

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 March 2013

Present: Councillor C B Pickard (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, A Austin, B Burdis,
R Glendon, I Grayson, Marian Huscroft, D McGarr,
J McLaughlin, T Mulvenna, D Sarin, M Rankin,
N Redfearn and J Stirling.

School Governor Representatives
Mrs J Little
Mrs M Ord

Church Representatives
Rev Vine

OV77/03/13 Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors C Gambling and J Harrison

OV78/03/13 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute Members was reported:-

Councillor T Mulvenna for Councillor J Harrison
Councillor B Burdis for Cllr C Gambling

OV79/03/13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

OV80/03/13 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 4 February 2013 be confirmed.

OV81/03/13 North Tyneside Strategic Partnership Performance Report 2012/13 – Quarter 3

The Committee welcomed Mr Peter Hedley – NTSP Executive Vice Chair to the meeting. Mr Hedley delivered a presentation where the structure of the NTSP Executive was outlined. A review was undertaken in 2011 where the NTSP increased representation on the Executive to include the Chief Officers Forum and Business Forum.

The NTSP delivers its goals through the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which is reviewed every three years and agreed by Full Council and sets out plans for the North Tyneside Vision 2030.

The 4 themed partnerships were responsible to deliver the key priorities of the SCS, the themes being:
Regeneration,

Quality of Life
Best Start in Life
Sense of Place

On a quarterly basis the NTSP-Executive receives exception reports and considers areas of concern. It was stated that the NTSP Executive saw the NTSP a true partnership although there was a clear understanding that the responsibility of the NTSP lay with the Council's Cabinet.

Of the 63 measures monitored over the year, 24 could be measures at the end of quarter 3 2013. Three measures were off target these being:

- Serious acquisitive crime
- Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time.
- Narrowing the gap between the lowest 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest.

Themed partnerships had identified areas of challenge for the following year.

The Committee were informed that the objectives for 2013/14 were to review the Sustainable Community Strategy, review the NTSP governance structures and consider further partnership working that would benefit North Tyneside.

The Committee were informed that information and reports following the Cabinets review of the composition up and governance of the NTSP would be circulated to the Committee.

Following his presentation Mr Hedley accepted questions from the Committee.

It was asked what achievements the NTSP had made. In response Mr Hedley gave examples of achievements where change had been delivered.

Children, Young People and Learning Board had responsibility for providing learners of all ages with access to high quality education and training, irrespective of where they live in the borough.

The Green North Tyneside Strategic Partnership Board had developed, in conjunction with North Tyneside Council, a local Carbon Reduction Award Scheme for businesses and other organisations who operate in the borough.

Members asked where the evidence was that the NTSP was achieving its goals and whose responsibility it was to assess the NTSP performance. The Committee were informed that it was the responsibility of the Council to monitor the 63 performance indicators.

A Member asked where the NTSP had identified the gaps in employability for young people in North Tyneside. Mr Hedley stated that there was engineering training available but experience had shown that it was difficult to retain the skill force in the area due to the number of opportunities in other areas. It was stressed that North Tyneside should not rely on one sector of employment training and there was a need for the development of the range of training opportunities to develop alternative careers.

It was stated that residents still feel vulnerable to the threat of crime at night. Mr Hedley stated that most crime at night was directed towards younger people, however, older people were those who are feeling most vulnerable and it was the perception that fear of crime was sometimes greater than the actual crime.

It was stated that it would be beneficial if there was an indicator for unreported crime.

A Member questioned the reasons why no faith group representatives were on the NTSP Executive, it was stated that faith organisations represented a significant proportion of the public.

It was stated that the NTSP-Executive represented a broad range of people in North Tyneside, with the Business Forum, the Voluntary Sector and the Council's own forums. It was thought that many members of the public of many faiths would be represented within these groups.

It was stated that the only political representatives on the NTSP was the Elected Mayor and it may benefit if other councillors as community leaders had a role.

A Member stated that a number of the indicators were not showing the expected improvement and asked what the NTSP would do try ensure the targets were met.

Mr Hedley stated that the NTSP would make policy suggestions to the Council on where it thought improvements could be made and that it would use its partnerships between the Council and businesses etc to reach the overall goals.

The Chair stated that there was a perception of remoteness to the NTSP, it was stated that Changes in Public Health, Welfare Reform and Narrowing the gap were major areas that should be looked at during the review, with wider roles of elected members and more information sharing.

Mr Hedley assured the Committee that he would feedback the Committee's comments and concerns to the NTSP – Executive.

The Committee thanked Mr Hedley for his attendance and presentation.

Mr Hedley left the meeting at this point.

The Committee considered the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership – Exception Report Quarter 3 report that had been considered at the Cabinet Meeting 11 February 2013.

A Member raised their concerns with the clearing process that had been undertaken, stating the Equalities and diversity section stated that there were no implications. However the report detailed area's that would have implications. The Strategic Manager- Policy, Performance and Communications stated that comments from Members would be relayed to officers responsible to ensure compliance with principles of decision making was carried out comprehensively.

A Member enquired to what challenge had been made by the Cabinet to the information detailed within the report. The Chief Executive assured the Committee that the Cabinet members had regular meetings with their service areas of responsibility and it was in those meeting that most challenges would be made with regards the targets where North Tyneside Council had the lead.

