

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 7th October, 2019.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell(Chairman), Cllr Mohammed Javed(Vice-Chair), Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Mick Moore,

Officers: Julie Auffret, Joanne Dolan (R&B, Michelle Connolly (SWIS), Garry Cummings, Ian Coxon (FBS), Peter Mennear, Michael Henderson, Marianne Sleeman (MD)

Also in attendance: Cllr Bob Cook (Leader), Ian Bartlett. Janine Brown (Stockton District Advice and Information Services)

Apologies: Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Eileen Johnson

PEO 16/19 **Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.

PEO 17/19 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

PEO 18/19 **Minutes from the meeting held on 9th September 2019 for approval / signature**

Consideration was given to the minutes from the meetings held on 9th September 2019.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

PEO 19/19 **Task and Finish Review of Smarter Working in Stockton-on-Tees - Accommodation and Buildings**

Members were presented with the Task and Finish Review of Smarter Working in Stockton on Tees – Accommodation and Buildings

The main issues discussed:

- Members were informed that several Task and Finish Group meetings had been held regarding the Smarter Working Programme in Stockton.
- It was noted the current buildings would need a lot of money invested to bring them up to any reasonable standard but to do nothing was not an option. Some buildings visited were would prove very difficult to maintain.
- The draft report would be submitted to Cabinet in November with a

recommendation to look at one base for the Council with more flexible working for staff.

AGREED:

Members agreed the draft final report of the Task and Finish Review of Smarter Working in Stockton on Tees – Accommodation and Buildings and thanked all involved for their input.

**PEO
20/19** **Scrutiny Review of Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

Members received information regarding the Scrutiny Review of Local Council Tax Support Scheme from Ian Bartlett and Janine Brown from SDAIS (Stockton District Advice and Information Service)

The main issues discussed were as follows:

- A survey was taken of 95 cases over a 3 month period.
- Single people and single parents were in the highest category of Council Tax debt. The Review highlighted there was clear evidence under 25's need assistance.
- Members were informed 14% of the cases presented with only Council Tax debt and 35% of cases had no Council Tax Support or Council Tax Relief in place.
- From April 2015 to April 2019 Council Tax bills in the Stockton area Band D have increased by 21% and there have been increases in Energy prices etc. benefit claimants have not seen the same increase in income.
- Members were informed in the period of January to March 2019 0% of applications were successful in the Stockton area for S13A (Local Government Finance Act 1992 which provides discretionary power to reduce the amount of Council Tax).
- There has been no proof identified with the increase of Council Tax debt and Universal Credit.
- Members were informed that the Council were looking at the impact of changing the 20% Council Tax contribution would have.

AGREED:

The information be noted and the draft recommendations be included in the draft final report for consideration.

Further information would be brought to Committee from SDAIS regarding the

impact of changing Council Tax contributions in other Citizen Advice Services.

The Revenue & Benefit Service would bring produce some options of the Council Tax Support Scheme to Committee which would be taken to Council in 2020.

**PEO
21/19** **Select Committee Work Programme**

Consideration was given to the People Select Committee Work Programme.

AGREED

That the People Select Committee Work Programme be noted.

**PEO
22/19** **Chairs Update**

The Chair had nothing further to update the Committee.