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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 4th October 2022

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Jackie Ramsay

Apologies: Councillor John Taylor

22 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor John Taylor.

23 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th July 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chair provided updates as follows:

(i) The Kirklees Employment and Skills Plan 2022-2025, which had been subject to pre-decision scrutiny by this Committee in April 2022, had been adopted by Cabinet on 26th July. Cabinet had requested the submission of regular progress reports on the delivery of the plan and the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel would undertake further scrutiny as necessary. (Minute 78, 2021/22).

(ii) Further to pre-decision scrutiny by this Committee at meetings in November 2021 and June 2022, the Communities Partnership Plan 2022-2027 had been endorsed by Cabinet on 21st September. It would be submitted to the next meeting of Council, on 12 October 2022, for approval. (Minutes 27 (2021/22) and 10 (2022/23)).

24 Interests

No interests were declared.

25 Admission of the Public

All items were heard in public session.

26 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

27 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

28 Community Anchor Network - Update

A report was submitted which gave an update on progress in respect of the Community Anchor Network Contract.

Jill Greenfield the Service Director, Customers and Communities and Mags Rogerson the Head of Service, Local Integrated Partnerships attended the meeting to present the report and answer Members' questions. The following points were highlighted:

- The aim was to build a network with strong relationships rather than focussing on specific target-driven outcomes.
- Partnership working with the social prescribing service across Kirklees.
- There were fifteen community anchors across Kirklees with a lead anchor in the Huddersfield, Rural, Batley and Spen, and Dewsbury and Mirfield areas.
- Monitoring of the contract.
- Engagement had taken place with over 300 community organisations.
- Each anchor was developing a locality plan in conversation with local communities which would set out priorities, concerns, opportunities and connections. These plans would be widely shared.
- Promotion of the network and engagement with Ward Councillors.

The Panel also welcomed Tom Taylor from Third Sector Leaders Kirklees and Carole Roberts from Huddersfield Mission to share their experience of the project. Third Sector Leaders Kirklees was responsible for co-ordinating and managing the development of the anchors and the network and Huddersfield Mission was one of the local anchor community organisations.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In respect of how the network would grow and support smaller organisations serving different geographical areas; it was explained that the lead anchors were well established organisations with strong infrastructures and the community anchors were very well embedded in their local communities. The lead anchors would provide peer support to smaller groups to aid in their development.
- Staffing capacity in the lead anchors could be funded, funding for the local organisations was flexible to allow it to be best used to support their needs.
- From the point of view of a lead anchor organisation this was a different way of working to previously; it had taken some time to develop new relationships and establish aims and boundaries. There was a positive and supportive relationship with the relevant Council officers. At a more local, community level it was considered that partnerships had been strengthened and trust was being built within the sector.
- The principle of using those 'best placed' to address a need was correct; established community organisations had the necessary experience, knowledge and connections. New or struggling groups would be able to go to them for support.

