

CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday 15 July 2021.

PRESENT: Councillors C McIntyre (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), S Dean, C Dodds, L Lewis, L Mason and J Rostron

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS: S Blood, G Field, R Horniman and S Bonner

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors R Arundale and D McCabe

21/1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest received at this point in the meeting.

21/2 **MINUTES - CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL - 15 APRIL 2021**

The minutes of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 15 April 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

The Chair thanked the S Bonner, Democratic Services Officer for his support over the last year and also thanked Councillor Lewis for taking the Chair role during his absence.

21/3 **OVERVIEW OF SERVICE AREAS**

The Director of Regeneration and Culture provided the Panel with an overview of the Services he was responsible for.

As part of the presentation the following points were made:

- The Director was responsible for the Regeneration and Culture Directorate.
- In terms of Regeneration, this comprised of Economic growth, Infrastructure, Planning, Capital Projects, Design Services and Housing, and these areas were examined by the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.
- Cultural Services was managed by Charlotte Nicol and [broken into 3 main areas](#). Venues - encompassing the Town Hall, Middlesbrough Theatre and Newham Grange Leisure Farm, all of which attracted high visitor numbers; Museums, namely the Dorman and the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum and Open Spaces including Stewart and Albert Parks.
- Cultural Services also covering a range of events including the Orange Pip Market and Christmas events such as the Reindeer Parade. It also contributed to events such as the Mela and Discover Middlesbrough.
- The service also has a small leisure function (1 officer), which was a contract with Sports and Leisure Management (trading as Everyone Active) as well as playing field provision.
- The Service was also responsible for Teesside Archives, and was currently operating out of Exchange House. The Archives were in a process of significant change, as the front end staff would be moving to the Dorman Museum (to occupy the Education space) and the backend would be moved to Spennymore to be placed in specialist storage. This would bide time in orde
- Lastly, within Cultural Services, they operated Arts Development, although this was quite a small area at present.

- The Town Hall and Theatre had been closed for 12 months. The Town Hall has been rented to the University and Teesside Courts however there was still uncertainty over the future programme, for example, shows have been booked in, however they have had to be cancelled at late notice due to a member contracted Covid or having to self-isolating.
- All other venues are in a similar position, for example Newham Grange Leisure Farm has been running on Skelton staff due to Covid and self-isolating.
- No events have taken place in the Town, although there are some scheduled in September and the Director hoped these can go ahead as planned.
- The Director also advised that there it was inevitable that it might take time to build up public confidence. Performances that have taken place has been done under social distances measures, however there has also been some outside performances which have proved successful.

In terms of 2021/22 priorities, the Director outlined the following:

- Returning audiences safely, following Government Guidance but also using common sense.
- There is a challenge to retain customer interest. There has been a lot of performances online, however during the second lockdown, customers have lost interest in digital media and wish to get their lives back to normal.
- A major priority is to restart events, and the service will ensure there are done as safely as possible.
- The Director made reference to the opening of the Globe in Stockton, which would possibly cause a threat on the Town Hall. However the Director saw this threat s a three-fold. Firstly, the capacity at the Globe is 3,000 so those customer wishing a smaller, intimate performance, will continue to attend the Town Hall. Secondly, the Globe is run by a national company and therefore they will only book in shows which can be shown across the 30 venues. Thirdly, the Globe is opening at a difficult time and therefore we need to ensure that the Town hall remains attractive as possible. A member also commented that there may be a novelty factor for customers attending the Globe.
- A significant issue was ensuring financial sustainability of the town hall, however it was hoped that a full programme would be up and running, however this needed to be taken into consideration.
- Moving of Teesside Archives
- The service was also now looking at 2022/23 events, as they were mindful that this year will not be as successful due to covid recovery.

The Chair thanked the Director of Regeneration and Culture for his presentation.

The Chair introduced the Director for Environment and Commercial Services, who provided the Panel with an overview of the services he was responsible for.

As part of the presentation the following points were made:

- The Director outlined that in terms of Communities, there were two sides. Firstly, Community Safety (looking at crime and anti-social behaviour) and this governed overall by the community safety partnership, which is as follows:

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) bring together the responsible authorities of Police, Local Authority, Fire and Rescue Authority, Health, Probation and Police Authority to work in collaboration with other statutory / voluntary services and local people to reduce crime and make people feel safer by dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, re-offending and is also responsible for delivering the Prevent duty (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) and it is a strategic document which the local authority set.

- There were a number of objectives around this, some in terms of reducing crime and others with regard to reducing the fear of crime. The Panel were made aware that over the past year the level of crime has gone down, and whether this has been down to covid is questionable as they are seeing levels increasing slightly now that

restrictions are being eased.

