

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 17th December, 2013.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton (Chairman), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

Officers: Julie Danks, Garry Cummings, Kate Fulton (R); Paul Diggins (DNS); Judith Trainer, Michael Henderson (LD)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Ross Patterson,

EXC Evacuation Procedure

42/13

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

EXC Declarations of Interest

43/13

There were no declarations of interest.

EXC Minutes from the meeting which was held on the 24th September 2013

44/13

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EXC Draft minutes from the meeting which was held on the 22nd October 2013

45/13

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2013.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

EXC Qtr 2 Performance Report

46/13

The Committee received a report that provided details of the Council's performance in Quarter 2 - 2013/14. The report also included information relating to Freedom of Information requests and complaints and commendations.

It was explained that the Council Plan performance was reported by theme against a basket of performance indicators agreed as part of the Council Plan 2013-16. At the half way stage through the year, 79% of the indicators were predicted to achieve the targets set, with the remaining measures indicating slippage against targets. This compared to 74% at the same period last year. Areas of good performance under each theme, together with key achievements, were highlighted to members; details of those areas that were not expected to achieve target were also provided along with proposed actions. A number of those areas were also the subject of regular reports to Cabinet, current scrutiny reviews, or incorporated into big ticket reviews.

There was a wide range of achievements and progress against the key council plan themes that were not captured within the basket of key performance indicators but were reported throughout the year in various reports to Cabinet, captured through press releases, Stockton News articles and various accolades awarded to the Council throughout the year.

During consideration of the information members asked for details of the number of residents who had approached the homelessness service because their homes had been repossessed.

AGREED report be noted and the the information requested be circulated to the Committee.

**EXC
47/13 Medium Term Financial Plan Update**

The Committee received a report relating to the 2014/15 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The final budget report for 2014/15 would be presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2014. The report also provided an update on the 2013/14 financial position and outlined progress on the Big Ticket Reviews.

Members considered the information provided and a number of issues were discussed, including:

- the budget pressures associated with the number of Looked After Children. It was noted that numbers were increasing as was the complexity of cases. It was anticipated that Spark of Genius venture would assist with the pressure caused by external placements.
- the Panel was provided with an update on the Spark of Genius and noted some of the issues being dealt with e.g. identifying and purchasing suitable houses and having properties Ofsted inspected.
- the financial settlement was due the day following this meeting and it would hopefully answer a number of questions the Council needed to assist with the budget setting process.
- member briefings associated with budget setting would be held in the New Year

AGREED that the information be noted.

**EXC
48/13 Corporate & Social Inclusion Select Committee Review of North East Procurement Organisation**

Members received a report detailing the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee's comments following the external, independent review of the North East Procurement Organisation.

It was explained that the independent review had put forward four options for the future of NEPO and details of these were provided. The preferred option for Leaders and Mayors and NEPO Joint Committee was to create a smaller and re-focused NEPO that would report through ANEC. The Select Committee

supported this decision and made a number of other recommendations, which were detailed in the Committee's report.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**EXC
49/13** **Scrutiny Work Programme - A Safer Place for Children**

The Committee received a report that recommended that the guidance on a safer place for Children be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme and a short Task and Finish review be undertaken by the Children and Young People Select Committee.

AGREED that a task and finish group of the Children and Young People Select Committee be established to examine the guidance on a safer place for Children.

**EXC
50/13** **Progress Updates on Previously Agreed Recommendations**

Members received updates on the implementation of agreed recommendation relating to previous reviews.

It was agreed that the fully achieved recommendations from the Cycling on Pavements review could be signed off.

AGREED that the updates be noted and the fully achieved recommendations, detailed in the Cycling on Pavements Review be signed off.

**EXC
51/13** **Forward Plan**

Members were provided with the statutory forward plan for 1st November 2013 to 28 February 2014.

AGREED that the Forward Plan be noted.

**EXC
52/13** **Report on Chairs Updates**

Members were provided with an update from each of the Select Committee's Chairman.

During discussion suggestions relating to future reviews came forward:

- Inter generational relations
- Transition of Children from primary to secondary education linked to Child Poverty issues.

There was also discussion on a survey of members, related to the future of housing provision. Responses from 8 members had been received representing 14% of all members.

AGREED that the updates be noted and the suggested potential future reviews be fed into the process for identifying the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme.