

Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee

Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 31 July 2012

Update on Progress (including issues/problems/successes)

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))

The following recommendations will be presented to Cabinet on 6 September 2012:

R1 Stockton Council maintain its membership to the six outside bodies scoped in this review

The action taken by Stockton Council to serve notice on the LGA thereby allowing termination of membership was supported by the Committee but it was felt that this was the limit of the action required at this time.

R2 Stockton Council continue to use the system of a rolling notice for membership to the LGA and that the Chief Executive write informing the LGA annually

The Committee having recognised the cost to the Council of all outside body memberships, subscriptions to journals, magazines and newspapers, portals, licenses, and professional body memberships (approximately £120,000 p.a.) believes greater consideration should be given to their continuation. The Committee recommend that:

R3 Specific criteria is developed and applied to determine the continued membership of all outside bodies and professional organisations

With membership fees at a third more than the LGA the Committee questioned the cost of ANEC undertaking a similar role to that offered by the LGA. The Committee recommend that:

R4 Negotiations with ANEC are undertaken to address value for money concerns of the Committee

Members were informed that through monitoring and governance arrangements the outcomes from NEPO were previously not being effectively delivered and that a revised organisational structure was put in place. The Committee recommend that:

R5 A review of the management and effectiveness of NEPO activity is pursued by appropriate officers of this Council.

To ensure value for money the sharing of information, ultimately purchased, should be shared widely and appropriately. The Committee recommend that:

R6 Improvement to the circulation and sharing of information and learning from membership to outside bodies is developed utilising all available resources such as the Council's Intranet.

Review of Energy Supply

The scope and project plan have been agreed.

By taking a more detailed look at energy supply the Council is seeking to achieve the following key objectives:

- Energy provision at a long term stable price
- Security of supply over the long term
- Reduction in carbon emissions in line with government targets (80% reduction from 1990 baseline by 2050)
- Stimulate the renewable energy supplier and energy technology markets with the aim of increasing employment opportunities

A route to procurement of energy over a period of around 20 to 25 years may therefore be required to provide the basis for any investment required to achieve these objectives on a commercial basis.

- Should the Council begin to progress to provide its own energy supply / become energy self-sufficient?
- Should the Council take the lead with other LAs or develop unilaterally?
- Develop a portfolio of available energy resources to utilise?

The Committee will take an overarching strategic view for the development of a sustainable energy supply.

At its meeting on 17 July the Committee received a presentation setting the scene of the review which included:

Stockton's energy consumption; current sources of energy; energy costs; carbon content of fuels; climate change requirements; CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (formerly known as the Carbon Reduction Commitment); security of supplies; energy reduction programme; where do we need to be?

It will now go on to look at current and potential energy sources and technologies at its meeting on 4 September.

This review is scheduled to report to Cabinet on 7 February 2013.

Other Work

Review of Impact of Welfare Reform – the next update will be presented to the Committee on 4 September 2012.