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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 15th June 2021

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Harpreet Uppal
Councillor Habiban Zaman

3 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Cooper.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15th April 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

5 Interests

No interests were declared.

6 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

7 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

8 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

9 Inclusion Commission - Update

A report was presented which provided an update on the work undertaken by the Shadow Kirklees Inclusion Commission (SKIC) to lay the groundwork for the formation of the formal Kirklees Inclusion Commission.

Councillor Shabir Pandor, Leader of the Council and Councillor Amanda Pinnock, Chair of the SKIC attended the meeting and introduced the report, with the following key points:

- The pandemic had highlighted inequalities in a number of areas, such as housing and health.
- There was an ambition to provide levelling-up across the district. The Commission would make recommendations for solutions, based on a strong intelligence and evidence base developed using conversations with real people.

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- It was important that all residents were able to connect and communicate effectively with the Council.
- The impact of the start in life on an individual's life journey was recognised and the Commission was an opportunity to break the cycle of deprivation and inequalities.
- The Shadow Commission was laying the foundations for the formal Commission. It aimed to provide a clear framework and operating model for the full Commission, including identifying prime areas of focus and who the Commission would need to work alongside to achieve its aims.
- The importance of engagement with not just the usual cohort of partners, but also reaching those people that the Council did not usually reach and who did not normally engage using the traditional methods.
- Evidence of lived experience would be essential to Commission's understanding of the impact of deprivation.
- Legacy and the continuation of dialogue, further to the Commission completing its work, was very important.

Naz Parkar, Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhoods and Kate McNicholas, Head of Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning were also in attendance and explained that:

- Creative and innovative ways of working were being developed to ensure effective engagement; with the aim of meeting with people where they were comfortable and building relationships and trust.
- The importance of the language that was used was acknowledged.
- In forthcoming meetings, the SKIC would be giving consideration to its overall ambitions, the establishment of an evaluation framework to measure outcomes and would also consider the potential input and role of co-optees.
- The Commission would be asked to focus on a number of areas including: quality of life, the impact of inequalities and inclusion; life course (impact of an individual's start in life and early years); educational attainment, employment, health and wellbeing, neighbourhoods and housing, and control and influence.
- The need to join-up the work with that being undertaken by the Climate Commission had been recognised.
- The recommendations of the Shadow Commission would be submitted to Leading Members in July.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members and the following key issues were raised during discussion:

- The Shadow Commission had been established as a precursor to the formal Commission to ensure that the work did not falter whilst energies were being focussed on the necessary response to the pandemic and to undertake some of the initial preparatory work.
- In response to a question about representation on the formal Commission it was explained that it was important that the Commission had high level cross-party buy-in and thus it was comprised of the leaders of each group; they were supported by a diverse management team.

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- The recommendations of the Shadow Commission would be taken to Leading Members.
- The issue of the evaluation of longer-term change would be raised with the Shadow Commission. The legacy and the frameworks left behind once the work had been completed were recognised as a very important issue. Engagement needed to be undertaken in a way that became sustainable for the future and work would be undertaken on the model to achieve that goal.
- By its nature, addressing inequalities was a long term piece of work and the work that the Commission was doing would need to be embedded within the organisation to ensure it could achieve this aim.
- In terms of capacity to undertake the significant number of strands of work, within the timeframe, it was explained that an Officer Programme Board had been established to manage and consider the necessary resources.
- Evidence would also be gathered from outside Kirklees and from within the wider region to aid learning and provide context, although the core data would, by necessity, be from Kirklees.
- Independent voices were very important and there was a need to make use of outside experience and expertise. It would be a good idea for an inequalities expert and people with lived experience to have a role with the formal Commission perhaps with a input into some of the decision-making.
- The acknowledgment of the impacts of inequality on life course was welcomed.
- It was agreed that it was crucial that the voice of young people was heard, from an early age, and that account was taken of their experiences, for example in terms of education and any barriers they had experienced.
- The Commission would look at risks, issues and opportunities but should also identify strengths.
- Consideration of influence and control was a very important aspect of the work; people needed to be assured that they were being listened to but further to this that their input received a response.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the points and suggestions raised by the Committee, including those noted below, be taken into account in the work of the shadow and formal Inclusion Commissions:

- Consideration should be given to representation on the Commission.
- The importance of independent voices and the engagement of expert knowledge and experience.
- The importance of hearing the voice and experience of children and young people.
- The importance of influence and control.

