaminated Land Strategy in the Borough to deal with these sites during the development of land, following complaint or land contamination incidents. The team also managed closed landfill sites including Cowpen Leachate Plant which had been upgraded and monitoring taken in house to ensure cost effective operation in the future.

The information provided around the Culture, Events and Leisure Services included:

Libraries were subject to an ongoing review which had been the subject of a detailed report to the Council's Cabinet in recent months. In summary it would see reduced staff structures, the closure of Egglecliffe Library, the co-location of Fairfield Library and a significant reduction in the fund from which books and other lending material was purchased. Extra income from our partnership with Newcastle Building Society at Yarm Library was also helping to accommodate budget pressures.

- Preston Hall Museum was the primary means of delivering heritage work and the focus had been on efficiency whilst officers responded to growing demand and rising visitor numbers. During the summer school holiday period the museum attracted a record 50,000 visitors. Earned income from entry charges, increased shop sales and increased income from charged-for events have enabled the service to sustain great customer service.
- Leisure and Sports Development had responded to budget pressures by developing income-generating services like the pre-school Funky Feet programme. In addition, working with the leisure facility management partners Tees Active, we have made significant investments to improve the profitability of leisure assets at the same time as reducing subsidy and driving down costs.
- During 2015/16, Customer Services answered over 300,000 calls on behalf of 20 Council services. Staff answered over 35,000 emails and dealt with over 110,000 visits to our Customer Service Centres. Across these interactions satisfaction with the service was 98%.
- Events were a strategic priority, contributing to the town centre vibrancy objectives as well as social and community development goals. Major summer events in 2016 were a great success, including the hosting of the British Cycling National Road Race Championships and the staging of SIRF. To mark the anniversary of the Somme Offensive, SIRF was launched with a major show in Preston Park, the first time a SIRF show had been staged in the Park. The scale and nature of the show presented significant challenges but was a technical and artistic success and attracted critical acclaim from the general public and national agencies alike.
- The Council has a duty to ensure that all events on Council owned land are subject to comprehensive and thorough risk assessment and safety plans. Within our Event Delivery Framework Stockton coordinates an Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) which provides a multi-agency check and challenge to any event proposal. ISAG has reviewed over 50 events this year.
- The Learning and Skills Service is fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and as such has not been subject to budget cuts. However, the SFA has

increased its emphasis on employability and apprenticeships and driven a shift in the curriculum of the Service. Learning and Skills continue to deliver high levels of retention and progression. Pass rates in 2016 were 93.8% with 91% moving on to employment or into higher level studies

AGREED that the information be noted.

**PEO  
47/16**      **Welfare Reform Monitoring**

Members were presented with the welfare reform update report.

AGREED that the information be noted.

**PEO  
48/16**      **Work Programme**

Consideration was given to the Committee Work Programme.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.