

Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee

Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 5 July 2013

Update on Progress (including issues/problems/successes)

Overview Meetings

The Committee received an overview of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer report, including key achievements and any difficulties in the previous year. The officer highlighted an application to the Supreme Court to obtain clarity on a child protection issue. While the application was unsuccessful, the case was of national importance and widely reported in various law reports. It was also the first time SBC had been involved in proceedings in the Supreme Court for over 20 years.

Emerging issues for the service include:

- HM Land Registry pilot exercise to consider whether the Land Registry can take on responsibility for the delivery of the Local Land Charges Service on a national level. If successful and taken forward this will have the effect of standardising the fees and the Service across all 365 Local Authorities,
- A Family Justice Review will bring changes to the way in which child protection proceedings are dealt with by the courts. There is to be one family court and all cases will have a 26 week completion target. To achieve this, the court will limit the use of experts and expect the council to be concise in the evidence that it presents.
- Reviewing the Council's code of conduct for members and the new Localism Act standards arrangements
- Developing a revised version of the Constitution in consultation with Members and Officers, not least to reflect the Authority's new public health powers.

Scrutiny Review of NEPO

Officers presented a report on the independent review of NEPO which has been commissioned to consider the way in which Strategic Procurement is undertaken in the North East Local Government Sector. Converto Consulting Ltd has been appointed to undertake the review and will report to the NEPO Joint Committee in late June 2013.

Members were also presented with categories of goods and services the Council purchases. The Committee will discuss this in further detail at their next meeting on 16 July.