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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday 23rd January 2017

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

Apologies:

In attendance:

Sue Richards, Assistant Director for Early Intervention and Prevention
Carol Smith, Project Manager, EIP
Tom Ghee, Group Engineer - Flood Management and PROW
Penny Bunker, Governance and Democratic Engagement Manager

Observers:

65 Membership of Committee

All members of the Committee were present.

66 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2017 were approved as a correct record.

67 Interests

There were no interests declared.

68 Admission of the Public

Agreed that all items be considered in public session.

69 Flood Risk - Annual Update

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered an annual update on the Kirklees Flood Risk Management Strategy. It was noted that this was a statutory requirement for Overview and Scrutiny. Mr Tom Ghee, Group Engineer, Flood Management attended the meeting to present the update and answer the Committee's questions.

Mr Ghee indicated that the strategy had originally been approved by Cabinet on 15th January 2013 and had been subject to a recent update in November 2016. The update took into consideration the flooding of December 2015 and new arrangements for the promotion of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) to strengthen the Council's support for Natural Flood Management.

A total of 32 measures were identified in the strategy but it was emphasised that funding, both internally and externally was limited. The action plan supporting the strategy had been amended to reflect a previous request by Scrutiny to ensure that progress was clear and any reasons for delay in delivering actions would be transparent.

The Management Committee noted that officers had targeted funding for smaller community size projects and successfully levered in approximately £500,000 against match funding from Council budgets of £100,000. It was acknowledged that areas around Leeds, Bradford and Calderdale were seen as higher priorities for significant funding given recent severe flooding episodes.

The Committee continued to discuss community engagement work and how Officers were seeking to work with communities to support them to be proactive when flooding occurs. A pilot was under way in Cleckheaton and Liversedge but overall it was a difficult task to engage with people who had not actually been flooded. Evidence shows that where people had been subject to floods they were keen to work together with the Council and partners to put measures in place to mitigate further risk.

The Committee continued to discuss how ward members had been engaged in projects. Mr Ghee highlighted the limited officer resources to support multiple community meetings but suggested that officers could help ward members to enable them to lead and drive forward the flood education and prevention work.

The Management Committee suggested that an advice letter with contacts and details could be provided for ward members to distribute in affected areas within their wards. It was felt that this could result in savings in both Councillor and officer time when flooding occurred.

Mr Ghee also encouraged Councillors to report any flooding episodes so that the Council could have improved intelligence on local flooding episodes and risks. This would support further bids for funding.

The Management Committee explored further the work that was being developed to provide ward members with local flooding information in the form of a ward information pack. Mr Ghee indicated that a consultant was looking to pilot an approach and Holme Valley South was a trial area. The Management Committee agreed to receive an update on this work, together with examples of what the information would look like, at the next flood risk update in October 2017.

There was a discussion on the role of flood risk advice in the planning process and it was noted that advice did not have to be followed by planners, who had to balance it against other development requirements.

The Management Committee looked through the action plan progress document and it was suggested that the University might be considered as a possible partner for some of the areas of research. Mr Ghee agreed to give consideration to the suggestion and report back to the Management Committee. Mr Ghee also mentioned the work being undertaken in Calderdale with volunteers and the Management Committee asked for an update in October on the learning from that work.

The Management Committee noted that the Leeds City Region had undertaken a Flood Resilience Review. Mr Ghee provided an assessment of Kirklees's actions against the recommendations within the resilience review.

RESOLVED –

(1) The Management Committee noted and welcomed the progress made against the actions in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

(2) That the Flood Risk Management Strategy be reconsidered at the October 2017 meeting of the Management Committee.

(3) That the October meeting consider proposals for information to be made available to ward members and the outcomes of any pilot work.

(4) That the Management Committee receives feedback on the Calderdale Volunteer Project and any progress in working with partners to potentially deliver some areas of the action plan.

70 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) - Final Proposals

The Management Committee considered a copy of the report presented to Cabinet on 17th January 2017 on the proposed early help offer for children, young people and families. Sue Richards, Assistant Director, Early Intervention and Prevention and Carol Smith, Project Manager attended the meeting to present the information and discuss issues arising with the Committee.

