

Contact Officer: Carol Tague

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday 13th January 2020

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Harpreet Uppal
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Habiban Zaman

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Cooper

48 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Cooper.

49 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 4 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

50 Interests

No interests were declared.

51 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

52 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

53 Public Question Time

There were no public questions received.

54 Effective Regional Working in Kirklees

The Committee received a presentation from Ben Still, Managing Director and Dave Pearson, Director of Transport Services at West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in relation to partnership working and the benefits delivered for the district.

The presentation outlined:-

- Political membership and the Leadership Team
- Kirklees' role
- The four key priorities, namely (i) boosting productivity; (ii) enabling inclusive growth; (iii) delivering 21st century transport; and (iv) tackling the climate emergency
- Kirklees' Levy Contribution
- Delivery in Kirklees
- Inclusive Growth

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- Tackling the Climate Emergency
- Key Kirklees Priorities 2020-21

The key areas of the Committee's discussion and responses to questions are summarised below:

- It was noted that Kirklees had a high level of engagement and involvement within the WYCA and had representatives on a number of boards and committees. This included Councillor Shabir Pandor, Leader of the Council, who was the Chair of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel and Councillor Manisha Kaushik who was the Deputy Chair of the Transport Committee.
- Kirklees made a transport levy contribution of £19.8m, which included £9m to fund free travel for older and disabled people, which was a national scheme now paid for by local authorities, and £4 m to commission social necessary buses and AccessBus services.
- The Committee noted the funds from central government allocated through the Growth Deal for each district and how this was spread over specific priorities within Kirklees. These priorities included Growing Business, Skills Capital and Clean Energy. It was noted that the Growth Deal funding mechanism was due to end in March 2021.
- In partnership with the Council, 1038 grants had been offered to support local businesses, totalling £8.3m. Websites and social channels were used to spread the message that this funding was available. There were also Business Advisors working within the local authorities, business representative groups and pop up cafes. A watching brief was kept on the distribution of spend in order to identify any potential gaps and encourage take up where required.

With regards to raising ward member awareness of the grants available and signposting opportunities, the Committee were informed that a members' newsletter tailored to each local authority was distributed via email on a monthly basis.

- In July 2019, WYCA set a zero emissions target of 2038 and work was ongoing to fully understand what the pathway to achieving that target across the City Region would look like. It was anticipated that this would be available for sharing in March/April 2020.

WYCA were also involved in work that was ongoing nationally as to how best to appraise the climate impacts of specific programmes and apply that method to current programmes. This would give an indication on the carbon footprint of each of the each of the projects and programmes within the authority's portfolio.

- It was acknowledged that there were challenges in that each local authority region had slightly different approaches to air quality management areas and were at different stages of setting a of clean air zone.

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With regards to clean air zones, the Committee were advised that the Euro 6 diesel engine specification was the minimum compliant in terms of vehicle emissions and produced significantly less emissions than those from older buses. Alongside the requirement for clean air zones, the Government also ran some schemes which enabled the retrofitting of older and mid-life buses to reach the Euro 6 standards. The Panel noted that WYCA had been successful in obtaining monies to retrofit vehicles and that funding had been applied via a prioritised approach as per the conditions of government funding.

The bus fleet across West Yorkshire was partially compliant with clean air zone Euro 6 standards. Further retrofitting and work with bus operators and government funding was required to bring all buses to that standard. In terms of standards required by WYCA, notice was given to the bus industry a couple of years ago that by 2020, they would only want to commission Euro 6 engine vehicles and were working towards Euro 6 being the default standard in order to deal with the worst effects of emission. It was important to be mindful that if too high a standard of vehicle was required then this might have the consequence of reduced bus services in areas where they were most needed, particularly given that the investment required was a challenge for smaller bus operators.

- The introduction of electric buses was at an early stage and it was acknowledged that the range and terrain of some journeys within the region made this was challenging.
- With regards to rail travel, Government decisions were expected in 2020 in relation to improvements to the Huddersfield/Leeds/York route and arguments would continue to be made to improve the trans-Pennine corridor and extend to Manchester.

It was acknowledged that the reality was that almost every corridor needed improvement and whilst there was a need to improve the Huddersfield to Penistone line it was not currently at the top of the list of priorities.

- Whilst the region did not have an oyster card system, it did operate a well established multi modal operational scheme via the M Card. There had been an aspiration to have a system based on a bank card and mobile phone as an identification token, but this had been outpaced by technological developments and that project was currently in a pause position and talks were ongoing with Transport for the North as to how the M Card could be further developed as part of a localised solution.

The complex structure of rail fares was acknowledged and it was noted that as part of the Williams' review of rail, a review had started to look the at the fare structure of railways across the whole country and the development of an equitable system across the length of the journey.

