

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 26th July 2021.

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Vice Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Lee Spence, Cllr Bill Woodhead, Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Jane Webb, Sophie Haste, Haleem Ghafoor, Jill Douglas (HR, L&C), Ian Tranter (Disability Staff Forum), Lesley Tart (A&H), Abbie Wild, John Devine, Judy Trainer (DS)

Also in attendance: Lilly Crisp (Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF))

1 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Barry Woodhouse declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 5 owing to a relative having a disability and being involved in Council activity.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2021**

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **Task and Finish Review - Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Select Committee considered a draft scope and project plan for the forthcoming Task and Finish Review of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

AGREED that the scope and project plan be approved and the following Members be appointed to serve on the Task and Finish Group:

Cllr Marilyn Surtees
Cllr Niall Innes
Cllr Eileen Johnson
Cllr Lee Spence
Cllr Barry Woodhouse

4 **Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough**

Jane Webb, Community Engagement Manager, advised that information was being collated from Directorates and Services around the key lines of enquiry for the review; this information would be mapped to identify any best practice and gaps in services/ support. She advised that the next meeting would take evidence from the Libraries and Information Service, Guide Dogs for the Blind and share regional good practice.

Members commented on the importance of gathering evidence in relation the breadth of disability including "invisible" disability and mental health issues. It was suggested that evidence should be sought from charities and in relation to mobility scooter proficiency.

Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF)

Lilly Crisp from the Big Committee gave a presentation on how disability was taken into account in the work of BMBF, including testimonials from BMBF members who had been supported with their disabilities.

BMBF was open to all young people aged 11 – 19, or up to 25 with SEN; information was gathered on disability as part of recruitment and a pledge had to be signed which encouraged members to respect and listen to the views of others and create an inclusive environment where everyone was confident to make their voice heard.

The Big Committee had positions for the Head of Diversity and Head of Special Educational Needs who worked with the Council on their Big Objectives. Some of the Big Objectives included supporting and empowering young people with SEN and promoting equality and diversity. A link was shared for a video created by BMBF for Autism Awareness Week.

The “BMBF Approved” award recognised businesses who provided a welcoming atmosphere to young customers and this had recently been extended to include disabilities visible and invisible.

Disability Staff Forum

Ian Tranter, Chair of the Disability Staff Forum, and Haleem Ghafoor, Corporate Projects Manager, gave a presentation on the work of the Disability Staff Forum. The Disability Staff Forum was established in January 2010 with the purpose of:

- Being a peer support network for employees with a disability
- Sharing information about Disability issues e.g., International Day of People with Disabilities
- To have an opportunity to make recommendations regarding service delivery
- Encourage and influence better organizational support for employees with a disability
- Support individuals in the workplace e.g., Access to work process
- Have an opportunity to champion issues effecting employees with a disability

The work of the Forum included:

- Actively working alongside the VCSE look to attract and recruit people with disabilities
- Providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process
- Offering an interview to people with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for the job
- Having a flexible approach when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job
- Proactively offering and making reasonable adjustments as required
- Encouraging suppliers and partner firms to be Disability Confident
- Being a model of good practice for Disability Confident and helping and advising other Local Authorities
- Ensuring employees have sufficient disability equality awareness training

- Getting the right people for our organisation
- Promoting a culture of being Disability Aware
- Supporting employees in the workplace
- Ensuring that any barriers in the development and progression of staff with disabilities are addressed
- Ensuring managers are aware of how they can support staff who are sick or absent from work
- Valuing and listening to feedback from staff with disabilities
- Reviewing this Disability Confident self-assessment regularly
- Including disability awareness equality training in our induction process
- Guiding staff in finding information and advice on disabilities
- Providing occupational health services if required
- Provide and share good practice
- Accreditation to SBC achieving Disability Confident Leader Status
- Accessibility work regarding Branding Guidelines
- Regular working with Employees, Managers and Occupational Health on:
 - Accessibility,
 - Assistive technology,
 - Access to Work applications
 - Support during COVID e.g., Homeworking
- Promotion of disability related events

Dementia Friendly Stockton – High Street Project

Lesley Tart, Community Link Worker, gave a presentation on a one-year pilot jointly funded by Stockton Business Improvement District and Stockton Borough Council Public Health to make businesses and organisations in Stockton High Street dementia friendly and more accessible for people with dementia and their carers.

The objectives of the project were:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Re-establish Stockton-on-Tees as a nationally recognised dementia friendly community
- Recruit a Community Link Worker to deliver the project
- Support businesses and other organisations in Stockton High Street to deliver their services in a manner that is accessible to and inclusive of people living with dementia and carers to enable people to live as independently as possible
- Develop existing community spaces to offer more social opportunities for people living with dementia
- Increase awareness of dementia and local support services (including how to reduce the risk and how to get a diagnosis)
- Empower commitment to support social prescribing and providing a meaningful retail and leisure experience

The presentation set out:

- The national framework
- Rationales

- Model for a dementia friendly Stockton High Street
- Social opportunities for people with dementia
- Work during the lockdown
- Next steps

The achievements of the project were also shared as part of the presentation and it was noted that figures were rapidly increasing following easing of Covid restrictions. Achievements recorded the numbers of:

- Dementia friends created - 511
- Dementia sessions delivered - 46
- Dementia champions trained - 6
- Events - 4
- Businesses accredited as dementia friendly - 29

AGREED that the information be noted.

5 Work Programme 2021-22 and Chair's Update

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.