

CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel was held on 17 July 2017.

PRESENT: Councillors J Goodchild, A Hellaoui, L Lewis, D Rooney and Z Uddin

OFFICERS: S Blood, R Horniman and J Bowden

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillor R Arundale, Councillor D J Branson, Councillor L McGloin, Councillor M Saunders.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made at this point at the meeting.

17/1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE- CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Goodchild was nominated and seconded and, therefore, appointed as Vice-Chair of the scrutiny panel until amended by the panel.

AGREED as follows:

That Councillor Goodchild be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel until amended by the scrutiny panel.

17/2 SETTING THE SCRUTINY PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018

The Democratic Services Officer presented a report that invited the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for 2017/18.

A list of potential topics, which were anticipated to be of particular interest to the scrutiny panel, and the suggestions received in respect of the scrutiny panel's remit were contained in the submitted report.

Members were advised that the topical issues and suggestions outlined in the report were merely proposals and the content of the work programme was entirely a decision for the panel to make. The panel were made aware that the Town Hall were operating 'hard hat tours' to allow councillors and members of the public to see the developments of the refurbishment. The members showed an interest in the tours and the Democratic Services Officer would arrange a visit in due course.

It was highlighted that the Panel had a responsibility to address certain issues each year and to request updates in relation to the following:-

- Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership.
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA).
- Domestic Violence.
- Preventing Terrorism.

In addition to any agreed work programme topics, the Panel had previously requested update reports in respect of the following previous scrutiny topics, which would be considered at future meetings of the panel:-

- Reoffending and Rehabilitation.
- Prevent

The scrutiny panel was encouraged to select two topics where scrutiny could make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development. In addition to the two topics, the panel expressed a need to receive update in relation to the topics mentioned above.

To assist with in determining possible Work Programme topics, the Director for Culture and Communities and the Advanced Public Health Practitioner, Improving Public Health were in attendance to provide an overview of the main services within the panel's remit and an outline of priorities, key issues and challenges for the year ahead.

The Director for Culture and Communities provided the scrutiny panel with a schedule of the department's elements. The Director advised that the schedule outlined the objective of each element, the priorities for 2017/18 and timescales in relation to its submission to Executive.

It was advised that the department had a responsibility for the following areas:

- Culture
- Marketing (including the Council's press office)
- Communications
- Events
- Community Sustainability (including community hubs)
- Family literacy (including library offer)
- Community Support (including homelessness and debt advice)
- Community Safety (including wardens, parking enforcement, CCTV and domestic abuse)
- North Ormesby (includes Selective Landlord Licencing)
- Licensing (includes alcohol and taxi licensing)
- Adult skills (includes community learning)
- North East Migration Partnership

The panel were advised that there were significant changes occurring in relation to Culture, Marketing, Communications and Events. In particular, it was commented that the department were aiming to produce at a more outward approach to drive ambition in the Town. A Cultural and Events Strategy were currently being drafted, and the Department were appointing a Head of Culture. The Strategies would be submitted to the Executive in October and members would be given the opportunity to feed in their views prior to their submission. The panel was also pleased to hear that the Town Hall had secured National Portfolio Organisation status, meaning the Council would receive £249,000 per year for 4 years from the Arts Council (from April 2018) to increase the quality of its programme.

Middlesbrough has a great deal to offer, however how this was promoted was important to attracting people to the Town. One huge area for change surrounded the way the council market and promote the town. The panel heard that this is currently being delivered across services, however this is moving to a central point to ensure the message is consistent and coherent. The panel learnt that there was currently a town branding exercise being undertaken by HemingwayDesign and would be launched for public consultation in due course.

The Director stressed the importance of communication and how we communicate our corporate message to staff, members of the public and councillors (acting as advocates).

The Director further added that significant work was being undertaken to attract events to the town on a commercial basis. The Town hold good events, but fail to attract those on a larger scale. Members did however make reference to the Middlesbrough Mela that had taken place over the weekend. The event had been very successful with approximately 50,000 people attending over the course of two days, bringing together people from all communities.

In terms of community sustainability, family literacy and community support, it was advised that the department was responsible for delivering family literacy (including the literacy offer with the hope to moving towards central library being viewed as the beacon of family literacy. The offer was to encourage more families to enter the libraries and hubs. There was also a need to consider the interior remodelling of the building whilst keeping in line with the buildings historical structure. The panel raised concern that Middlesbrough had the worst record of literacy and this may have a direct impact. The Director commented that the libraries would not be replicating the work schools do, but looking what value the offer could bring to families in Middlesbrough. There were solutions to seek help and advice for example the

community learning team and facilitating programmes under current resources that would make an impact.