Members expressed their disappointment that there was no Cabinet Members in attendance.

It was stated that the Cabinet Members were busy and may not be available to attend meetings at short notice. The Chief Executive advised the Committee that arrangements would be made for Members to agree a process on calling Cabinet Members to attend scrutiny committee meetings.

A Member expressed that there was more work needed to narrowing the gap with regards to the performance for priority 3: Best start in life, it was suggested that there may need to be a need to create stretch targets for some of the performance indicators.

Agreed that (1) that information and reports following the Cabinets review of the composition up and governance of the NTSP would be circulated to the Committee; and (2) measures be undertaken to ensure compliance with principles of decision making is carried out comprehensively in respect to Executive reports.

OV82/03/13 Corporate Performance Quarter 3 Report

The Committee received the Corporate Performance report Quarter 3 2012/13 that was considered at the Cabinet meeting 11 February 2013.

The quarterly report from the Senior Leadership Team was appended the report and detailed the progress, the achievements against the Councils ambitions and a traffic light summary of where the Council stood against the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The report also informed that more detailed performance summaries relating to the priorities were accessible on the Council's data store.

A Member questioned to what parts of the Council's Strategic Plan did the Cabinet have due regard. The Chief Executive stated that there is a section in Cabinet reports that indicate the links that related to the Council Strategic Plan and/or the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

A Member enquired to how the focus on performance and the need to meet budget proposals would be achieved. The Chief Executive stated that although it would be challenging to reduce levels of expenditure and improve services and a number reviews would be undertaken to look at where both could be accomplished.

Members stated that there was a need for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to be in attendance when the end of year performance reports would be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allow the opportunity to discuss the final plans for future years.

The Chief Executive stated that the scrutiny Sub Committee's would receive the final plans once completed, and that it may be beneficial for SLT to be in attendance for the End of Year performance report.

A Member highlighted that under the Quality of Life priority for Health and Wellbeing, positive language was being used to the progress and actions being undertaken, however it did not indicate that the priority was off track. The Strategic Manager- Policy, Performance and Communications explained that there was further detailed information available with regards to this priority and that this information would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

The Committee raised its concerns to the level of information detailed in the report. The Strategic Manager- Policy, Performance and Communications informed the Committee that work was ongoing with the performance network to refine the delivery of information to officers/all Members and residents.

Agreed that (1) the Senior Leadership Team be present for the presentation of the End of Year Corporate Performance Report; and (2) Health and Wellbeing priority information would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

OV83/03/13 Change Efficiency and Improvement Programme (Previous Minute OV64/12/12)

The Chief Executive updated the Committee to the latest position on the projects to each theme, with a focus on the project plans for years 2-4 of the programme (2012-13 to 2014-15).

The Chair questioned the amount stated in the plans currently in place for year 2014/15 (£4.729m), it was stated that in recent budget papers that were considered at the Council meeting on the 7 February 2013 the figure was approximately £3.5m. An explanation was requested on the difference of the two reports.

The Chief Executive stated that he would provide a written response to the question.

Agreed that (1) the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Plan be noted; and (2) a written explanation to be provided to the reason for the difference to plans currently in place 2014/15 reported in the CEI report to that reported in a Council report on the 4 February 2013.

OV84/03/13 Councils Strategic Plan and 2012/13 Budget – Implementation Plan (Previous Minute OV62/12/12)

The Committee received an updated report that detailed the changes to the Council Strategic Plan and 2012/13 Budget – Implementation Plan since December 2012.

The Committee was reminded of its decision to receive only information on updates to the Implementation Plan, which was attached to the report.

Agreed that the Council Strategic Plan and 2012/13 Budget – Implementation Plan be noted.

Councillors A Austin, I Grayson, J McLaughlin and D Sarin left at this point and took no further part in the meeting.

OV85/03/13 Risk Management issues associated with the Business and Technical Packages

At the Council meeting on 24 January 2013, it referred Risk Management issues associated with the Business and Technical packages to be considered by the Committee.

The Corporate Risk Management Summary Report that detailed the risks identified for monitoring and management by the Councils Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and was to be considered at Cabinet on the 12 March 2013 was appended to the report.

The Committee asked a number of detailed questions in relation to the options of termination of the Business and Technical packages and asked that details of the analysis undertaken to the costs of termination of the packages be provided to the Committee.

The Chief Executive stated that the analysis undertaken to assess the costs was commercially sensitive and that he would need to take legal advice before it was able to determine what information could be provided to the Committee.

With respect to the monitoring of the packages the Committee asked to what information was sought when agreeing the suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). It asked that in the development of the KPI's, what other Local Authorities were accessed to gain intelligence.

The report stated that the Council required the partners to provide Value for Money (VfM) throughout the term of the contracts and that a benchmarking test against other providers would be undertaken in years 4, 8 and 12 of the contracts. The Committee requested that the information on VfM provided to the Executive be presented to the Committee.

Agreed that (1) a report be presented at the next meeting scheduled for the 2 April that details (a) the analysis undertaken to the costs of termination of the Business and Technical packages; (b) the KPI's and other Local Authorities accessed to gain intelligence; and (c) the Committee be provided with the information on VfM that was provided to the Executive.