- Work in relation to inclusive growth was in its early stages, in that the scale of the problem was understood and efforts had gone into developing a strategy that aimed to align with local authorities' own work on inclusive growth.

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- Confirmation as to whether it was community groups or businesses who could apply for the Rural Communities Energy Fund would be provided further to the meeting.
- Work led by the 5 authority leaders was ongoing to secure a devolution deal and there were positive signs that this might be concluded over the course of the year.
- A major funding bid had been submitted to Government called Transforming Cities, which was a corridor based programme that had been developed in partnership with the local authorities with a focus on linking actual travel demand for communities. The total value of the programme across the city region was between £250m - £500m and it was hoped to hear the outcome of the bid by Spring 2020.
- With regards to skills, there was an ask to devolve powers and funding in order to reshape and re-structure local skills provision to meet future demand. It was noted that every LEP area had an Employment Advisory Panel.
- In relation to transparency, the Committee were advised that the WYCA were established in statute and its' processes mirrored how the local authority conducted business. However, it was acknowledged that the WYCA did not have the same direct relationship with communities and that did present challenges in communicating work and decision making.

Local Enterprise Partnerships were separate in terms of their treatment by Government. Government had introduced some new information regarding improving LEP's transparency but this was already in place at a WYCA level as the LEP mirrored the transparency and accountability.

- Decisions were made through 3 Boards, namely the Combined Authority as the core decision making board, the Transport Committee which had delegation from the Combined Authority; and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Other decisions were delegated through officers and recorded in line with those taken by local authorities. It was noted that a potential area for confusion for the public was where the Combined Authority funded a project that was sponsored by a local authority who were ultimately the decision maker and scheme sponsor.
- The Combined Authority meeting was webcast and members of the public could attend but not ask questions. The Transport Committee was not currently webcast due to accommodation issues. There were also district consultation sub-committees, which were locally based meetings specifically around transport issues, which were an open forum. It was acknowledged that wider promotion of these meetings was important.
- With regards to engagement across West Yorkshire, the Committee raised that pavements and roads etc did not stop at Council boundaries and it was important that there was a mechanism to ensure consultation across region.

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In response, it was accepted that this was an area to improve with local authority partners. It was noted that some combined authorities had taken a more strategic view and managed more centrally than the WYCA had chosen to do. It was acknowledged that WYCA may have gone too far in the other direction and a joining up mechanism had not been in place early enough in the process to ensure that the whole picture was in view and the Committee were advised that lessons had been learned.

- The changing environment in relation to bus operators was highlighted and it was noted that the bus market in West Yorkshire had lost over a million bus trips per year. This was at a time when public transport would need to play a key role in the reduction of the carbon footprint and allowing fully inclusive growth, and the reconciliation of this would be a real challenge. It was important to support bus operators in taking a wider view of profitability and to face the challenge of decline when services were needed most.

The Panel also noted that a close watching brief would be kept on events in Manchester, which as a mayoral zone had taken the first steps to a franchising option.

Resolved: The Committee noted the information presented and thanked Ben Still and Dave Pearson for their attendance.

55 Cohesion Review Progress Update

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the development of the Cohesion Strategy, focusing on findings from analysis of the 50 focus groups held to inform the vision and strategy.

Carol Gilchrist, Head of Communities and Ali Amla, Cohesion and Integration Manager were in attendance for the item.

The Panel were advised that the Cohesion Strategy had been developed with co-production principles at its foundation. The next stage of development was a partnership event in January to which all councillors had been invited. This would enable the drafting of the vision and strategy which would go out to further consultation before formal adoption.

The key areas of the Panel's discussion and responses to questions are summarised below:

- With regards to whether communities across the whole of Kirklees had been consulted, the Panel were advised that focus groups had been varied and a place based approach had been taken throughout the process. All local areas had been covered including Huddersfield, Mirfield, Batley and Spenningsdale and rural communities. It was acknowledged that there were some gaps within the engagement, but it was believed that there was a fairly representative voice at this point to create a broader vision and strategy and gaps that had been identified would be addressed through local planning and development.

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- The Committee referred to the findings of the Casey Review of 2016 which highlighted the need to bring communities together and asked what work was being undertaken to build on previous work around cohesion as well as current working practices. In response, it was noted that the Casey Review was a national review and the policy never came to light through government. The Cohesion Strategy review was more localised and would tie in with current Council policies around place based working.

Since 2016 the offer within the Cohesion Team had changed in that they were now a smaller team comprised of 6 officers. Some of the work being translated through the Strategy was that work should not just be led by officers and elected members, with an asset based approach being taken to developing cohesion.

