

Kirklees Council

Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Lead Member: Cllr Gulfam Asif Panel: Corporate Scrutiny Panel

Period of Update : From September to December 2018

Panel Highlights

31/8/2018 meeting

The Panel received an update on the progress being made in relation to the procurement strand of the Council's Transformation Programme. It was noted that there had been 3 core phases to work, namely data visibility, identification of opportunities to made rapid savings and work on the operating model.

The broader aims of the project were to challenge and redefine how goods and services were procured, to ensure that all third party spend was necessary, to support local economic growth through local spend and to stimulate local social value and contribute to good growth. A savings target of £6.5m across 6 categories had been identified and good progress had been achieved. Savings were mostly attributed to positive results in the Temporary Staff category.

24/9/2018 informal meeting – Libraries Review

The Panel were advised of the proposed principles and framework that had been agreed by Cabinet on 21 August 2018:-

- Libraries must be situated in the right building in the right place, to meet community needs and maximise the impact on early intervention and prevention;
- Libraries should be situated where possible on one floor to ensure an efficient and cost effective delivery model;
- A local plan should be developed for each area to reflect the differing needs of each community;
- Staff should be equipped and supported to deliver on the future library strategy and job profiles should reflect the future roles needed to deliver the new service; and
- The services and activities provided must meet the Council's outcomes

11/10/2018 meeting

The Scrutiny Panel received an overview on the three key strategic themes sat behind the Council's People Strategy; Attraction, Development and Wellbeing, and were advised that eight work streams sat behind the themes in order to deliver the overall strategy. They were also told that the key activity taking place within the development work stream was in relation to - Developing Emotional Intelligence, Establishing the Council as a Coaching Organisation, Inclusion and Diversity, Learning Offer and Apprenticeships.

29/11/2018 meeting

The panel received an update on the progress made in relation to the Democracy Commission. Included in the update was a request for the Panel to explore ways in which further contributions could be made to the next phases of the work.

The report set out a high level summary of the work commissioned since the initial meeting of the working party in March, which included updates on the following areas:

- The Changing Councillor Role and How it is supported;
- Developing a Citizen Engagement Framework and Place Based Working;
- Improving Electoral Registration
- Putting Councillors at the Heart of the Organisation
- Networked Councillors – Digital Skills, Confidence and Content for Civic Good
- Regional Devolution – Supporting our Councillors and Citizens
- Opening up our Meetings
- Recommendations for External Organisations

The Panel committed to undertake "a day in the life of an officer" and feedback their experience to the Democracy Commission Working Party.

Lead Member Briefings

1/10/18 – Joint briefing on Social Value:

- Parts of the district were within the top 10 most deprived areas in the country and there were 4 main themes to the amended approach:-
1. Spend of anchor institutions in getting wider social and local economic value from employment and commissioning;
 2. Employment opportunities and conditions;
 3. Land property and investment are for the benefit of the local economy; and
 4. Developing democratic and local control within the economy with a diverse chain of suppliers.

The work in Kirklees had focused on procurement and spend within the Council.

13/12/18 – Work Programme review and catch up with Rachel Spencer-Henshall

Recommendations Issued

In relation to Finance:

- That the Corporate Scrutiny Panel liaise with the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee regarding an update on the developments to the Corporate Risk Register, especially in relation to potential impacts of Brexit;
- That the Corporate Scrutiny Panel highlighted the requirement to consider the grants to Parish Councils as part of the budget considerations;
- That the Corporate Scrutiny Panel advised that the forecast process be reviewed in an attempt to set budgets accordingly and avoid high level overspends in areas where need has already become apparent.
- That the Panel recommend the difference between the aspirational figures for housing growth within the Corporate Plan and those set out in the base line budget assumptions for council tax revenue be clearly explained in narrative within the relevant documents;
- That the Panel recommend the narrative relating to the review of the Waste Strategy within the Corporate Risk Register be amended to clearly outline the potential risks to the organisation;
- That the Panel expressed their support for necessary amendments to Financial Procedure Rules to be made, to avoid unnecessary delays to the Town Centre Regeneration Project.

In relation to the People Strategy:

- That the Panel recommend that councillors be involved in the monthly recognition scheme for employees and are able to put forward nominations, given that they at the receiving end of customer service from employees of the council;
- That the Panel recommend that schemes relating to the development of the high street be developed in readiness for the distribution of the pot of money being made available by Government for “changes to local high streets”.
- That the Panel recommend a schedule be created to outline a set of standards to be adopted by the council in relation to appropriate principles for responsiveness to councillors;
- That Members of the Corporate Scrutiny Panel endeavour to undertake “a day in the life of an officer” and feedback their experiences to the Democracy Commission Working Party.

Looking ahead

The Panel will be receiving a training session from the LGA on Commercialisation in the New Year and will open this up to all Members, should they be interested.

General comments

Our Cabinet Member has attended every meeting of the Panel and has contributed to the Panel discussions and been receptive to the Panel’s comments and suggestions.

Panel Member attendance is generally good and participation within the meetings is helpful.