- Some areas currently had fewer local anchors. One of the five aims for the lead anchors was to reach out to groups and organisations that it did not already have contact with and, if they wished to engage, the local anchor network would respond with help and support as appropriate. This would also be forthcoming if requested by a smaller local group.
- The level of awareness of smaller local groups about this offer was queried and how would they know that this support was available.
- Some development of the lead anchors was still ongoing but they were established organisations who could provide the necessary advice, training and support to others.
- Competition for funding and duplication could be a concern particularly when the resources were limited and it was hoped that this would be discussed with groups.
- It was considered that this way of working would assist in avoiding competition and duplication, local groups had a much higher level of communication with each other, and a much greater awareness of what others were able to offer, this was backed up by good support from the lead anchors. As the connections developed it had become less focussed on geographical location and more about what skills each organisation may be able to offer to others within the network.
- The draft locality plans aimed to capture the insight and intelligence from the conversations with local communities about their concerns and difficulties but it was acknowledged that there may be a need to simplify them and align them with other things, such as the Council's aspirations for youth services.
- The level of meetings between the lead and local anchors varied depending on the area and what was felt appropriate to ensure effectiveness. It was important that groups were able to focus on their core work. The network as a whole met on a quarterly basis, the lead anchors on a monthly basis, and informal meetings were also an important element.
- It was considered that this work was an integral part of building resilient communities that were able to respond to the issues affecting them, in partnership with the Council. By enabling communities to do what they wanted to do and to use resources and assets as they considered appropriate this would encourage organisation and inclusion.
- It was recognised that different areas may need different levels of support; the starting point would be to establish their concerns, assets and skills and support them to build on these. The development of the network would also lead to the sharing of skills, resources and support with other areas of the district.
- It was important that the geography of the different areas was understood.
- Anchors should speak to all community groups to ask what they needed and to explain what they could do to assist; this would help to build a stronger network.
- The locality plans were at an early stage and how they would fit alongside other action plans, ward plans and partners' priorities was an important point for consideration as they developed, It was hoped that the planned Councillor Workshops would assist in this cross-referencing.
- It would be a good idea to evaluate why some areas had lower levels of activity and to take learning from areas that were operating more effectively.

- From the viewpoint of a local anchor organisation, it was considered that this different way of working and mindset; connecting, uniting and supporting community groups, was powerful.

Resolved -
1) That the comments of the Committee, as set out below, be taken into account in the further development of the Community Anchor Network:
- The need to support capacity in local communities.
- Communication with all community groups and raising awareness of the network.
- Further development of the locality plans to link in with other plans and priorities.
- Building capacity and developing the network in places where additional support may be needed.
- Taking learning from areas where the community groups are operating effectively.

2) That the Head of Service be asked to share the locality plans with Members of the Committee in twelve months time.

29 Loneliness and Social Isolation in Kirklees - Loneliness Steering Group

Jill Greenfield – Service Director, Customers and Communities, Mark Wearmouth – Service Manager, Local Integrated Partnerships and Helen Gilchrist – Project Manager, Local Integrated Partnerships presented a report in relation to role of the Kirklees Loneliness Steering Group.

The group had been established by the Council and partners, further to the development of a partnership vision to make Kirklees a place where communities are more connected and support each other to develop meaningful relationships and reduce loneliness.

The report was part of the ongoing scrutiny of this topic by the Committee and the Chair gave a brief update on visits undertaken with:
- Yorkshire Children's Centre
- A local Long Covid Support Group
- Luv2MeetU (a charity which organises events for small groups of people with learning disabilities or autism to address issues associated with independence and/or loneliness).

She had also observed a recent meeting of the Loneliness Steering Group.

The report set out background to the group including its vision and key priorities, the work undertaken prior to and during the pandemic and an ongoing review of its terms of reference and membership. It also set out the key challenges faced in addressing loneliness.

It was reported that there was a strong commitment from the group and the aim was to strengthen its focus and purpose post-pandemic with key objectives that could make an impact. A review had been undertaken, with a range of options considered, and a decision made to continue with a broad strategy group with a wider membership.