It was commented that a Community support was a huge area of work which was undergoing significant change. The Council had in the past spent a lot of money of homelessness and debt advice. The Director stressed that the Council spent a significant amount of money on commissioning services. A huge amount of work was being undertaken to rationalise commissioning based on a model in Plymouth.

During the discussion, the work of licensing, North East Strategic Partnership, Community Safety and North Ormesby- Selective Landlord Licensing were addressed. The panel were aware that there is more integrated work being undertaken with the police but were concerned that there was no preventative measures being undertaken all work was reactive e.g. street wardens. The Director advised that work needed to be done to look at what we offer in Middlesbrough but stressed community safety was paramount to the Council.

In terms of decreasing anti-social behaviour and preventative measures, the Director referred to North Ormesby and how selective landlord licensing had made a significant improvement to the area. The scheme had almost been rolled out to all landlords in the area, however it was pointed out that running the scheme was very expensive and due to this, the scheme would unlikely to be rolled out town wide. It was more likely to be directed to a specific area within a ward depending on the need.

The panel raised that 90% of issues raised in their ward were linked to anti-social behaviour and landlords, and that this topic would raise interesting discussion. The scheme had been very successful in North Ormesby and therefore the panel were in agreement that selective landlord licensing should be investigated.

The panel also received an update from the Advanced Public Health Practitioner, Improving Public Health and another topic identified as a priority was examining drug and alcohol rehabilitation and how to prevent the revolving door process.

The Advanced Public Health Practitioner outlined that changes were made to the drug and alcohol treatment model in 2013. The new substance misuse model- Middleborough Recovering Together (MRT) receives between 2,000- 2,500 people a year and sees about 300 cases successfully completed within a year.

The panel made reference to the fact that it was apparent more young people were choosing to stay abstinent from drugs and alcohol which was a good news story considering the drinking culture associated with the North East. It was commented that social media has a huge part to play in deterring young people away from drugs and alcohol, especially due to health advice e.g. Joe Wicks. The Advanced Public Health Practitioner advised that the largest increase into services were from individuals aged 50+, many of whom had been users since a young age.

There was currently a grave area of concern in some areas of the NE around the drugs Fentanyl and Carfentanil, as well as Novel Psychoactive substances, predominantly Spice. A great deal of work was being done to tackle this scaling issue. Thankfully Middlesbrough had only had a few cases but it was becoming a national issue, especially in Newcastle.

In terms of the revolving door process, the panel were advised that when individuals leave treatment, a third of heroin users go back to old habits. There was huge area of work to address how other services across the Council, and external organisations (Police), could assist Public Health in responding to this and considering preventative measures.

There was evidence to suggest that if a recovering user makes 1 positive social relationship, this increases long term recovery chances. If then they introduce them to a friend, a ripple effect takes place, reducing in time, social isolation, mental health issues, unemployment, homelessness and increasing positive community networks.

In terms of the Middleborough Recovering Together (MRT) there were currently the following

services:

1. Fulcrum Medical Practice - a specialist prescribing service
2. Change, Live, Grow (CGL) - formerly lifeline- providing help and guidance,
3. Recovery connections – formerly Hope NE – on Marton Road providing a recovery programme and 6 self-contained flats
4. The Live Well centre- Dundas Arcade – where a full MRT offer is available.

The panel queried where help could be sought and they were advised that there had recently been a single telephone number launched (number to be circulated to the panel) and the Live Well centre was open Monday – Friday 9am- 5pm (with extended opening til 6.30pm Wednesday) and 10am-2pm Saturday. The Government had also recently launched a new Drugs Strategy which focused more on early interventions and looking more at broad services. The Strategy would also be circulated to the panel for information.

Due to the information received, the panel agreed to consider the topic as their second investigation.

Members also expressed a wish to address Domestic Violence, and it was agreed that the panel would be updated on the position at a later meeting.

AGREED as follows:

That the topics listed below be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for approval and inclusion in the scrutiny work programme of the Culture and Communities Panel for 2017/2018:

- Selective Landlord Licensing
- Drugs and Alcohol Rehabilitation- how to prevent the revolving door issue

17/3

PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE 2017/2018

A provisional schedule of meeting dates, for the 2017/18 municipal year, was submitted for the scrutiny panel's consideration.

AGREED as follows:

That the proposed meeting dates, for 2017/18, be approved