

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 2nd March, 2020.

Present: Cllr Jean O'Donnell (Chairman), Cllr Mohammed Javed (Vice-Chair), Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Beccy Brown, Margie Stewart-Piercy, James Burrell (HR,L&C) Garry Cummings, Ian Miles (F&BS), Margaret Waggott, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Judith Trainer (MD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Jim Beall.

Apologies: Cllr Bob Cook and Cllr Mick Moore.

**PEO
30/19** **Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

**PEO
31/19** **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Jim Beall and Jean O'Donnell declared an interest in Item 4 as they are both members of the Tees Active Board.

**PEO
32/19** **Minutes from the meeting held on the 9th December 2019 for approval / signature**

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

AGREED that the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**PEO
33/19** **Overview Reports 2020**

Consideration was given to the Overview Report 2020 for HR, Legal and Communications.

The main issues were discussed as follows:

- Members were informed that there are a number of areas where there have been recruitment difficulties. These included IT, social services, and audit. This was a national as well as a local issue.
- The Council still had a high employee retention rate.
- Members were informed that new approaches to recruitment were being implemented and a 2020 apprenticeship recruitment programme was being delivered.
- Members questioned if they could receive training to assist residents with mental health problems. Members were informed two members of the HR team were now qualified to provide training and this would be arranged.
- Members were informed that contingency plans in the wake of a corona virus outbreak were being coordinated. Regular meetings were taking place regarding this issue.
- Members were informed that the high level of open legal cases in children's social care due to court pressures is being managed and extra money

has been provided to assist with this.

- Members were informed that the HR department had received an award for its initiatives in supporting staff who may be victims of domestic abuse.
- Members were informed that new initiatives were being developed on diversity in recruitment.

Consideration was given to the Overview Report 2020 for Finance and Business Services.

The main issues were discussed as follows:

- Members congratulated the team on successfully completing the Annual Accounts and Governance Statement. Members were informed that around 98 Councils across the country failed to submit this before the deadline.
- Members were informed that work had begun on decanting tenants from the Castlegate Centre to Wellington Square. The planning process on Council office accommodation had also begun. Current office buildings would be assessed to determine if any actions needed to be taken in this interim period.
- Members were informed that a review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme was underway and Members would be presented with options in a future committee meeting.

Consideration was given to the Overview Report 2020 for Xentrall Shared Services.

The main issues were discussed as follows:

- Members were informed that internal and external threats to IT systems were a daily occurrence and ever changing. However, the Council's IT systems were robust and staff were well trained in IT security.
- Members were informed that the majority of Council employees had completed cyber security training.
- Members thanked the team for providing cyber security training to Members as well as staff.

Consideration was given to the Overview Report 2020 for Administration, Democratic and Electoral Services.

The main issues were discussed as follows:

- With regard to ID in polling stations, Members questioned who would finance a scheme to provide photographic ID for those who do not already have it and would struggle to meet the costs. Members were informed that pilot schemes had taken place, however financial arrangements had not been finalised.
- Members were informed that there was a national recruitment issue in electoral services. A potential national apprenticeship scheme in electoral services was being developed.
- Members congratulated the team for their hard work during the last year which included three elections, two of which were unplanned.
- Members requested information on the new constituencies following the conclusion of the Parliamentary Boundary Review.

Consideration was given to the Overview Report 2020 for Arts, Leisure and Culture.

The main issues were discussed as follows:

- Members asked for information on the literature/promotional material on Stockton Borough Council events which was provided for guests in Hilton Hotel.
- Members were informed that the new leisure centre in Ingleby Barwick would be completed on time in summer 2020.
- Members congratulated the team for providing another successful year of events across the Borough.
- Members supported the scrutiny review suggestion on public events on private land.

AGREED that:

- 1) the information be noted.
- 2) the further information be provided as requested.

PEO 34/19 Scrutiny Review of Public Consultation

Consideration was given to the Scope and Project Plan of the scrutiny review of Public Consultation.

Members were presented with an overview of Public Consultation from the SBC Communication Team.

The main issues/services that would be covered by the review included:

- The principles of good consultation (including an outline of SBC's approach to consultation)
- Scrutiny of consultation platforms (including the Planning Portal)
- SBC Viewpoint Panel
- Residents Survey
- Best practice and industry developments
- Learning from the approaches of other Councils
- Feedback and evaluation from previous consultations

AGREED that:

The draft scope and project plan of the review be approved.

PEO 35/19 Chairs Update

The Chair had nothing to update.

PEO 36/19 Select Committee Work Programme

Consideration was given to the People Select Committee Work Programme.

The next meeting of the People Select Committee will be on 16 March 2020.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.