

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

6 July 2015

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, S Day, P Earley,
M Hall, Janet Hunter, C Johnson, D McGarr, P McIntyre,
A McMullen and J O'Shea

School Governor Representatives
Mrs J Little
Mrs M Ord

OV09/07/15 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs B Burdis, A Austin & Church Representatives Rev Vine, Mr G O'Hanlon

OV10/07/15 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members

OV11/07/15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

OV12/07/15 Minutes

Resolved that the minute of the meetings held on 30 March 2015 be confirmed.

OV13/07/15 Kier North Tyneside Joint Venture- Future Priorities

The Committee received a report from that detailed the work carried out by the Kier North Tyneside Joint Venture Sub-group.

It heard that in 2014, Councillor J Harrison – Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport had asked the Committee to carry out work and provide evidenced opinion on areas to improve business planning and performance priorities for the future.

As part of the review the sub-group received information from a number of interested parties which included the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing and Transport and Kier Management.

It also received the views from other interested parties which included a Tenants focus group and received views through electronic surveys from Council Staff, Kier Staff, Schools, Council Members and the Business Forum.

All responses and views were then collated to establish key themes and priorities for future consideration.

The sub-group made 10 recommendations that it wished to be considered by Cabinet.

Agreed that (1) the Kier North Tyneside Joint Venture Sub Group report and recommendations (listed) be referred to Cabinet:-

R 1: That investigation is progressed to see what if any alternative/ sustainable and suitable proposals could be put in place with regards to the use of the Killingworth site to aid both the Council and JVCo.

R 2: that consideration is given to offering a wide range of minor works/ services by extending the current offer to private sector clients.

R 3: that consideration be given to the introduction of efficient payments processes that would avoid delay in receiving payments.

R 4: that establishing a customer charter providing a named contact that customers could call would be beneficial as a clear communication process would be established to deal with customer concerns and requirements.

R 5: That further efforts be made to reduce the time taken for completing the lettings process to a more acceptable level i.e. under 25 days. It was thought that better programme planning and developing a multi skilled workforce would help in achieve this goal.

R 6: That the JVCo investigate smarter working approach to enable and encourage housing staff to identify potential back to back lets. This may require investigation if some financial incentive would enable agreed works to be carried out once the new tenant has moved in or before the old one departed.

R 7: This is an area that should be investigated to discover the reasons why jobs cannot be completed first time and put procedures in place to reduce the amount of delays as much as possible.

R 8: that there should be a greater focus to ensure better online services are available to customers to allow them to report faults and create better appointment management etc

R 9: That greater focus was needed from the Strategic Partnering Board on creating a clear Strategic Vision as to how it would deliver and grow the business.

R 10: the most appropriate time to consider a rebranding exercise may be addressed when consideration is being made to how the JVCo will look like post 2019.

OV14/07/15 Council Partnership - Capita

The Committee received a presentation and report that provided information with regards the Councils strategic partnering arrangement with Capita.

The report addressed concerns raised following a freedom of information request that related to delays to the delivery of some major road infrastructure schemes on the A188 corridor that included Four Lane Ends, Goathland Road and Balliol Business Park junctions.

The presentation provided an overview of the contractual arrangements to the partnership.

The Committee was reminded that the Capita technical services partnership with the Council commenced in November 2012 for a period of 15 years with a possible break at 10 years. The three key services to deliver were in the areas of;

- Highways, Engineering and Transport
- Strategic/Corporate Property
- Regulatory Services

To assure service delivery the Council retained a client team that provided strategic direction and ensured delivery of the agreed annual service plan and its strategic targets.

As the Councils partner and specialist provider Capita had exclusivity to supply services and related capital projects and formal benchmarking reviews would be undertaken at 4 years intervals.

The Committee was informed that if there was a loss of performance, there were a number of options in place, which included the time for the partner to remedy any default position, loss exclusivity and the ultimate action that the agreement could be terminated.

A Member questioned the reason to have complete exclusivity in the contract for technical services, stating this was not the case with other partnerships with the Council.

In response the Committee was informed that although there were aspects of exclusivity in partnership arrangements, there were occasions that exclusivity was not appropriate, this can occur when external funding is provided (e.g. Lottery funding) for projects and on these occasions the normal procurement arrangements would need to be followed.

A Member raised concerns that the delays in delivering the road infrastructure schemes could have a detrimental effect on the Councils reputation and therefore could theoretically become financially damaging. It was asked if the contract included protective and penalty options if this occurred.

The Committee was informed that there were options in the contract to protect the reputation of the Council and the ultimate penalty would be the withdrawal of exclusivity to areas of work that would not need to go through the normal procurement arrangements.

A Member raised the need for more coordinated Ward Member involvement and communication approaches especially when there are delays on delivery of services such as a major infrastructure schemes.

It was stated that the best approach to communicating with residents and services users would be investigated and this would include methods how to liaise with Ward Members.

Members raised the wish to and requested that the Committee carry out further in depth work into the Councils Partnership arrangements and include these on the work programme to be completed as soon as practicable

Agreed that (1) the Council Partnership – Capita information and update be noted; and (2) further in depth work into the Councils Partnership arrangements be included in its work programme to be completed as soon as practicable

OV15/07/15 Young Women and STEM Sub Group – Cabinet response

The Committee received the response from Cabinet to the recommendations submitted by the sub group of the Children Education and Skills Sub Committee in relation to its work on Young Women and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).

Appended to the report were details to the actions to be taken for each of the sub groups recommendations.

Agreed that the recommendation responses from Cabinet in relation to the work of the sub-group of the Young Women and STEM be noted.

OV16/07/15 Public Rights of Way Sub Group – Cabinet response

The Committee received the response from Cabinet to the recommendations submitted by the sub group of the Environment Sub Committee in relation to its work on Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

Appended to the report were details to the actions to be taken for each of the sub groups recommendations.

The Committee asked that clarification be provided to who would establish the membership & support the sub group and that the Constitution Task Group be asked to consider the need to reference the Rights of Way Sub group and its terms of reference in the constitution.

Agreed that (1) the recommendation responses from Cabinet in relation to the work of the sub-group of the Public Rights of Way be noted; (2) clarification be provided to who would establish the membership & support the sub group; and (3) the Constitution Task Group be asked to consider the need to reference the Rights of Way Sub group and its terms of reference in the constitution.