

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

31 March 2014

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, B Burdis, A Cowie, S Day,
Marian Huscroft, P Mason, A McMullan, Les Miller,
J O'Shea, M Rankin and J Walker

School Governor Representatives
Mrs J Little
Mrs M Ord

Church Representatives
Rev Vine

OV75/03/14 Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Cllr P McIntyre

OV76/03/14 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members reported.

OV77/03/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

OV78/03/14 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 3 March 2014 be confirmed.

OV79/03/14 Wallsend Customer First Centre (Previous Minute OV71/03/14)

The Committee received a report that provided information in relation to the finance and leasing arrangements, with responses to member's questions on the Wallsend Customer First Centre.

Also appended for information was the report to Cabinet on the Wallsend Customer First Centre and Library dated 10 December 2012.

A member of the committee questioned to the cost to fit out for the 2nd floor of the centre to provide a workable space, if the space had been marketed for let and would a possible let be realised in 2014.

It heard that no costs had been formulated for the fitting out, that a review of Authority accommodation was being undertaken with the possibility of staff being moved into the 2nd floor and for this reason no marketing had taken place. It was not forecasted that the 2nd floor would be operational in the current year.

The Committee continued to raise its concerns to the information it had received and the answers to its questions.

It questioned the extent of information provided to the 2012 Cabinet to allow it to make a measured decision. It also questioned if the Cabinet had requested additional information on other options that may have been available.

The Committee believed that when consideration is made on entering into contracts (especially long term), a comprehensive portfolio of information and options should be available for the decision makers to consider. The portfolio of information should then be available to allow a decision made to be open and transparent to any scrutiny.

The Committee thought that although all information and options may have been considered. The information requested had not been readily available or as comprehensive as it expected.

Agreed that (1) the information on the Wallsend Customer First Centre be noted; and (2) the Committee's concerns to the information available and transparency of decision making be reported to Cabinet .

OV80/03/14 Our North Tyneside Performance Report

The Committee received the first performance monitoring report for the Our North Tyneside Plan.

The report detailed 13 measures included in the Our North Tyneside Plan, 8 showed improvement, 2 had remained the same and 1 had declined.

Agreed that the Our North Tyneside Performance Report be noted.

OV81/03/14 Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14

The Committee received the Overview and scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14.

The report set out the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny and its 5 sub-committees during 2013/14 municipal year.

Agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be submitted to Annual Council on 5 June 2014.

OV82/03/14 Street Lighting Sub-group report

The Committee received a report of the work undertaken by a sub-group of the Environment and Culture Sub-committee into its review of part night switch off of street lighting in non residential areas.

Councillor B Burdis presented the sub-groups findings and its recommendations.

The Committee was reminded that the Street Lighting sub-group had been established in June 2013 to explore the differing options available to aid the reduction of energy consumption and to achieve efficiency savings.

On completion of that study Cabinet asked that the sub-group review the options of night time switch off.

The sub-group considered a list of potential non residential areas for part night switch off that had been drafted in July 2012 and asked for a further review to include any new suitable areas for inclusion.

The revised scheme totalled 3,200 lighting columns for potential switch off during the times of midnight and 5:30am, which would realise estimated savings of £140k, with a reduction of 739 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

Northumbria Police were supportive to the original scheme with the exception of Tyne Tunnel Trading Estate where minor adjustments were suggested. They were also supportive of the revised scheme provided that Mayflower controlled lighting was in place in the turn off areas. This measure would enable the street lights to be turned on remotely if needed.

The Cabinet Member responsible for Sustainable Development was in attendance and updated the Committee that a the Council had secured a an interest free loan of £493k to extend the Mayflower Central Management System (CMS) to include additional lighting columns selected for part night switch off and repayments would only be made on savings made.

It was stated that the additional columns would be in place for autumn 2014, with residential areas not being affected and that carbon footprint CO₂ savings would be realised and not only monetary savings.

It was also stated that all new estates would be fitted with LED lights.

It was asked who would be responsible for the part time switch off. It was stated that the CMS allows any officer with access to the system to control the part time switch off.

It was requested that Members receive the program of switch off areas. The Cabinet Members stated that the program would be shared with Members once available.

Agreed that (1) the Street Lighting Sub-group report and recommendations be referred to Cabinet:

R1: That Cabinet considers implementing a trial of part night switch off between midnight and 5.30am in the non-residential areas listed in the revised scheme attached at Appendix B and that this is facilitated through extending the Mayflower Central Management System to these areas.

R2: That Cabinet ask the Senior Manager of Commercial Partnerships to seek feedback from residents and local businesses once the part night switch off trial has been in operation for three months.

and (2) all members receive the program of switch off areas once available.