(2) That a further report be submitted to the Committee later in 2021 to update Members on the work of the Commission. The report to include, in particular, more detail in relation to the process for engagement; how this will work and encompass the whole of Kirklees; and the life course strand of work.

10 Development of Inclusive Communities Framework

Jill Greenfield, Service Director - Customer and Communities, and Jo Richmond, Head of Communities, attended the Committee and gave a presentation which shared early thoughts in respect of the development of an Inclusive Communities Framework to guide work alongside communities. The following points were highlighted:

- The approach aimed to build on the experiences of, and strengths identified during, the pandemic and reflect the shift in thinking from cohesion to a broader, more holistic inclusion agenda.
- It would embed the role of organisations and institutions as enablers, co-producers and convenors, using the building blocks that were already in place.
- There was a need to hear a range of voices and act on the information received.
- It would aim to create the right conditions for communities to thrive; the core of which was building local trust and connectivity. People wanted to feel; safe, that life is fair, connected to their neighbours, that they have a voice and influence, a sense of belonging, and that they had access to work.
- There were significant interdependencies with other strategies (Economic Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy) and initiatives such as the Inclusion Commission. Consideration was being given to how to conduct one conversation with people so that inclusion was not being looked at in isolation.
- Work was being done to explore and develop indicative outcomes.

Members asked questions and commented on the issues raised, with the following key issues being covered:

- The work of the Inclusion Commission would feed into this developmental process.
- The work was at a very early stage. It was intended to provide a framework to establish a set of principles for ways of working with communities to reach across the whole system and to provide some checks, balances and challenges. It would be a high-level document, but it was important that it had an impact. An example was given in respect of the Integrated Care System: the framework would provide a set of principles and approaches that organisations and agencies could adopt when considering what services should look like.
- In response to a question about when this work would be delivered and concern that inequalities had become more amplified during the pandemic and about people becoming disenfranchised, it was explained that, during the pandemic, inclusion work had proved much more difficult to undertake due to the restrictions on face-to-face contact. The right conditions were important for these conversations particularly when discussing the more difficult subjects. Work was ongoing and it was acknowledged that there was a need to proceed as a matter of urgency, but it was also important that this was balanced against the need to progress at the speed of trust.
- The pandemic had also strengthened some communities and helped to establish trusted relationships and the team would be working to build on these foundations.
- This approach positioned the Council as convenor and enabler: the message being that this was not about the Council trying to fix an issue but rather ensuring that it did not get in the way, or have any barriers in place, for communities

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coming together. It was also about enabling safe spaces that would naturally bring people together and ensuring the approach became embedded within mainstream work.

- The level of overlap with other work being undertaken, and other strategies, had been recognised and this would be taken into account in order to reduce repetition and confusion in engagement. The aim would be to achieve one conversation with the results directed to a number of different destinations.
- The overall goal was to establish a sustained conversation over the long term.
- The feedback provided by scrutiny in relation to the concepts and the language used would be really helpful.
- The work undertaken and intelligence gathered using the Place Standard Tool provided a good base.
- Influence and control was an important issue to consider and a key concern was considered to be online information and misinformation.
- The pandemic had provided a lot of useful learning in terms of how the Council and partners had worked quickly with community groups and transferred power.
- The importance of the visibility of this work was stressed..

RESOLVED –

That further reports be presented to the Committee as work on the framework progresses.

11 Re-Appointment of Co-optees for 2021/22

The Committee was asked to consider the allocation of co-optees to the Scrutiny Panels, for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Members paid tribute to the co-optees, in particular those who were retiring, for their valued contributions to the work of scrutiny. Their knowledge, experience and insight were very much appreciated.

RESOLVED-

(1) That the allocation of co-optees for the 2021/22 municipal year be agreed, as set out in the report.

(2) That the serving co-optees be thanked for their continued commitment and contribution to the work of Scrutiny in Kirklees.

(3) That Peter Bradshaw and Eilidh Ogden be formally thanked for their contribution to the Health and Adult Social Care, and the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panels respectively.

12 Re-Establishment of Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel - Residential Housing Stock Health and Safety Compliance

The Committee was asked to consider the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel in respect of Residential Housing Stock – Health and Safety Compliance.

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RESOLVED –

That the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel be re-established with the Terms of Reference and membership details set out in the report.

13 Work Programme 2021-22

The Work Programme for 2021-22 was noted.