

**CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday 7 January 2021.

**PRESENT:** Councillors C McIntyre (Chair), L Lewis (Vice-Chair), R Arundale, C Dodds, J Goodchild, L Mason, J Rostron, M Saunders and J Thompson

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillors N Hussain

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

**OFFICERS:** L Bean, S Bonner, S Lightwing, J McNally, A Shippey and M Walker

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors

20/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

20/20 **MINUTES - CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL - 10 DECEMBER 2020**

The minutes of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 10 December 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/21 **PREVENT - UPDATE**

The Head of Stronger Communities and the Community Safety Partnership Officer provided the Panel with an update on the PREVENT agenda. As part of the presentation the following points were made:

- The Community Safety Officer advised the Panel that he was the Council's lead officer for Prevent and reducing reoffending.
- PREVENT was a safeguarding function, whose duty fell under s26 of the 2015 Counter Terrorism and Security Act. This Act placed a duty on Councils to safeguard those at risk of becoming radicalised.
- The primary aim of PREVENT was to empower individuals and communities to resist extremist rhetoric. This also involved working with professionals and partners so they could identify relevant risks and vulnerabilities, and potentially make referrals to the CHANNEL programme.
- Individuals at risk of extremist rhetoric were from a wide demographic.
- The CHANNEL element of PREVENT was voluntary and based on consent.
- PREVENT worked in a similar fashion to other crime prevention initiatives, such as trying to prevent gang related activities.
- In Middlesbrough there was a multi-agency operational group known as the Bronze Group which met every two months. This group formed action plans to help reduce risk.
- The group worked with the public to identify what risk factors to look out for.
- The group recently reviewed its internal training plan, which was now five stages rather than three.
- Promotion of PREVENT occurred through a number of different mediums, such as road shows, website material and campaigns with partners such as the NHS, CRC probation and youth services.
- Actions plans were derived from a regional Risk Assessment with actions focused on the education of professionals and identifying new and emerging threats so that resilience could be built around high risk groups. An example was online gaming in that gangs could take advantage to radicalize young people in that environment.
- Example risk actions included work carried out with a range of diverse communities

and the third sector, educational establishments and roadshows at James Cook Hospital and the Hill Street Centre.

- There was a constant requirement to understand engagement needs with different communities.
- Recent projects included working with the Learning Disabilities Community that utilised tools such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PEX) to generate publicity that would be understandable to the Learning Disability Community and their carers.
- Different levels of training were provided and had recently been reviewed which would be rolled out in spring 2021. The Council also hosted Home Office training material on the PREVENT website.
- WRAP 3 training had been completed with a minimum of one Designated Safeguarding Lead per school and a lot of work had been completed around COVID resilience in the face of "Fake News."
- Face to face and virtual training had been delivered to schools and school governors.
- Awareness raising was a large proportion of what PREVENT did, particularly around digital resilience.
- Online safety awareness was planned with a virtual PREVENT session with foster carers.

The Head of Stronger communities provided the Panel with an update on CHANNEL and made the following points:

- CHANNEL was a statutory duty placed on all Local Authorities and was a multi-agency approach to support those deemed to be at risk of extremist narrative.
- Nationally CHANNEL was piloted in 2007 and rolled out widely in 2012 and codified in legislation under the 2015 Counter Terrorism and Security Act.
- CHANNEL was a safeguarding function with which had several key aims, such as identifying individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism; to assess the nature and extent of the risk and to develop the most appropriate support plan.
- Local Authorities were required to carry out several tasks including the establishment of a CHANNEL panel which must have a Chair and Vice Chair. Currently the Chair was the Head of Stronger Communities and Vice Chair was Strategic Community Safety Manager.
- The CHANNEL Panel must develop support plans for individuals, and give consideration to what other forums would be appropriate if CHANNEL was not.
- The CHANNEL Panel also ensured that accurate records were kept regarding what decisions were made and procedures that were followed.
- The CHANNEL Panel in Middlesbrough included members from the NHS, social workers, schools, colleges, Youth Offending Services, Early help, the Home Office as well as the Prison Service.
- Both PREVENT and CHANNEL sat under the Community Safety Partnership providing a broad multi-agency approach. Both PREVENT and CHANNEL also sat within the Cleveland wide PREVENT framework.
- A referral to CHANNEL could be made from anywhere and assessed against set criteria. Should those criteria be met a CHANNEL Panel would be convened, with timescales and support plans put in place for that individual. This process was reviewed closely and the Panel was closed once the Panel achieved its aims for that individual.
- PREVENT now formed part of Council's mandatory induction programme.

