

Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday 5 March 2020

- Present: Councillor Harpreet Uppal (Chair)
Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Richard Eastwood
Councillor Richard Murgatroyd
Councillor Yusra Hussain
- Co-optees: Andrew Bird (Co-optee)
Chris Friend (Co-optee)
Eilidh Ogden (Co-optee)
- In attendance: Councillor Graham Turner – Cabinet Member for Corporate
Councillor Rob Walker – Cabinet Member Culture and Environment
Rob Dalby – Greenspace Operational Manager
Chris Duffill – Head of Business and Skills
Richard Hollinson – Head of Major Projects
- Apologies: Councillor John Taylor

- 1 Membership of the Committee**
Apologies were received from Councillor John Taylor.
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 be agreed as a correct record.
- 3 Interests**
Andrew Bird declared an “other” interest in respect of Item 9, Kirklees Digital Update, as Interim Chair of the Kirklees Media Centre.
- 4 Admission of the Public**
All items were considered in public session.

Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel – 5 March 2020

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6. Public Question Time

No questions were asked under this item.

7. Kirklees Learning, Skills and Employment Plan Update

Chris Duffill, Head of Business and Skills, submitted a report reviewing the background to the development of an all-age, Learning Skills and Employment Plan (LSEP) for Kirklees and setting out the objectives of the plan. The report presented a snapshot of some of the learning, skills and employment issues/challenges that will be addressed as the plan is developed and highlighted the specific opportunities to develop career pathways for the construction sector to capitalise on the major infrastructure, housing and other projects proposed in Kirklees over the next decade.

Questions and comments were invited from Panel Members and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question concerning linkages with the West Yorkshire Skills Strategy, the Head of Business and Skills confirmed that the Plan will feed into the Strategy and highlighted the opportunity for other parts of the region learn and benefit from the ongoing in Kirklees
- With regard to the issue of targets, it was reported that an action plan would be in place with focussed targets to be delivered in conjunction with partners.
- The Chair encouraged the use of social interventions and the Council's procurement processes to proactively encourage the use of local people as developments come on-stream.
- With regard to shortages in the social care sector, the Panel discussed the need for the Council to be pro-active in encouraging people to enter the profession and raised the issue of the need for the real living wage.
- During discussion of this item, the Panel highlighted the importance of focussing on delivery of digital jobs and alignment with the Council's Digital Strategy.
- Members highlighted the need to create high skilled, well paid jobs and referred to opportunities arising from the investment in broadband and the recent decision by Chanel 4 to move to Leeds.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Panel notes the development of the Plan and encourages the use of procurement and social value interventions from the Council in relation to apprenticeships and the use of the local workforce.

Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel – 5 March 2020

2. That, as the Plan develops, a further report be submitted to this Panel setting out the issues, opportunities and emerging priorities.

8. Greenspace Policy

Rob Dalby, Greenspace Operations Manager, submitted a report providing a status update on the development of a Greenspaces Policy. In 2018 the Parks and Greenspaces team, in collaboration with the Corporate Policy Office, began works to develop a Greenspace strategy. It was reported that due to capacity and organisational changes this process was placed on hold, however following the addition of a Programme Manager into the team capacity has been realised to recommence the works previously started.

The report sought to gain feedback and direction on plans to develop a policy, rather than a strategy, which will make it clear how the service will help the council deliver on its aims and objectives, principally but not explicitly issues with climate change and to support to the local economy. The aim is to have a document which is collaborative between internal and external partners and to be used to inform service, team and individual work plans so that everyone is pulling in the same direction.

The document will be directly related to the Corporate Plan and will feed into and guide individual operational plans, policies and projects within the service. It will sit underneath the council's strategies and is intended to deliver the supporting infrastructure setting out how the greenspace service will achieve its aims and objectives.

During discussion of this item, the panel suggested a focus on making greenway's safe and clean so people feel confident going off main highways to use them as preferred walking and cycling routes, trialling the use of moss walls to help tackle climate change and ensuring a programme is in place for habitat corridors. The Panel also highlighted the importance of effective communications with residents around potential changes to how greenspaces are managed.

RESOLVED -

That the Panel is supportive of the development of a Greenspace Policy that is designed and developed in conjunction with a cross section of the service and ward members, incorporating results from community engagement.

9. Kirklees Digital Update

Richard Hollinson, Head of Major Projects, submitted a report setting out an update on the digital programme; the chain of governance that has been established; and what the Council are trying to achieve and the streams of work that are being undertaken. The reports builds on the foundations of the Digital Plan presented to Scrutiny on 14th February 2019, a copy of which was appended.

Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel – 5 March 2020

The report also made reference to the development of a Technology Strategy which is shaped by a high level set of outcomes and ambitions which represent a combination of both the Council's digital focus as an organisation, plus the wider digital agenda throughout Kirklees as a district.

The Panel received a presentation on the Council's Digital Programme. Representatives from private infrastructure providers, City Fibre and Fibre Nation had been invited to attend and responded to questions relating to their ongoing work and investment plans for Kirklees.

During discussion of this item, the panel stated the importance of residents and businesses locally benefitting from the infrastructure investment and ensuring this strategy is aligned with the skills strategy.

With regard to next steps the following actions and timelines were reported:

- Technology Strategy to be finalised and circulated
- Engagement sessions between individual services and the Digital and IT teams (supported by RENTSO) to explore how the Technology Strategy and its ambitions can be integrated within all individual forward plans and objectives
- Continuance of work with digital providers to keep abreast of their build programmes and barrier busting
- Identification of digital funding streams
- Exploration of new and innovative technologies with "Smart City" focus in mind and how that can be introduced to the district
- Continue to engage with Building Digital UK (Dept for Culture, Digital, Media & Sport) to ensure Kirklees Council remains aligned with central government direction/funding.

RESOLVED –

The Panel endorses the next steps as set out above, noting the positive work underway and undertakes to receive a further update in 12 months as the work and plans develop.

10 Work Programme 2019/20

That the Panel's Work Programme and forthcoming items/activities was submitted.

RESOLVED –

That the Panels Work Programme and forthcoming items/activities be noted.