- With regards to research, it was planned to triangulate and integrate communities work and consult across the Council, which was a data rich organisation. More in Common were currently doing a piece of research across Batley and Spen and it had been intended to align with this work, but unfortunately there had been delays due to the general election. Reference was also made to new academic research emerging in the field of cohesion and integration.
- The new vision would be aligned to the Council's commitment to Intercultural Cities with the incorporation of key recommendations to complement existing action plans. It was clarified that Intercultural Cities was working broadly across the Council and cohesion was one aspect. It was agreed that the report would be shared with the Committee.
- It was important to create a shared vision with communities and partners and review the whole council approach, rather than focusing on one service. With regards to day to day operation, it was intended that work would evolve into locally place based action plans which would include further engagement and work with partners as to priorities within specific localities.
- In terms of demonstrating and recording work that had been carried out by the Cohesion Team to bring communities together, it was noted that the implementation and development of the cohesion framework would include an evaluation matrix and measurements to evaluate the impact of work and determine what was working and to consider any changes that might be required to make more impact.

Examples of work included the administration of small grant funding opportunities to a number of grass roots community organisations of up to £500 to assist in innovation as well as a series of up to 30 events that had been facilitated during Inter Faith Week which had brought together approximately 2,800 residents.

- Hate crime was not used as a measurement of cohesion as reporting could rise as a result of awareness raising work carried out in an area. One measurement used was the CLIK Survey, which was completed by residents and measured

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perceptions of cohesion across the district and another was the Police and Crime Survey.

- The Cohesion Review and Strategy would be broader than being sat within one department and viewed as everyone's business. It would be aligned to work done through the Democracy Commission, place based working and the Council's vision of people, partners and place. There was a desire to engage broader partners to enrich the data obtained and this included workshops and elected member engagement.
- In response to questions as to the consultation carried out and whether 250 people was a representative sample of the population of Kirklees, the Committee were advised that work had started with 20 focus groups and there had been an iterative process to identify gaps in order to ensure that voices were captured. It was noted that Kirklees had a unique footprint and it was important to engage more widely eg with rural communities and young people and recognise other diversity factors such as disability. Staff networks had also been utilised, as 80% of staff lived and worked in Kirklees and this was a valuable insight. The Committee were informed that this was not the end of the journey.

The Place Standard had been delivered in 11 areas to date and up to 600-1,000 residents could be engaged in a geographical area. These findings would also be integrated into this work.

The Committee were advised that this was an initial analysis of data for strategy development purposes and it was hoped to collaborate with the University to do more. It was also noted that at the outset of the process, focus had been on consultation and engagement, rather than research. However, through discussions with More in Common and the University, there was going to be a piece of statistical research specifically around cohesion within the Batley and Spennings Dale area. As previously mentioned, it had been hoped that it would form part of this report but there had been a delay to external factors. The research would include a door knocking survey as well as other types of academic research and would focus on what impact More in Common's cohesion work had made across the area.

In terms of lessons learned, it was acknowledged that there could have been more focus on representative sampling and liaising with the Council's Data and Intelligence Team at an earlier stage.

- The next stage of development was important, as once the framework had been developed, work would move into developing localised action planning.
- Members questioned whether the consultation demonstrated voices across the locality, recognised the multitude of community groups across Kirklees, involved schools and the Youth Council and reached out to those who were not part of community groups.

The Committee were advised that consultation data had not been included within the report due to GDPR challenges, in that it had not been possible to data

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cleanse to the extent where it could be shared in the report. Members were informed that consultation included 89 primary, secondary and further education establishments, 44 teachers and 5 focus groups involving 53 individuals which incorporated a spectrum of voices across the age groups. Volunteers, generational family groups, women's groups, refugees and asylum seekers, faith groups, volunteers and young offenders had also been consulted and feedback had been received from individuals to say that this had been their first interaction with local authorities. Officers had also gone out to communities and attended large events such as carnivals and Pride.

In response to a question regarding the action plans and the outcomes, outputs and measurements therein, it was noted that this was still in development and the partnership event in January would be part of this and officers were keen for elected Members to be part of the working groups who would set the place based action plans. The Committee asked for further information as to how the action plans would evolve.

Resolved: The Committee:

1. Wished to see further information as to how the action plans would evolve;
2. Required further details as to the engagement carried out; and
3. Recommended that the Strategy timeline be paused to ensure that the base for the vision was robust and based on a representative sample across Kirklees.

56 Scrutiny Panel Lead Member Reports

The Management Committee considered update reports from the four Scrutiny Panel Lead Members on the recent work of their panels.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Lead Member update reports on the work of scrutiny panels.

57 Date of Next Meeting / Agenda plan

Resolved:

1. It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held on 9 March 2020 at 1400; and
2. Agreed that an additional meeting be scheduled at the beginning of March to consider the report of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel (Future Arrangements for the Council's Residential Housing Stock), prior to it being submitted to Cabinet.