A Member queried if people were more vulnerable due to spending an increased amount of time at home due to the COVID Pandemic. It was confirmed that people were spending more time online and in some cases people were unable to discern the difference between genuine and untrue information. It was also confirmed that it was important for relevant professionals to be able to have physical contact with those at risk, where possible, to determine if an individual's behaviors were changing due to potential radicalization.

A Member queried if any updated PREVENT training would be offered to Councillors. It was confirmed that the Home Office was to shortly release new training products to Councils that Councillors would be able to access.

ORDERED: That the information presented by noted.

20/22 **TERMS OF REFERENCE - CULTURAL EVENTS**

The Chair advised the Panel that that Terms of Reference for the Panel's review into Cultural Events in Middlesbrough were:

**TOR A**

Using examples of best practice, learn how cultural events are delivered in Middlesbrough how they contribute to wider social regeneration initiatives.

**TOR B**

In light of COVID-19 explore potential future Event formats to understand if Cultural Events can be sustainable in a post Covid world.

**TOR C**

To learn how Cultural Events can contribute to wider Economic Initiatives in Middlesbrough.

The Terms of Reference were submitted and agreed by the Panel.

ORDERED: That the Terms of Reference for the Panel's review into Cultural Events be agreed.

20/23 **CULTURAL EVENTS IN MIDDLESBROUGH**

The Creative Programmes Manager the Vice Chair of Mela provided the panel with a verbal report and made the following points:

- Some of the events that were delivered, or supported, by the Council's Events Team included the Mela, the Organge Pip Market and the Christmas events programme, Discover Middlesbrough and Local History Month.
- The Events Team also supported external event organisers that wanted to come to Middlesbrough to deliver cultural events.
- Some of the benefits of delivering cultural events included raising the positive profile of the Town; attracting visits to the Town Centre which increased spend in Middlesbrough's local economy as well as helping to support the local creative economies of Middlesbrough, the Tees Valley and the North East.
- Events also helped to promote inward investment as many investors were keen to see a thriving Town Centre with robust events programmes taking place.
- Events provided the opportunity to provide new skills for residents, especially through engagement work.
- Many events delivered in Middlesbrough were not one-off events with most having sub-work programmes that further enhanced community engagement. Those engagement events provided the opportunity for schools, communities and individuals to participate and by extension develop skill sets and improve their wellbeing.
- Cultural events also had a positive impact on community cohesion.
- The Middlesbrough Mela was supposed to celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2020, however the COVID pandemic prevented this.
- Ordinarily the Mela received audiences of between 30,000 – 50,000 people with over 100 crew members being involved. Hold the event also led to an increase in employability for the duration of the event.
- Events such as the Mela helped to attract investment via sponsorship and funders.
- As part of the Mela, there were additional events that worked with over 150 people from community groups on various commissions. These commissions worked with professional artists, musicians and choreographers over a three month period which contributed to the creative content of the Mela and for its associated, smaller events such as parades.
- The written reports provided to the Panel about the Mela gave examples of different community groups that had engaged with the event and what such engagement looked like. Examples included the Mela Big Knit that reached over 100 people.
- Activities associated with larger events helped combat social isolation and reach those individuals engage with events like the Mela where they had not done so before.
- The Events Team actively worked alongside the Stronger Communities service as this helped to identify community groups that may benefit from cultural engagement. This

could be communities with diverse demographics, or those that had not previously engaged with cultural events. This was especially true for those communities in the east of the Town.

- The Events Team also worked with a number of external agencies including the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner all of which helped to support and reinforce social and community cohesion.
- The Covid Pandemic had resulted in cultural events being offered in different formats, namely online. Changing to new formats had however resulted in some positive change with the Mela being awarded the best online Mela in the UK in 2020.
- The Vice Chair of Mela advised the Panel that he had been involved in the Mela for approximately 15 years and in that time the event had grown significantly. It was pointed out that whereas other Mela had been cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic, the Middlesbrough Mela had continued.
- The nature of the Mela had transformed from being a purely multi-cultural event to something that was targeted at the entire community.
- The support provided to the Mela by the Council's Events Team was instrumental to the Mela's effective delivery.
- It was important that the Mela continued to grow and deliver its cultural offer and that support from the Council was crucial to making this happen.
- The Mela always received positive feedback from visitors and vendors alike.
- There were also 400 art packs delivered to the community that were themed around the Mela, as well as online story telling.
- There was a will to make events as accessible as possible to the wider community and means of doing this included producing literature that was available in different languages. In order to maintain physical contact with the community a book had been created that included information relating to events, which was especially important for those without or limited access to online materials.
- It was important to the Events Team that grassroots contact with communities was maintained.
- Moving forward there were plans to try and ensure future events Covid secure, which meant exploring if the event could be held in the same format. Alternative methods for holding events included a reduction in scale or the introduction of ticketing. It was noted that a different format for the Mela would also have an impact on how the event was funded.
- Another best practice example of an events programme delivered by the Council were those related to Christmas. An example of this event was the Christmas lights switch-on that often saw over 10,000 people attending.
- The Magical Middlesbrough Parade was very successful and often saw between 15,000 and 20,000 people attending.
- The Events Team worked with a wide range of stakeholders, including those involved in the creative arts, such as costume design and dance instruction as well as other sectors such as Health and Safety to ensure event delivery was of a high quality and procedurally robust.
- The Magical Middlesbrough Parade not only made an impact for the duration of the event, additional engagement with residents was also extremely beneficial.
- Cultural events like Magical Middlesbrough Parade also brought wider economic benefits owing to increased footfall and increased financial activity in the Town Centre.
- The Christmas markets were also a key feature of the Christmas events programme, which was largely delivered by an external provider with the fees generated used to invest in other events.
- The Christmas events programme for 2020 was delivered despite Covid and had been done so following Covid safe practices.
- Delivery of cultural events was usually achieved via external sponsorship as the Council's core events budget was relatively small.
- The Orange Pip Market was another example of best practice cultural event delivered by the Council. Despite not being held in 2020 due to the Covid Pandemic the event was opportunity for local trades to showcase their businesses and generate increased awareness of Middlesbrough's cultural and economic offer.

