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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Friday 2nd August 2024

Present: Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)
Councillor Itrat Ali
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Jo Lawson

3 Membership of Committee

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2nd August 2024 be approved as a correct record.

5 Declaration of 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 and Diversity Strategy

The draft Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-2027 was submitted for consideration and comment prior to submission to Cabinet.

Stephen Bonnell – Head of Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning and Sarah Harris – Policy and Partnerships Officer, gave a presentation highlighting the following points:

- The final version of the strategy would be presented to Cabinet, for approval, on 10th September 2024.
- The strategy set out the broad direction for inclusion and diversity and provided an overarching framework, with some of the specific actions and projects being picked up in other strategies such as the ‘Peoples Strategy’ and ‘Access to Services Strategy’.

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- The Council Plan, set out three organisational values, kindness, inclusion and pride. The strategy set out three elements to respond to the commitment to inclusion:
 - **Compliance**: with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, and beyond.
 - **Ambition**: to achieve the ambitions for inclusion as an organisational value. set against four themes, as set out below, which stemmed from the Local Government Association's Equality Framework. An overview of the objectives under each theme was provided:
 1. Understanding and working with our communities
 2. Leadership, partnership, and organisational development
 3. Responsive services and customer care
 4. Diverse and engaged workforce
 - **Partnership**: to enable inclusion more broadly in Kirklees, as an anchor organisation, as a co-ordinator and facilitator, leading through partnerships, and as a service deliverer through services and programmes.
- An overview was provided in relation to the key inequalities and challenges that had fed into the development of the strategy. The objectives in the last strategy had progressed the use of Integrated Impact Assessments; creation of the Inclusion Learning Framework; strengthening of employee networks and new projects such as 'Project Search'. This had led to the development of a number of 'always on' priorities within the new strategy, which described the way the organisation would work to deliver the new objectives.
- The actions analysis that had been undertaken to try and ensure that delivery was achievable and identify where resources may be needed.
- Delivery of the strategy, which included-
 - The establishment of a steering group for workstream leads to monitor progress.
 - The use of data and updates from a number of sources, such as the Communities Board, Kirklees Parenting Board, People Services, the employee networks and Access to Services.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In response to a question regarding the inclusion of key performance indicators, and how they would be reviewed in the future, it was acknowledged that further details could be documented in the strategy.
- It was important to have clarity on those things being done at a national level and those that the Council was responsible for at local level.
- The role of an elected member was discussed by the Committee and how they could contribute to this work, perhaps by funding relevant projects and activities through ward budgets. Although there was nothing explicit in the draft strategy, this could be reviewed, acknowledging the importance of a Councillor's role in acting as advocates for, and providing qualitative feedback from, communities.

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- A question was asked regarding the objective 'Understanding and Working with our Communities' and how this process was managed. It was explained that, at the beginning of the process, the results from the 'CLiK Survey' (Currently Living in Kirklees) had been used. This was completed every 4 years and provided qualitative data from residents. In addition, information was gathered from a number of sources such as from ward councillors, engagement with portfolio holders, specific services involved in the strategy such as the Community Plus team, and groups identified as having particular inequalities.
- It was confirmed that the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy was a 3-year strategy, which would align with the Council Plan.
- It was noted that the key themes that had developed since the last strategy included a focus on loneliness and isolation and addressing inequalities within communities.
- A question was asked regarding the social isolation, loneliness and fuel poverty figures contained in the strategy and it was confirmed that the figures were from the 2021 CLiK Survey. The Committee was advised that updated figures would be sought.
- Partnership working was considered and how the Council ensured partners worked collaboratively together. The Committee was advised that there were numerous ways in which links were made, such as through ward councillors and the community anchors, who worked across the district, but it was dependent on the specific project involved and who was responsible for delivery.
- It was suggested that consideration could be given to the use of an Integrated Impact Assessment for ward budgets. A further suggestion was made in respect of additional specific funding being made available, which could allow ward councillors to focus on pieces of work to support the strategy.
- The Quarter 1 Corporate Performance Report was due to be finalised shortly and would include a progress update on the shared outcomes. The outcomes were population-level, and a wide range of indicators were considered. The Committee would have the opportunity to consider this at a future meeting.
- 'Project Search' was a successful programme and it was referenced in the strategy as an example of how achieving meaningful inclusion could mean treating people differently. The project was praised for the benefits that it had for individuals, groups and families. The importance of ensuring success stories were reported was acknowledged.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the points and feedback raised by the Committee, including the recommendations set out below, be taken into account in taking the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy forward:
- Detail should be provided in respect of the Key Performance Indicators, including the reporting mechanisms.
 - Reference should be made to the important role of Elected Members and how they could contribute and add value in terms of delivery of the objectives of the strategy.

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- The statistics in respect of social isolation and loneliness and fuel poverty should be updated.
- (2) That the officers be thanked for attending the meeting and presenting the draft strategy.

