

PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 20 March 2023.

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Neil Mitchell (DoCS,EC), Chris Renahan, Margie Stewart-Piercy (DoFD&R) and Rebecca Saunders-Thompson (DoCS).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Vice-Chair), Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Lee Spence and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley.

PEO/32/22 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure

PEO/33/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PEO/34/22 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PEO/35/22 Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations - Progress report for the previously completed Tees Credit Union review.

The Select Committee considered a progress update including assessments of progress following implementation of the recommendations from the Tees Credit Union review.

The overall aim of the review had been to consider the operation of the Credit Union since its merger with Moneywise in 2017 to ensure that it was serving the needs of the people of the Borough and specifically supporting the vulnerable who rely on it for the provision of loans, banking services and savings accounts at reasonable rates.

This was the first time the update had been presented to the Committee. There were six outstanding recommendations.

The Committee commended the report and the work of Council Officers, the Tees Credit Union, and the Stockton & District Advice & Information Service.

AGREED that:

1) the Progress Update be noted, and the assessments of progress be confirmed.

2) the Action Plan in relation to the recommendations from the previously completed Scrutiny review be signed-off as fully achieved (no further updates required).

PEO/36/22 Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future

The Head of Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure and the Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth and Development, presented an action plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future would be implemented and target dates for completion.

The overall aim of the review had been to understand what funding was available for home efficiency improvements and whether this met the needs of the borough's residents. The review also examined the work that was taking place across the Tees Valley to create a local workforce fit for the demands of a green economy of the future.

Actions were focused on highlighting the need for new housing stock to be more energy efficient through tighter building regulations along with a commitment to raise awareness of new home energy efficiency initiatives and grants available to residents. Actions also focused on highlighting and promoting 'green jobs' at all levels, including entry level jobs. Timescales to implement actions ranged from September 2023 to March 2024.

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of recommendation one which focused on writing to government to urge that legislation was passed to improve energy efficiency measures in new homes.

It was stated that energy efficiency measures should be improved in older and new homes.

It was suggested that the number of onshore windfarms should be increased.

Responding to questions on the Council's 'Big Community Switch', officers informed the Committee that the scheme was being constantly monitored and as soon as the volatility in the energy markets eased, the scheme would be resumed.

Questions were raised about the upcoming hydrogen trial in residential areas in Redcar and if officers had more information on this. Officers responded that they would conduct further research on the trial and provide information to Members.

AGREED that the Action Plan be approved, and the further information be provided as requested.

PEO/37/22 End of Term Report 2019 - 2023

Members were presented with the Scrutiny End of Term Report 2019-2023. Officers introduced the report and highlighted the achievements across the Scrutiny Committees during this term.

The following points were raised by the Committee:

The Committee commended the work of Council officers on the report and discussed the reviews undertaken.

A further update on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, following the May 2023 elections, was requested.

AGREED that the report be noted.

PEO/38/22 Work Programme 2022-2023

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The Chair had nothing to update.

The next meeting would be held following the May 2023 elections.

AGREED that the Work Programme and Chair's update be noted.