A Member commented that he hoped the Mela, Nagar Kirtan and Cleveland Show all proceeded in 2021 should the Covid Pandemic allow. The Member also commented that Armed Forces day was an important event that also formed part of the Council's cultural offer. The Creative Programmes Manager confirmed the Council's Events Team continued to

support Armed Forces Day, and while there was not a core budget for holding the event, there was financial support available for it. It was commented that should the National Armed Forces event be held it would be in Scarborough resulting in significant resources being sent there.

A Member commented that the Mela's growth was a significant benefit to the Town and hoped to see it grow further. The Member also expressed her gratitude and praise for the Christmas Lights display in the Town, which was a collaborative effort between different service areas.

It was queried if the lack of a normal events programme had seen a significant financial impact on the Town. It was confirmed there would have been a wider economic impact as cultural events helped support the local economy due to increased footfall and spend in the Town Centre. An example was the Orange Pip Market in which local traders were able to sell and promote themselves, however this was not possible due to the Covid Pandemic. This was also reflected in the local creative industry.

However, it was confirmed that while physical meetings had not taken place, where possible events had been delivered online, such as VE Day. In order to do this, the same creative industries were employed to ensure the quality of the event remained high, despite a change in format. Sponsorship was still secured for those events that were held online which meant financial support, although reduced, was still provided to the creative industry.

It was queried if going forward events would include Covid secure practices, or similar safety measures to help alleviate any concerns the public had. It was clarified the Events Team belonged to the Local Authority Events Organisers Group that benchmarked national trends and audience attitudes in this regard. An example was cited whereby the Council was working with suppliers of an illuminated Christmas Trail that could maintain socially distanced practices and allow for the same number of attendees as before the Covid Pandemic. A further example of how cultural events could be held and ensure public safety, was to hold the Mela over a longer duration and hold more, smaller scale, events rather than one large event.

Socially distanced methods for holding events had already been employed by holding an outdoor theatre event during the Summer of 2020. It was commented that this approach could be extended to other event types. There were also discussions in place about drive through events for the Mela in order to maintain social distancing.

It was commented that while the Covid Pandemic had been difficult for the Events Team it nevertheless illustrated that adaptability was crucial to delivering effective cultural events programmes.

It was queried what metrics were in place to measure the impact of events, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, attendee numbers were recorded for cultural events, along with national statistics to ascertain what economic impact had been made. Collaborative working with other internal and external stakeholders was critical to understand impact including the Town Centre Team, local businesses and schools. Qualitatively, user experience surveys of individual cultural events were also carried out.

Collaborative working was also critical to deliver effective cultural events, with examples being national Mela partnership, Unions and private enterprise. Working together with Community Safety partners to identify groups that would engage with the Events Team meant the Events Team strived to work with all communities to ensure every need was catered for.

The Chair thanked the Creative Programme Manager and the Vice Chair of the Middlesbrough Mela for their attendance and recognized that the hard work carried out by the Events Team and the passion displayed in that work was evident.

ORDERED: That the information presented be noted.

## **CHAIR'S OSB UPDATE**

The Chair advised the Panel that at the previous meeting of OSB a Call In was considered regarding the frequency of waste collection, moving from weekly to fortnightly. Unfortunately, the meeting was unable to take place due to technical issues.

07 January 2021

The Chair also advised the Panel that since the Call In meeting, a decision had been made to maintain weekly waste collections therefore the issue may not be heard again by OSB.

ORDERED: That the information be noted.

20/25

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

None.