10 Corporate Safeguarding Plan - Update

A report was submitted which provided an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Plan and an update on progress.

Jill Greenfield, Service Director, Communities and Access Services and Laura Chamberlain-Powell – Service Development Manager, Communities and Access Services, gave a presentation, which covered the following:

- Safeguarding was responsibility of all and the Corporate Safeguarding Plan therefore had a reach across all employee groups, elected members, volunteers and contracted workers across the Council and partners.
- Service Directors from all areas of the Council contributed to the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group (CSOG), which provided the main governance framework for this work and had immediate oversight of the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan, supported by a working group.
- The action plan had been endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team and Executive Board.
- Arrangements would remain in place with the CSOG through 2024/2025 to ensure that robust arrangements were in place and to ensure there continued to be effective oversight and that practice development continued to successfully promote a 'whole family' approach.
- An Organisational Safeguarding Assessment had been completed in March 2023. This, alongside the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and accompanying action plan, had provided a baseline of the position, against which to measure progress and had identified key areas for development. It had also identified a number of positive elements in the approach being taken.
- The three key areas for development were:-
 - The Corporate Safeguarding Policy; embedding and review,
 - Introductory safeguarding training and service specific requirements,
 - Safer recruitment practices,and an update on progress in each case was given.
- Examples were provided in respect of the positive impact and influence of the work undertaken to date which included, the establishment of a Safeguarding Champions Group and initiatives undertaken as a result, such as the development of a training package for housing tradespeople to raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities.
- The key priorities and next steps.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- Further information could be provided to Members regarding the recruitment and selection process and 'name blind' approach.

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- Assurance was given that safeguarding issues and the impact on children and young people and families had been integral to the development of the work and representation of young people and children came through the professional representatives from within services and the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The Safeguarding Champions Groups were discussed, these groups acted as connectors between the work that was going on in in each specific service area, the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group, and the wider staff force. This was not a formal role but was undertaken on a voluntary basis and included individuals from across all different service areas, allowing shared experiences to be provided from their service area or from partners to the Championship Network Group, which then fed into the Corporate Safeguarding and Oversight Group.
- In respect of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, all employees were DBS checked where this was necessary, and re-check mechanisms were in place.
- In relation to the percentage of the Council's employees who had completed basic safeguarding training, the Committee was advised that each service area had completed their own audit, and this process had provided assurance about the level of safeguarding awareness across all job roles, whether this had been gained through formal or informal training. The introduction of mandatory basic safeguarding training would ensure consistency across the Council going forward.
- It was suggested that reporting safeguarding concerns using the Council's website could be more user friendly, but it was acknowledged that staff had been very proactive in their response.
- The safeguarding reporting procedures were shared as part of the Councillor induction process. Consideration could be given to whether these should be shared again with elected members and to whether additional support might be provided to them on this issue.
- In terms of services with high staff turnover it was important that consideration was given to training needs and how the issues could be addressed. In services where there were low number of referrals it was suggested that the reasons for this should be explored.
- The value of e-learning was questioned in comparison with one-to-one and group learning. It was recognised that e-learning was just one part of the approach. The package was in the process of development and would include scenario-based examples. The training would also be supplemented by other initiatives such as the safeguarding champions taking the safeguarding policy back to their service and making it relevant to that area of work, and the sharing of best practice.
- Quality assurance mechanisms would be built in to ensure the impact of this work could be measured.
- Elected members were not subject to mandatory DBS checks. It was noted that the guidance provided by a former Local Government Minister had recommended that elected members appointed to Committees that discharged functions of social services or children's services should undergo a DBS check. The view was expressed that all Councillors should have a DBS check, in light of their access to a wide range of people within their communities.

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RESOLVED –

- (1) That the officers be thanked for attending the meeting and providing an update in respect of the Corporate Safeguarding Plan.
- (2) That the points raised by the Committee be taken on board in the future development of this work.
- (3) That the Safeguarding Champion role be welcomed as an excellent initiative, with the added value it provided being well illustrated by the examples given.
- (4) That a progress update be placed on the Committee's work programme further to the Organisational Safeguarding Assessment in 2025.

11 Allocation of Scrutiny Co-optees for 2024/25

The Committee considered a report in respect of the allocation of co-optees to the Scrutiny Panels for the 2024/25 municipal year.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the allocation of scrutiny co-optees for the 2024/25 municipal year, as set out in paragraph 2.2, be agreed.
- (2) That the existing serving co-optees be thanked for their continued commitment and contribution to the work of scrutiny in Kirklees.
- (3) That the retired co-optees, Toni Bromley and Oliver Gibson, be thanked for their contribution to the work of scrutiny.

12 Kirklees Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25

Initial Work Programmes for the Committee and the four standing Scrutiny Panels; Children's; Environment and Climate Change; Growth and Regeneration; and Health and Adult Social Care, were submitted for consideration and approved.