

Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday 14th November 2019

Present: Councillor Harpreet Uppal (Chair)
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Richard Eastwood

Co-optees Andrew Bird
Chris Friend
Eilidh Ogden

In attendance: Rob Dalby – Greenspace Operational Manager
Michelle Anderson-Dore – Head of Partnerships, KNH

Apologies: Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Richard Murgatroyd
Councillor Yusra Hussain

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Martin Bolt, Councillor Yusra Hussain and Councillor Richard Murgatroyd.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6. Tenant and Involvement Strategy

Michelle Anderson-Dore, Head of Partnerships at Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) submitted a report providing an update on the implementation of the KNH Tenant Involvement Strategy.

It was reported that In 2017 Kirklees Council had taken the decision to decommission the Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (KFTRA), known operationally as Communities Who Can (CWC), with effect from 1 October 2017. The reason for this decision was informed by the fact the existing model suggested low engagement levels, limited and uninspiring ways for tenants to get involved and, an approach to tenant scrutiny that was disconnected from any formal governance arrangements and did not align with the Council's or KNH's strategic priorities.

As a result, the Council had commissioned KNH to review the current model and to put forward recommendations for a new, modern and innovative involvement model which reflects best practice, promotes the use of technology, offers value for money and supports communities to do more for themselves and each other. The KNH Board had also asked that the new approach include proposals that empower tenants to be more resilient, strengthen the tenants' voice in shaping services, influencing decision and driving improvements and is outcome focused.

A new Tenant Involvement Strategy under the name 'Get Involved' has been developed and was appended to the report. The strategy highlights what tenant involvement means at KNH, the key activities it will support, the outcomes KNH seeks to achieve in partnership with our tenants, leaseholders, the Council and partners and the desired impact within communities.

Michelle explained that the new model would be evaluated externally in January 2020, with the outcome reported by the end of the financial year.

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

- With regard to the role of Street Voices, it was explained that individuals were formally supported to play an active role, with access to funding and training opportunities.
- In response to a question concerning Place Standards, it was confirmed that all members of the Tenant Involvement Team were trained in this area and any proposed activity goes through a route to avoid the potential for duplication and to ensure alignment.
- Formal sign off of the Fire Safety Management Plan is awaited with work ongoing around compliance.
- With regard to outstanding vacancies on the various Tenant Panels, it was explained that a robust recruitment process was in place to ensure the right people for the organisation and tenants were encouraged to apply.
- The new strategy builds in monitoring arrangements with new Performance Indicators being developed in respect of tenant involvement. Michelle gave an undertaking to provide details of performance indicators to the Panel.
- In response to a question relating to under-represented groups, it was explained that good progress had been made in respect of working with

young people. Informal work with other groups that work with young people had been productive in terms of engagement. A similar approach is planned in relation to BME and disabled residents.

- In response to a request for further information around the use of the Integrated Grant Scheme and a scheme to run diversionary activities to address Anti Social Behaviour, Michelle undertook to provide details of the activities.
- With regard to performance data in respect of digital engagement, it was reported that there had been 594 logins and 284 posts since December 2018. An undertaking was given to provide performance information relating to digital performance.

During discussion on the issue of technology, Michelle explained that staff were encouraged to post events and activities through the new digital platform. Work has been ongoing with Tenant and Residents Associations (TRA's) to look at how to drive traffic to the platform. Although there is no direct link from the Council website there is a link from the KNH site, which in turn is linked to the Council website. With regard to those who are unable to engage online, neighbourhood forums and TRA's ensure that the voice of non IT users is recognised.

RESOLVED -

1. That Michelle Anderson-Dore be thanked for her attendance.
2. That a further update on the implementation of the Tenant Involvement Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of this Panel.

7. Playable Spaces Strategy

A report was submitted providing an overview and update on the Playable Spaces Programme. The revised version of the Strategy had been approved at Cabinet on 8th October 2019. The following works and actions had been undertaken since Cabinet approval:

- 24th October – Re-start meeting held with the Project Team, the Communications team and Cllr Walker
Next steps are to re-arrange ward meetings with all councillors, develop the communications plan, including a case study of a Playable Space and investigate options for and logistics of public engagement
- 28th October – Meeting held to discuss engagement with children through Community Hubs and Play.
Next steps are to develop and review engagement plan, aligned with communications plan
- 31st October – Meeting arranged with Project team and Communications team to plan the communications programme
- 11th November – Commence Case Study
Site visit with Project team, Communications and Cllr Walker to design case study materials for use with Ward meetings and social media

Rob Dalby, Greenspace Operational Manager, gave a presentation at the meeting setting out the next steps in relation to the strategy, which focusses on engagement with the public. The following two phased approach was suggested:

Phase 1 (winter 2019/20) – gather views and opinions from children across the district in addition to promoting positive communications messages through various channels. There is also an option to hold generic drop-in sessions across the district to take any feedback directly from communities. These options are currently under discussion.

Phase 2 (spring 2020 onwards) – a more focussed and detailed engagement by site. This phase requires further research and planning to determine the logistics of carrying out this intense, high level style of engagement.

It was reported that the original timings for consultation had been amended as a result of purdah guidance relating to the upcoming General Election.

During discussion of the planned engagement Rob stressed the importance of the voice of children and users of the sites being heard. The role of elected members is also seen as key to having meaningful engagement with local communities. The aim of the strategy is to offer diverse opportunities for play in the borough.

In response to questions Rob explained that:

- The needs of those with learning difficulties, physical and mental disabilities has been taken into account in order to ensure the sites offer access to all.
- The £9.5m of funding set out in the report is to cover 177 sites during the 3 year programme. It was explained that the budget is fixed but it was acknowledged that additional capital may be required.
- The Council are looking to broaden the number of playable spaces and routes to form a playable network.
- Upkeep of sites will be through the current maintenance budget programme.
- Regulation of independent play sites would be through the Health and Safety Executive.
- It was acknowledged that a clear, effective communication policy was needed to help explain to how natural habitats are managed. Engagement with resident and schools is key to getting people to engage with their surroundings.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Panel supports the proposal for consultations with a wide range of stakeholders on the Playable Space Strategy in advance of the local elections 2020.
2. That the Panel acknowledges the vital role of ward members in contributing to the consultation to develop play opportunities to meet children's needs

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Work Programme 2019/20

That the Panel's Work Programme and forthcoming items/activities was submitted. The Chair reported that following a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee it had been agreed that a cross party committee would look at the Council's relationship with KNH.

Due to the upcoming General Election, it was reported that the next meeting had been rescheduled to take place on 20 December.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, placed on record her thanks to Sheila Dykes for all her hard work and commitment in support of the Panel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Panels Work Programme and forthcoming items/activities be noted.
2. That Councillor Uppal request, through the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, for the final report of the cross party group set up to examine the Council's relationship with Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing , to be submitted to this Panel.