The role of the group was highlighted, as set out below:
- Owning and driving forward the strategy across the life course.
- Understanding local needs, identifying opportunities for development and setting priorities for action.
- Continuing to make tackling loneliness/ meaningful social connection everyone's business.
- Keeping a 'watchful eye' on progress and helping to unblock barriers to progress.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:
- The steering group was quite large and appeared to have significant engagement, but further clarity was needed in respect of the impact it was having, other than ensuring awareness at a strategic level in the organisations involved.
- It was recognised that there was a need for the steering group to develop an achievable and purposeful work programme aligned with the identified priorities and, further to this, for discussion to take place with partners about their responsibilities and accountability, and consideration of the resources that were necessary to re-shape the agenda.
- The training of staff at grass-roots level to identify loneliness and to build their confidence be able to address the issue, with the necessary sensitivity, was an aspiration of the steering group and a guidance note had been produced in 2021. It was noted that most large organisations had training and development programmes and an issue such as this could be accommodated under the wellness agenda.
- In respect of links with the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and ownership of this issue, it was explained that there was need to ensure that everyone had the ability to identify and respond at points of contact. It was acknowledged that a number of key points of contacts were within the PCNs; there were a number of council staff involved with the networks and this issue was a high priority for them; it was also believed to be a focus for GPs practices.
- Loneliness and social isolation was an important issue to address in light of the potential impact on individuals.
- In terms of internal connections and with anchor organisations, Third Sector Leaders Kirklees were represented on the steering group. There were also strong links with the Integrated Partnerships Service including the Personalised Care Team and Community Plus. The community anchors would be a useful source of intelligence and information as the work moved forward.
- The links to the PCNs and GPs were through the personalised care roles. It was believed that partners on the Health and Wellbeing Board had a very good understanding of the impacts of loneliness but it was important to ensure that the issue was in view and there may be a need to reinforce this within the work programme. There was strong awareness in the PCNs and it had been a driver for the creation of the social prescribing link worker roles.

- Further information could be provided in respect of whether the issue was on the agenda for GP commissioning groups.
- The steering group needed to provide a strong lead and drive the priorities forward ensuring that they fed through to partners.
- There were working groups sitting beneath the steering group which focussed on specific projects to support the priorities.
- The importance of the careful definition of loneliness was acknowledged. It was a normal part of the human condition and covered a spectrum, having an impact when someone was experiencing chronic loneliness and this was negatively affecting their health and wellbeing.
- There was no single solution or approach and strategies were needed across the different life stages; addressing what people needed rather than what organisations wanted to provide.
- It had become apparent from the visits undertaken to date that there was a need for individuals to have access to someone that they could talk to when in crisis, particularly when they might be unable to talk to someone to whom they had a personal connection.
- The work of the steering group was evidence based, using national and local sources, and aimed to be pro-active in the areas highlighted by data, such as young adults.
- Members expressed an interest in further information on the work being undertaken, including the staff guidance.

Resolved –
That officers be thanked for their report and presentation and be asked to consider the following points in taking this work forward:

- The need for the steering group to establish an achievable and purposeful work programme aligned with the identified priorities, and for responsibilities and accountability to be discussed with partners alongside consideration of the resources that are necessary to re-shape the approach to tackling loneliness.
- The potential for making identifying and addressing loneliness a priority within organisations' training and development programmes
- Links to the community anchor organisations and within the Primary Care Networks.
- How support might be provided to people at a point of crisis.
- The definition of loneliness in the context of this work.
- Links with the Health and Wellbeing Board; highlighting the strategy so that it is visible at the top tiers of partner organisations.

30 Lead Members Update

Councillor Yusra Hussain, Lead Member for the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel updated the Committee on the work being undertaken by this panel.

An update was submitted on the work of the Corporate Scrutiny Panel by Councillor John Taylor, the Lead Member.

The updates were noted and the panels thanked for their work.

31 Work Programme 2022-23

The latest version of the Work Programme was submitted for the Committee's consideration.

The next meeting would be held on 1st November 2022 and the following items had been provisionally scheduled:

- Draft Inclusion and Diversity Annual Report
- Inclusive Communities Framework Implementation
- Lead Members' Updates from Children's and Health & Adult Social Care Panels.

32 Any Other Business

The Chair reported that, since the last meeting of the Committee, she had been consulted, in her role as Chair of Scrutiny, on an urgent key decision in respect of the award of grant funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to deliver the Local Supported Employment Initiative.

She had agreed that call-in could be waived as a decision was required to receive the grant and enter into a funding agreement. Confirmation of the successful application for funding had been received on 16th August 2022 with instructions to return the signed grant agreement by 26th August 2022, hence the need for urgency.