

Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee

Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 6 June 2012

Update on Progress (including issues/problems/successes)

EIT Review of Commissioned Carers and Independent Living Services

The final report was considered by Cabinet on 17 May and all recommendations were agreed.

Current Review

Review of Membership to Outside Bodies

The main issues:

The Council has completed a three-year programme of efficiency saving reviews. This review contributes by examining the overall spend on Council membership to outside bodies as well as determining value for money.

The following bodies (with membership fees 2011/12) are scoped within this review:

- Association of Public Service Excellence (£3,159)
- British Association of Adoption and Fostering (£3,316)
- North East Purchasing Organisation (£37,843)
- North East Regional Employers Organisation (£15,680)
- Association of North East Councils (£64,700)
- Local Government Association (£42,871 (£1,099 early payment discount))

A series of interviews were programmed with officers and elected members of the Council to understand the value for money aspects of the membership and the implications to the organisation should membership cease. Joint procurement opportunities were to be explored along with an understanding of future plans of the organisations scoped.

A few key themes are emerging as follows:

- Information/ learning from the memberships is not widely circulated or shared.
- Many of the organizations have a lobbying role which is valued, however the impact to drive change is not well known or understood.
- Discounts for members attending conferences – often not widely utilised because of the focus of London for conferences/ events. Regional organizations were better at this e.g. NEREO, NEPO, ANEC.
- Through the EIT and other value for money exercises, duplication of information received through these and other organizations has in some cases already been eliminated.
- Capacity to replicate the information from some organizations, will pose a problem.
- Potential for reputation, relationships regionally and collaborative working to be affected by the outcomes of this review.
- Some memberships deliver cost savings. For example, NE recruitment portal is free to members and saves SBC money, Self-Sector regulation/ peer review challenge comes free with membership.

An analysis of subscriptions to outside bodies below the £3000 threshold is being undertaken. These include:

Memberships - £76,180.26

There are approximately 81 membership fees paid in 2011/12.

Journals / magazines / newspapers- £12,960.22

There are approximately 35 subscriptions to journals, magazines and newspapers paid in 2011/12.

Portals - £28,146.49

There are approximately 13 Portals that the authority subscribes to, which allow us to send information securely and access benchmarking information and national statistics.

Licenses £ 18,736

The authority pays a license fee to some organizations to enable access to use their products.

Professional body membership - £1,933.17

The remaining interviews and research will conclude over the next few weeks. When this information is collated a SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis will be developed for Members to assist their consideration of recommendations for how the Council should proceed with membership to outside bodies.

The findings and development of the recommendations will be the subject of discussion at the next meeting on 26 June 2012. The Committee's conclusions will be the basis of the tripartite meeting now arranged for 4th July 2012.

A final report with recommendations will be considered and agreed by the Committee on 17 July 2012 before presentation to Executive Scrutiny Committee on 31 July 2012. Due to the August recess Cabinet will receive the report on 6 September 2012.

Overview Meetings

The Committee received an overview of Legal Services on 22 May which included the following emerging issues:

- Family Justice Review
- Localising Council Tax
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Supreme Court Application
- Reforming the Law of Taxi and Private Hire Services
- Adult Social Care
- Standards Regime
- Academy Conversions
- Land Charges/Environmental Information
- Yarm Town Council – Judicial Review
- Health and Well Being Functions
- Special Educational Needs – consultation

Other Work

- Review of Energy Supply - tripartite on 18 June. Scope and project plan at Committee meeting on 26 June.
- Review of Impact of Welfare Reform - presentation at meeting on 26 June.