Ms Richards indicated that following consideration of the outcomes of the consultation it was still proposed that there be:

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- Three tiers/levels of support
- Four local areas
- Four children's centres

Initially the intention had been to keep 17 delivery sites owned by the Council, however following consultation it was now proposed to move towards a position where the Council owned and ran fewer buildings but operated from more buildings that were not within Council ownership. It was suggested that this enabled the Council to better meet the needs of communities. This proposed change did not change the level of investment in Early Help.

Ms Richards continued to explain the move to outcomes that were informed by data and intelligence, this included health, schools and communities feeding in intelligence, not just intelligence possessed by Kirklees Council. The offer would see a move to much more integrated working and not a sole reliance on Council staff. It was felt that this would support better engagement with families who did not always want to engage with a member of Council staff. It enabled the development of a local approach to meet local need. It was emphasised that the change would take time and should be seen as a journey through which local approaches would emerge.

In considering the detail of the Cabinet report, the Management Committee suggested that wording needed further consideration in section 3.5 where there was reference to domestic abuse and reduction in severity and frequency. Ms Richards agreed to give this further consideration.

The Management Committee suggested there were concerns in some local communities about facilities being accessible and how they might be linked to other things, for example health & wellbeing. Ms Richards emphasised that the move away from having to use Council buildings provided greater freedom to develop a strategic direction for the whole community. It was acknowledged that in making some decisions it was important not to cut off potential future options and longer term strategic direction. If buildings were transferred to other agencies, including schools there would be clear expectations and outcomes as part of any agreement.

The Committee discussed the edge of care work which had been identified by the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Panel into Children's Services and questioned how that linked to the early help work. Ms Richards indicated that the linkage had been made but there was work to be done to ensure a better joining up of the strands of work. A project manager was overseeing that work.

Cllr Stewart-Turner had attended a presentation to partner organisations on the proposals. It was suggested that there were concerns about data and information sharing and what was needed to effectively work together to deliver early help objectives. Mrs Richards agreed that there was further work to be done in this area however it had to be balanced by a need to know, rather than a view that all information should be shared. An example of the MASH was given, where a closed system approach is used which allows the effective sharing of information within a controlled environment.

The Management Committee was informed about how the complex level of support offer would work. It was suggested that the Council could move to a local authority co-ordination model however this would be a radical change and as yet the Council was not ready for such a move. It was agreed that the information on the local authority co-ordination model would be shared with members of the Committee.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the update report on early help services for Children, Young People and Families be noted.

(2) That the issues identified by the Management Committee concerning Edge of Care; domestic abuse (section 3.5) and information on the local authority coordination model be progressed by officers.

(3) That the Management Committee schedule discussions on the previously identified strands of the EIP work in the new municipal year.

71 Scrutiny Referral Request - Bus Gates

The Management Committee considered a draft terms of reference for the agreed review of the bus gates project. The terms of reference included the need to understand the rationale for the bus gate proposals: consideration of how the proposals were developed: consultation processes and how responses to the consultation were considered.

The Management Committee agreed that the review would initially explore the background to the project before speaking to stake holders and those who had been involved in the process.

The Management Committee agreed that it would undertake the review itself (rather than establishing a separate ad-hoc panel) however a co-optee would be invited to take part in the review work.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the proposed terms of reference for the review of the bus gates project be approved

(2) That the work be carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, with the appointment of a co-optee for the review.

(3) That the first background information meeting be held on 27 March 2017 at 1.00pm

(4) That the second meeting be held on 10 April 2017 at 9.30am, subject to confirmation nearer the time.

72 Date of Next Meeting and Forward Agenda Plan

The Management Committee considered arrangements for its next meeting to be held on Monday 13th February 2017 at 9.30am. The Management Committee noted that the agenda for that meeting included performance management and business intelligence.

The Management Committee agreed that the first meeting of the bus gates review would be held on 27th March 2017. It was also provisionally agreed that a second meeting would be held on 10th April 2017 at 9.30am.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the forward agenda plan for meetings to the end of the municipal year be noted
- (2) That officers begin to draft an outline work programme for 2017/18.