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## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Monday 1st October 2018**

Present: Councillor Julie Stewart-Turner (Chair)  
Councillor Gulfam Asif  
Councillor Cahal Burke  
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje  
Councillor Rob Walker

In attendance: Cllr Shabir Pandor – Leader of Kirklees Council

#### **26 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 September 2018 be approved as a correct record.

#### **27 Interests**

No interests were declared.

#### **28 Admission of the Public**

It was agreed that all agenda items would be considered in public session.

#### **29 Leader of the Council Priorities**

Cllr Shabir Pandor, Leader of Kirklees Council attended the meeting to outline his key priorities. He advised the Committee that he had focused his priorities on issues that can be measured over the next few years.

Cllr Pandor's priorities were;

Achieving a devolution deal for West Yorkshire. Eighteen local authorities have agreed to support a Yorkshire deal. The South Yorkshire deal is currently in progress but there is a local commitment to moving to a deal for the whole of Yorkshire.

A review of the Inclusion and Growth Strategy is being undertaken by a new group called the Inclusive Growth Commission which has its first meeting on the 2 October 2018. The aim is to create quality jobs and try to recirculate the wealth in Kirklees. As a starting point a report has been commissioned by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, which includes a desk top study. One of the areas looked at is benefits to ensure that people's income are maximised and creating employment locally that pays real wages. The report will be presented at the first meeting of the Inclusive Growth Commission to help agree some key actions.

Inclusion and diversity is a key area for Cllr Pandor. Kirklees Council has become a member of the Intercultural Cities Programme, a programme that spans across

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Europe and allows benchmarking against other local authorities and similar countries in respect of social cohesion. It is to ensure that communities are not polarised and pull together, especially with the challenge of far right extremism. There is also a need to understand neighbourhood relationships and there are tools in the Intercultural Cities Programme that will allow Kirklees to benchmark how well it is doing in comparison to its European counterparts. There is work to do with regard to migrants resettlement in Kirklees and how they are integrated and made to feel welcome when they get here.

The Committee noted that Cabinet had recently approved a new £13m leisure centre in Spenn Valley. Cllr Pandor outlined the planned timetable which saw the onsite building works for the new centre starting in April 2021.

In respect of town centre regeneration in Dewsbury and Huddersfield, Acom had been commissioned to work on the master plan. Stakeholder workshops will be organised later on in October. There will be options for consideration in respect of the Piazza and Station Warehouse. In addition a report would be presented to Cabinet early in 2019 regarding Cross Church Street, Queensgate and New Street.

Cllr Pandor advised that Combined Authority matched funding has been secured to support projects and needs to be delivered by 2021, this would include the Station Gateway £10m, A62 smart corridor £8m and Southern Gateway £10m.

In respect of Dewsbury, some master planning work has also taken place. Pioneer House was identified as a priority and following a slight delay, construction work was underway for completion in 2020. On the Springfield Campus a new college building was now open and there had been funding from the Combined Authority. A lot of work was taking place at Dewsbury train station to improve the frontage of the station and ring road. Finally, Heritage Action Zone work was taking place and £2m been allocated to bring some buildings back into use.

Cllr Pandor continued to outline his priority for the delivery of the housing element of the Local Plan for 10,000 homes in the next 5 years. The Local Plan will be coming back to Full Council, at the end of the year or early in 2019. Proposals for specialist housing and extra care housing are being considered as part of the commissioning of housing.

In considering the update, Cllr Stewart-Turner advised that inclusion and diversity and community cohesion are on the OSMC work programme and sought clarification on how the Intercultural Cities Programme was being fed into the two strategies that are being developed. Cllr Pandor explained that Kirklees had only recently joined the programme and he would be happy to bring back further details.

In respect of air quality, Cllr Pandor suggested that committee members may wish to have a further discussion with the Cabinet Member responsible for air quality. It was noted that the issues was on the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel for future consideration.

Committee members asked if the Leader would be willing to commit to having a revised process in place with regard to the allocation of funds from section 106

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contributions. It was suggested this could involve elected members and schools in a more formal way in the allocation of contributions for educational purposes to benefit the children from new housing developments. Cllr Pandor explained that he would be happy to look at the allocation of 106 monies including working with partners and schools.

