

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 November 2013

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, G Bell, B Burdis, A Cowie, S Day,
John Hunter, M J Huscroft, P Mason, D McGarr,
A McMullen, L Miller, M Rankin and J Walker

School Governor Representatives:
Mrs M Ord
Mrs J Little

Church Representatives:
Rev M Vine

Others in attendance:
Councillor L Spillard
Councillor J J Stirling

OV35/11/13 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Huscroft and J O'Shea

OV36/11/13 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following Substitute Members were reported:-

Councillor G Bell for Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor M J Huscroft for Councillor M Huscroft

OV37/11/13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

OV38/11/13 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2013 be confirmed.

OV39/11/13 Our North Tyneside Plan – Performance Management

Consideration was given to a report and presentation which set out the proposed arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the "Our North Tyneside Plan" which had been agreed by the Council on 26 September 2013. It had been recognised that the plan would require partnership working with local people, businesses, local public sector and voluntary organisations. The plan had therefore been developed and agreed with the partners who made up the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership.

It was explained that work was ongoing to develop a series of specific performance measures which would ensure that the measures of success in the plan were achieved. A two level approach was being developed, the first being a corporate report which would be produced on a six monthly basis and would in simple terms demonstrate whether North Tyneside was on track to meet the objectives set out in the Council Plan. The second approach was based around service level reports which would examine how individual services were performing against the targets set out in the plan. To avoid duplication it was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive the corporate reports on a six monthly basis and the scrutiny sub committees would receive quarterly service level reports on those topics which fell within their remit and which were not meeting the expected targets.

Members sought clarification on how they would be involved in the selection of the Council Plan's performance measures which would be reported to central government. Officers offered to provide this information to members. Clarification was also sought on how the performance indicators to be used for monitoring the Council Plan were to be selected. It was explained that there was a need to ensure that there was a justifiable reason for the inclusion of each measure of performance and clarity over what each target was designed to achieve. It was suggested that this information be provided to the next meeting.

Agreed that (1) the briefing be noted; and
(2) A further report on the selection of performance measures/targets associated with the council plan be provided to the next meeting.

OV40/11/13 Change, Efficiency and Improvement

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the monitoring of the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme (CEI). The report provided details of all the schemes within the CEI programme as at 4 October 2013 and highlighted those schemes which were not currently on target. It was noted that the scrutiny sub committees were monitoring those projects which fell within their remit.

The Committee considered each of the red and amber rated projects in turn.

Clarification was sought on how the one off in year savings had been made in respect of project A16: Review of non School Buildings Education Estate. It was explained that this was an in-year staffing saving of £0.106M. Further information was requested

Members also sought clarification on what action was being taken to find the outstanding savings in respect of A19: Redefining Housing Related Support. It was explained that in-year contingencies would be used to cover any shortfall. Reference was also made to the savings associated with project A18: Locally Commissioned Independent Supported Living Services. It was explained that delays had been as a result of additional consultation being carried out with service users and carers although the service area would find the savings from elsewhere if needed.

The committee was advised that the Maximum Spend Framework Project (A21) was always going to be a high risk project. It was explained that the project was subject to further consultation and was unlikely to be implemented prior to December 2013 which meant that the savings would not be achieved in 2013/14. The service area had been working to identify in-year contingency arrangements to cover the shortfall.

Reference was also made to project A24: Extra Care Housing which was not on target and was to be the subject of a report to Cabinet.

Further information was requested on how the savings in relation to a review of the election expenses had been achieved under B6, B7. B8: Legal Services.

Reference was also made to the street lighting project (C4) which was expected to be on target by the end of the year if the recommendations of the sub group on street lighting were adopted. Back up options were also being explored including an application for a SALIX loan to cover the cost of the introduction of Mayflower technology.

In addition the Committee gave consideration to two projects which had not been considered in detail and which fell within the remit of the committee these were legal shared services and trading opportunities.

It was explained that legal services was collaborating with another local authority legal team to offer legal services to other public sector bodies as well as generating income internally. The service had achieved savings of £0.053M through the deletion of a management post and expected to achieve the other £0.055M savings through an increase in income generation and a reduction in expenditure. Details of the steps taken by the service to improve income generation were set out and included:

- A benchmarking exercise which led to an increase in charges in connection with highways, planning and property agreements.
- A waiver obtained from the Solicitors Regulation Authority which allowed in-house solicitors to charge for services provided to voluntary and community sector bodies.
- The exploration of joint traded opportunities with colleagues in Newcastle City Council.
- The submission of tenders for the provision of services for education establishments.
- The development of closer working links with the Northumbria Police legal team.
- The provision of legal work for the North Tyneside Learning Trust and schools.

The committee then went on to consider an update on the trading opportunities project which aimed to generate savings through the exploration of trading opportunities across the council in terms of sales. It was explained that the project had currently achieved savings of £0.105m towards the £0.250M target. Work was ongoing to secure a further £0.050M and if the full target could not be reached savings would be made through vacancies across the Council. The income generated had been through additional activity in respect of Kier, the LIFT project, work for Darlington schools and the provision of additional support to Northumberland County Council in relation to an audit of ICT. Staff secondments to Adult Social Care and Balfour Beatty Workplace in respect of the Electronic Document Records Management System had generated £0.035M of income.

Members sought clarification on what the trading company was doing and what it was trying to achieve. It was suggested that there were a number of outstanding queries to be addressed in relation to the programme including information on why the savings targets had not been met, who was involved in the project, how the trading company was currently working and what were the future plans for the company. It was also suggested that a detailed report purely on the trading company be presented to the next meeting and that relevant officers and Cabinet Members be invited to attend the next meeting

Agreed that (1) the information provided in the report be noted;

(2) relevant officers and Cabinet Members be invited to the next meeting to provide a comprehensive report which provides detailed information on the operation of the trading company including:

- Why have the saving targets not been met?
- How is the trading company currently working?
- Who is involved?
- What are the future plans for the company?

(3) further information be provided on:

- how the in year savings had been made in project A16
- how the savings in relation to a review of the election expenses had been achieved under B6, B7. B8: Legal Services.

OV41/11/13 Report of the Street Lighting Sub Group

The Committee received a report from the Street Lighting Sub Group which had carried out a study into options for a reduction in the cost of providing street lighting within the borough together with a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint. The Group had explored the different options available in respect of street lighting within the borough, attended an on site demonstration of the options available and initiated a trial of dimming, reducing the intensity of the lighting, and trimming, switching on the lights a bit later on an evening and switching them off a little bit earlier on a morning, in the Weetslade area.

The Sub Group had made four recommendations which if adopted would reduce the Council's carbon footprint by 2,784 tonnes per annum and create annual savings of around £0.200M on energy costs.

Agreed that the report of the Street Lighting Sub Group be referred to Cabinet