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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday 17th October 2016

Present: Councillor Julie Stewart-Turner (Chair)
Councillor Cahal Burke
Councillor Gulfam Asif
Councillor Ken Sims

Apologies:

In attendance: Councillor Graham Turner, Cabinet Member - Asset
Strategy, Resources & Creative Kirklees (Arts)

Observers:

35 Membership of Committee

All Members were present.

36 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Committee considered the minutes of meetings held on 5 and 26 September 2016.

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 5 and 26 September 2016 were approved as correct records.

37 Interests

There were no interests declared.

38 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

39 Flood Risk - Preparation for Flood Season

Paul Hawkins, Operational Manager and Tom Ghee, Group Engineer attended the Committee meeting to provide an update on preparations being made by the Council in anticipation of possible autumn flooding.

The report indicated that a Leeds City Region working group had been established following the 2015 floods to review the impact of the floods and consider actions to reduce the social and economic damage from future floods. The actions identified were high level and regionally based but many were relevant to issues faced in Kirklees.

Kirklees had taken the opportunity to consider whether its operational response to predicted flooding was appropriate. A new Flood Response Policy and supporting operational plan was being developed to manage a targeted and proportionate response to flood events.

Mr Ghee explained that the policy described the Council's policies during a flood event and also refreshed the Council's sandbag policy in line with the priorities. It sought to make best use of weather forecasts and river flooding warnings to mobilise appropriate resources for the rainfall event. The report continued to outline the operational plan approach and summarise Council preparations for autumn and winter flooding.

The Committee noted that preparations included trash grille inspection and clearance programme which now meant some higher priority grilles were cleared monthly. Gully emptying resources were targeted at higher priority transport routes to increase the frequency of emptying and operational support to communities before and during flooding had been improved with stand by resources available at all times. A community engagement programme was to continue over the next few years to all of those communities at higher risk of flooding to provide information, advice and encourage self-help.

In considering the report, Councillor Asif asked what information was routinely given to local ward members to understand the risks within their local areas. It was noted that currently there was no routine practice for providing that information other than responding to local member's enquiries. The Committee agreed it would be appropriate if all wards had a profile for members to enable them to discuss with local communities as opportunities arose.

Councillor Simms expressed concerns that there were still inadequate preventative measures within the flood risk approach in Kirklees. He identified a need to undertake work in upland areas to try to limit the excess water running down into populated valleys. Mr Ghee indicated that there was an emphasis on natural flood management including keeping water in moorlands but currently funding was not available to support that work. However there were projects adjacent council areas, such as Calderdale that Kirklees could learn from and adapt best practise within the Kirklees district.

The Committee continued to discuss national regulation regarding water supply in reservoirs and the limitations of local authorities to influence policy dictated by OFWAT. The current approach to the impact of developments on flood risk areas was also discussed and Mr Ghee confirmed that the service was providing robust comments as a technical consultee to try to manage risk within development areas. A policy was now in place that should stop some previous issues, for example the inclusion of mill ponds.

Mr Ghee indicated he would report back to the Committee in January 2017 on the pilot, working with local communities in the Cleckheaton area of Kirklees.

RESOLVED -

(1) That Tom Ghee and Paul Hawkins be thanked for attending the Committee meeting.

(2) That the update report on Preparations for the Flood Season be welcomed and noted, in particular proposals to revise operational practices to be more proactive in addressing flood risk management.

(3) That the Service investigate issues raised by the Committee concerning, Ward based information for Members; the funding opportunities through Ward budgets; contact information for residents.

40 Performance Management

Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Director for Public Health and Martin Dearnley, Head of Audit and Risk attended the Committee meeting to present information on work towards developing improved performance reporting within the Council. Information circulated with the agenda included the following:

- What is changing: Performance Improvement Proposals
- A List of the Seven Outcomes
- A chart of the Commissioning Cycle and how intelligence and performance interrelate.
- A calendar for the changed reporting arrangements.
- The schedule of monthly performance monitoring items.

The Committee noted that current performance reporting arrangements did not reach the needs of the Council moving forward. Performance indicators related to outcomes and linked to Kirklees Economic Strategy and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. However this did not enable the organisation to understand the day to day picture and identify significant operational issues. The objective was to introduce a business critical set of performance indicators that would enable Cabinet and the Leadership of the Council to more quickly identify critical issues as they arose. These would be produced in the middle of the month and analysis would be on an exception reporting basis.

Ms Spencer-Henshall continued to explain to the committee how the performance indicators would be developed following the reorganisation of the directorate management structures and using policy, intelligence and finance information to

inform a picture of Kirklees within those areas. It was emphasised that the list of indicators would not be comprehensive but that services would also monitor key areas within their own management processes.

In discussing the proposals, the Management Committee recognised they were at an early stage and there was further work to do. It was requested that the Management Committee also be provided with a list of those areas to be monitored on a quarterly basis to provide a fuller picture of the performance information to be captured.

Reference was made to the need to learn from the issues highlighted by the development work in Childrens Services which had included the use of performance clinics to focus on specific areas of practice.

RESOLVED -

(1) That Rachel Spencer-Henshall and Martin Dearnley be thanked for attending the meeting to set out the proposed revised approach to improving performance reporting within the Council.

(2) That the Management Committee be supplied with the monthly performance reporting areas in order to develop a full picture of information to be monitored.

(3) That the Management Committee is supportive of the performance clinic approach to managing transformation improvement.

(4) That a further progress report be presented to the Management Committee later in the municipal year.

41 Corporate Complaints Annual Report

The Management Committee considered a report which set out recent learning from complaints handling. Chris Read, Corporate Customer Standards Officer attended the Committee to present the report and answer Member's questions.

The report provided a summary of the Council's complaints process and the current Kirklees position which indicated that the customer standards function provided advice to services on over 500 complaint inquiries each year. In addition 93 complaints had been received by the Ombudsman which was 16% of the total number of complaints received by West Yorkshire local authorities.

The report indicated that the majority of complaints that progressed to second stage had one of the following factors to them:

- Poor communication.
- Speed of response.
- Misunderstanding of the process.

The Corporate Customer Standards Officer informed the Committee that he was working on eight short guides to offer staff advice on complaints handling. The guides were designed to highlight good practice and provide practical advice on the

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steps to be taken when considering a complaint. In addition, templates of complaint letters were being prepared to support officers.

In considering the report the Management Committee welcomed the proposal to develop guides and templates to support officers in managing and responding to complaints. The Committee suggested that officers should, where possible, discuss concerns rather than take an over defensive stance when receiving a complaint.

RESOLVED -

(1) That Chris Read, Corporate Customer Standards Officer be thanked for attending the meeting to present information on the learning from complaints handling.

(2) That the report be welcomed, in particular the work to produce templated and guides to help raise consistency and standards in our response to enquiries.

42 Date of Next Meeting/OSMC Work Programme

The Management Committee considered its future work programme. It was noted that a potential item regarding Highways funding had been listed on the work programme, however as the Committee was unable to identify a specific focus for work it was agreed that the item would be removed. The Committee agreed that its next meeting would be held on 7 November 2016 and issues for discussion would include the Comoodle Project, in particular how it was working with communities.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the next meeting of the Committee be held on 7 November 2016 at 9.30am.

(2) That the potential item regarding Highways Funding be removed from the work programme as a focus for discussion could not be identified.

(3) That the agenda issues identified for 7 November 2016 meeting be confirmed and noted.