Councillor Stewart-Turner referred to a previous committee discussion regarding the preparedness of Kirklees to apply for funding when it becomes available. Whilst recognising that no devolution deal had been agreed, when it has, or additional funding is available through the Combined Authority, what project proposals have been worked up to enable the Council to be proactive in bidding for funding. Councillor Stewart-Turner asked if the committee could be provided with a list of project areas. Cllr Pandor explained that projects had not yet been formulated yet and ask for a further discussion with the Chair of Scrutiny to discuss a way forward.

### **RESOLVED –**

- a) That Cllr Pandor, be thanked for attending the meeting to set out his priorities
- b) That Cllr Pandor be invited back in April 2019, to provide a progress update on his priorities

### **30 Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel - Elective Home Education Progress Report**

Cllr Cahal Burke, Lead Member for Children's Scrutiny Panel provided an update on the work of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel, looking into Elective Home Education. Cllr Burke informed the Committee that in July 2017, the Director for Children's Services requested that Elective Home Education (EHE) be added to the Scrutiny Panel's work programme. This was based on the increasing numbers of EHE both locally and nationally and was seen as an area where the Panel could add value. The Ad Hoc Panel was established in November 2017.

Cllr Burke informed the Committee that EHE is the term used by the Department for Education to describe parents who choose to educate their children at home rather than sending them to school and it is different to home tuition provided by the local authority.

The decision to home educate a child, can often be based on the parents philosophical, religious, or spiritual outlook while for others it is to meet the specific needs of a child or children. The Panel was informed that for some an issue with the school had led them to consider electively home educating their child. For the academic year 2017/18, approximately 450 children were registered as being home educated for all or part of the school year. At the start of September 2018, approximately 300 children were known to be home educated.

Currently schools are not required to give detailed information regarding why a child has been taken off the school roll and therefore, officers only have limited information as to what may have influenced a parents decision to electively home educate. Contact is always made when a child has been taken off roll, however parents are not obliged to take up the offer of a meeting. Panel members recently

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met with parents in Dewsbury and Huddersfield and some concerns around 'off rolling' were raised and the panel will need to look into this further with schools.

The ad hoc panel has concerns about the practice of taking children off a school roll and have spoken to parents about the issue. In Kirklees the highest number of EHE children is in the Key Stage 4 cohort. The Panel was also concerned about children's progression into further education and employment opportunities.

The Panel learned that whilst there is no requirement for home education children to take exams, there are currently no facilities in Kirklees for EHE children to take GCSE exams, should they wish to do so. The Panel will need to explore this further to ascertain how the offer to electively home educated children can be improved to produce a better outcome.

The Committee was informed that the Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill completed its House of Lords stages in July 2018, the second reading is at the House of Commons on the 26th October 2018. Should the bill gain royal assent this will increase the duty of the local authority and will have financial implication on services. The Panel will monitor the progress of the bill and the implications for the local authority.

The Panel plans to meet with a number of other witnesses and groups, including leading elective home education experts, other local authorities in the area to consider their offer to EHE and head teacher forums.

In considering the report the Committee discussed whether the council could take a more proactive approach in support to parents who choose to home educate. Cllr Burke advised that the Home Education Bill will have an impact on what the local authority will have to provide. He explained that currently, the authority can offer to meet with parents however parents do not have to take up that offer, or show the work that is being produced or allow access to the young person at home.

### **RESOLVED –**

- a) That Cllr Burke be thanked for providing an update on the work of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel, looking into Elective Home Education, and
- b) That Management Committee note the work of the ad-hoc panel to date.

### **31 Appointment of Interim Co-optee**

Cllr Rob Walker, advised that both he and Cllr Julie Stewart-Turner, had recently met with Mr Andrew Bird to discuss Mr Bird becoming an interim co-optee on the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year.

The Committee was informed that in preparation for becoming a co-optee Andrew had observed the September panel meeting. The Committee noted Mr Bird's background experience, pertinent to the work of the Panel, and agreed that he should be appointed an interim voluntary co-optee.

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**RESOLVED** - That the appointment of an interim co-optee to support the work of the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

### **32 Forward Agenda Plan / Date of next meeting Committee meeting dates 2018/19**

The Committee considered arrangements for the next meeting and agreed to amend the start times for the November and January Committee meetings to accommodate the agenda issues to be considered.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) That the forward agenda plan be amended in accordance with changing timescales for particular items.
- b) That the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 5 November 2018 starting at 9.30am.