- The Council have a community safety team, which comprises of Community safety officers, Neighbourhood safety officers and Environmental enforcement.
- Community Safety officers deal with the most difficult cases and they work with agencies normally to intervene with an individual and put in place actions plans.
- There was a complete Management review of the Neighbourhood safety wardens and the Director overtook the running of the service 18 months ago. The service is now seeing significant benefits and they do an excellent job for the community and its residents.
- In terms of Environmental enforcement, the Director outlined that prior to Christmas, he did not feel it was operating to its full potential and therefore the service changed its approach. The Director outlined that the service is known as the Environmental flying squad, and this has had some fantastic results e.g. picking up 10 cars over in Greta street and catching residents for fly tipping.

In terms of joint working, the team have significant engagement with other agencies, which included:

- Daily briefings with the Police and street wardens, to highlight areas of concern/ individuals who may be causing trouble for residents.
- The service has reintroduced Active Intelligent Mapping (AIM), once every 3 weeks, there is a joint committee between the police, thirteen, fire service and they look at hot spots across the town.
- CCTV suite in the bus station. This is across the town and does act as evidence in solving crimes.

The Director advised the Panel that the service was currently working on locality working.

Locality working brings together both Council and Partner operations to undertake focused work to support communities.

- Initial phase is in Newport and North Ormesby and locality buildings have been allocated, however due to lockdown the opening of these Hubs have been delayed, however it was hoped that the buildings would be occupied by September 2021.
- A locality working model involving operational departments and partners who are working at business as usual or close to Area Care, Neighbourhood Wardens, Cleveland Police, Selective Landlord Licensing, Environmental enforcement and Neighbourhood Safety are joint working, sharing information and progressing actions
- It was hoped that once the two areas are in place and improvements are seen, patch based working will be rolled out across the whole of Middlesbrough.

Libraries and hubs

- The Director also outlined that the service was responsible for libraries and hubs, which was an important part of community infrastructure, Staff have been instrumental in their working and introduced new and innovative ways to ensure residents can still access services e.g. ordering books online and collecting from the library entrance.
- Libraries and hubs are beginning to reopen and although restrictions are being eased, there is a great deal of interpretation surrounding the guidance, socially around the wearing of face coverings.
- The main central library was currently being reviewed as the Director, whilst not criticising its usage and excellence, feels like there is potential to expand, especially in relation to children's literacy and improving this across the town. The Director stated that because the library is a large building, it can sometimes be slightly intimidating to children. Whilst, the Director stressed we cannot change the structure of the building, he would like to perhaps develop a centre of children's excellence and improve the interior of the library, based on the idea of Seven stories in Newcastle.
- The service also hosted the North East Migration Partnership, which was a coordinating role for Local Authorities across the North East. The Director was now the Chief Executive Lead for the North East and he felt more work needs to be done on explaining what the service does and how it supports migrants and asylum seekers in the town.
- The Director outlined that there were awaiting confirmation of government's approach

to increased migration in the UK. However the Director outlined that it was a privilege to have the service within his Directorate. A member also outlined how wonderful it was to see how many migrants have settled and made a living for themselves in Middlesbrough.

A Member queried where the locality hubs would be situated. In response, the Director outlined that within Newport it would be the old coop building and in North Ormesby the hub on Derwent Street.

The Chair thanked the Director of Environment and Commercial Services for his presentation.

AGREED that the Panel note the information presented.

21/4

SETTING THE SCRUTINY PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022

The Chair presented a report, the purpose of which was to assist Members of the Panel to consider and agree its work programme for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year.

A list of topical issues and the suggestions received in respect of the scrutiny panel's remit were contained in the submitted report. It was suggested that the Scrutiny Panel should select two topics for full review along with several updates.

In addition there was one review from the previous year to be completed as follows: Cultural events in Middlesbrough.

Members discussed the topics suggested in the report.

Following the discussion, Panel Members agreed the following topics for review:

Main Topics:

1. Enforcement in Middlesbrough and its impact on crime and anti-social behaviour in Middlesbrough.
2. Middlesbrough's struggling highstreet

The following updates would also be provided:

1. Operation Phoenix.
2. Regulatory Investigative Powers (RIPA).
3. Preventing Terrorism.
4. Community Safety Partnership.
5. Selective Landlord Licensing.

The Democratic Services Officer outlined that she has received information from a scrutiny colleague in Stockton, which worked to support the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel meeting. The Panel were currently undertaking a review to look at Cleveland Police Communications Strategy and have developed a ward councillor survey to capture views of councillors across Cleveland. The Panel were asked their views on whether they would like to take part in this survey.

AGREED that:

1. The information provided was received and noted.
2. That the councillor survey as part Cleveland Police and Crime Panel investigation on Cleveland Police Communications Strategy be circulated to ward councillors once made available. This would be incorporated in the terms of reference to the review on Enforcement in Middlesbrough.
2. The topics and reviews listed above, would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for approval.

21/5 **PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE - 2021/2022 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

A proposed schedule of meeting dates for the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year was submitted for the Panel's consideration.

AGREED that the proposed meeting dates for 2021-2022 were approved.

21/6 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**