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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 20th August 2020

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

79 Membership of Committee

All members of the Committee were present.

80 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

With regards to Item 74 (Request to Re-establish and Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Panel) it was noted that an informal OSMC meeting has been arranged on 29 September at 1000 am to consider a report of the Ad Hoc - Future arrangements for the Council's Residential Housing Stock prior to Cabinet.

81 Interests

No interests were declared.

82 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

83 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

84 Public Question Time

There were no public questions received.

85 Our Council Plan

The Committee received a report which provided information on the development of Our Council Plan, and how it built on previous approaches. The report also provided an update on the Council's approach to communication in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Rachel Spencer Henshall (Strategic Director, Corporate Strategy Commissioning and Public Health), Kate McNicholas (Head of Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning) and Marcus Bonnell (Head of Strategic Communications) were in attendance for the item.

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The Committee were advised that the original intention had been to carry out substantial review to establish a 3 year Council Plan. However, given the context in which the Council was now operating, it had been agreed to proceed with a 1 year extension of the existing Corporate Plan, rather than carrying out a detailed piece of work at this point in time. This extension would focus on the consolidation of response and recovery work and play in the learning to date regarding the values of the organisation. Follow up work would be carried out next year to consolidate those values and embed within the organisation.

The Plan would continue to be structured around the 7 shared outcomes and a commitment to People, Partners and Place.

In terms of the reporting flightpath, it was noted that the Council Plan and associated Recovery Plan would be considered at the Corporate Scrutiny Panel on 10 September, Cabinet on 22 September and Council on 21 October 2020.

A clear commitment to tackling inequalities was set out within the Recovery Plan and this would be accompanied by a Tackling Inequalities Action Plan, which would set out specific actions. As part of this coherent approach to planning, the refreshed People Strategy would also be considered at the same time.

Key communication approaches taken through the pandemic were outlined and it was noted that a new Communications Strategy was at the early stages of development and would be aligned to the Council Plan.

The Committee asked a number of questions and a summary of responses is noted below:-

- The Committee asked that the phase title ‘Forever Kirklees’ be changed.
- Resilience, both in terms of personal, community and organisational, was critical and reference to this would be strengthened within the report
- Funding made available to improve cycling should be dedicated to longer term projects, such as greenways, rather than short term fixes.
- In terms of improving outcomes for children, the positive impact of food vouchers for children on free school meals was highlighted as was the need for an examination of connectivity and digital exclusion. It was noted that this would form part of the Inequalities Action Plan moving forward.
- Communications had improved and the internal communications were welcomed. Recent web posts were clearer and information regarding Covid-19 data was more accessible. In terms of communication more generally, it was suggested that there should be a move from internal/external language with just one clear way of communication.
- The priority being given to tackling inequalities was welcomed, but the Committee felt that it should be more prominent within the Plan. In response, the Committee were reassured that the Council Plan would place inequalities

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front and centre and the Inequalities Action Plan would sit alongside this and set out the key actions. The commitment to building an inclusive economy was also part of the Recovery Framework and would be a key aspect within the Economic Recovery Plan.

- In terms of measuring delivery on inequalities, key indicators at a population level, such as healthy life expectancy would be measured on an annual basis in conjunction with shorter term indicators such as access to services eg NHS health checks, to determine if the borough was moving in the right direction and whether that gap was being reduced
- It was acknowledged that ongoing engagement was critical to tackling inequalities, both in terms of relationship building and informing further phases of the action plan.
- Inequalities would be embedded and connected into other actions plans through integrated impact assessments in order to steer development activity at an early stage. It was suggested that issues such as power and inequalities and local wealth building could be themes for further development at a local level.
- In terms of resources, the importance of having the right staff in place for meaningful engagement was outlined and a recruitment strategy would be in place to support the Inequalities Action Plan. Consideration also needed to be given to how best to move away from a standard delivery pathway to something designed with those affected in mind alongside appropriate resources. It was suggested that the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel may wish to consider how best to put an inequalities slant on service delivery. It was noted that the commitment was there from a partnership perspective and it was critical to determine how best to translate that into action and ensure that resources were put into the right initiatives.
- In response to a question regarding capacity to take advantage of funding opportunities as when they arose and ensuring that such decisions were transparent to elected Members, it was noted that capacity would be drawn from a variety of sources such as Executive, partnership or sub-regional, depending on what the Council were trying to achieve. It was further noted that there was a need to be explicit in the Corporate Plan as to the appetite for making use of any such opportunities and ensure that this was built into the relevant services.
- With regards to input from Kirklees shaping sub-regional activity, it was noted that work in relation to Kirklees' Economic Recovery Plan had directly shaped the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan being led out by West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- It was noted that one of the Corporate Plan supporting documents would be in relation to performance management.
- In terms of keeping communications visible and engaging to avoid message fatigue, it was noted that various channels and partner networks were being utilised. The use of staff on the ground was also providing a better insight into

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specific issues and message could be focused accordingly. The potential to use influencers outside of the Council was also being considered.

- With regards to the Partnership Plan, it noted that this could potentially be completed by November 2020. It was hoped that the partnership event ‘A Picture of Kirklees’ could be held as in previous years and this would be a positive opportunity for the partnership executive to articulate to a wider set of partners. It was noted that the Corporate Scrutiny Panel would wish to consider the Partnership Plan at an appropriate point in its’ development.

Resolved:-

1. The Committee thanked the officers for attending the meeting and noted the update provided in relation to the Council Plan, Recovery Framework and the Council’s approach to communications in the context of the corona virus pandemic;
2. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel to consider how best to put an inequalities focus on service delivery as part of their work programming;
3. The Corporate Scrutiny Panel to consider the Partnership Plan at an appropriate point in its’ development; and
4. The Council Plan and associated documentation to encompass the following key areas highlighted by the Committee:-
 - Digital inclusion across all age groups
 - ‘Forever Kirklees’ to be renamed
 - More prominence for resilience within the Council Plan
 - Inequalities to be front and centre
 - Employment opportunities for children and young people
 - Inclusive economy
 - Wider long term projects in relation to cycling and climate change
 - Clear, consistent innovative messaging in the Communications Strategy
 - Budget strategy and partner involvement
 - Wider engagement, not just the usual networks
 - Clear actions to accompany the Council Plan
 - Partnerships – build on the approach taken over the last few months

86 Work Programme

The work programmes for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committees and Scrutiny Panels were noted.

The Committee were informed that the Place Based Working Group had received an update on the place based approach during Covid-19. The Group were reassessing priorities in the light of this, but it was intended that areas for consideration would include discussion with the Place leads and an examination of place based partnerships.

87 Any Other Business

The Chair reported that an urgent item in relation to the purchase of the George Hotel had been taken to Cabinet on 16 June 2020. It was agreed that the item would be exempt from call-in, but on the proviso that relevant information be taken to the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel at the earliest opportunity and the report submitted to Cabinet should reflect that. It was confirmed that the item had been considered by the Panel on 9 July 2020.

88 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that there would be an informal meeting of the Committee on 29 September at 1000 and the next public meeting would be on 29 October 2020 at 1400.