

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 25th October, 2016.

Present: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley (In the Chair), Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Philip Dennis, Cllr Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers and Cllr David Wilburn.

Officers: Richard McGuckin, John Angus (EGD); Jamie McCann, Craig Willows (CS); Nigel Hart, Peter Mennear, Judy Trainer (DCE).

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: Councillors Bailey and Harrington.

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016 - for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2016 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th September were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:-

(i) Teesside Park Access

The Director of Economic Growth and Development provided an update regarding the query raised at the last meeting as to whether the Combined Authority or other appropriate body would again be considering the issue of the existing access to Teesside Park.

It was noted that the remedial work recently undertaken had been to strengthen the embankment at a cost of £3.5M funded by the Government's Local Growth Fund. The bridge itself was sound however the embankment was constructed on poor ground that comprised of peat and the works to strengthen it would prolong the performance of the embankment for possibly a further 10-15 years, though this is very subjective due to many unknown factors.

It was explained that the alternative and more long term solution would have been to remove the embankment and replace it with a polystyrene construction. However, this would have cost within the region of £9-10M and would have prevented access to the Park for a significant amount of time which was not considered to be acceptable for the economic impact it would cause. Reference was also made to the concept raised some years ago of a second entrance to the Park but this was not something that was actively being considered at the present time.

Members queried whether there was any recourse against the original designers and constructors of the bridge but were advised that this was not thought to be feasible due to the length of time the access bridge has been in operation.

(ii) Co-opted Members

Members were advised of the status of representation by both the Diocesan and Parent Governor representatives on this Committee; and other Select Committees when considering education related matters.

The update included an explanation of the legal requirement to have such representation as well as feedback on the capacity of the existing representatives to attend meetings.

It was further noted that the term of office of the current Parent Governor representatives would end this year and this presented an opportunity to review the number of representatives appointed, as well as the remuneration afforded. This review would take place and contribute to the MTFP process prior to any new elections being held.

Members expressed a desire to be informed of the election process in order that they could promote take up from eligible candidates within their own communities.

4 Parking on Grass Verges / Street Cleansing

Members considered updates provided by the Directors of Economic Growth & Development and Community Services regarding the following issues that had been referred for consideration by this Committee in April:-

i) Grass Verge Parking/Vehicular Trespass

Members noted that the Council's budget pressures were such that it was likely to be a continuing difficulty to be able to respond to requests from residents to provide measures that would address parking issues and vehicular trespass on grass verges. This situation was likely to be exacerbated by the current review of the Enforcement Service which was likely to further impact on the availability of resources.

The only source of available funding to provide formalised parking was via the Ward Member Community Participation Budgets (CPBs), however, use of these were subject to many competing priorities and their future availability was set to be discussed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Member discussion included :-

-the cost/capacity of CFYA workforce to undertake works to replace grassed areas with hardstanding as compared to outsourcing the works;

-residents own capacity to contribute to/pay for the cost of the works;

-whether the charges levied upon utility companies for reinstatement works were sufficient.

With regard to iii) above, the Director of Economic Growth & Development advised that our charges were comparable within the Tees Valley, however, he would seek to ascertain how they compared nationally and update members.

ii) Street Cleansing

Members noted that despite the significant financial pressures faced by the Council in recent years, the standard of street cleansing service delivered had remained consistently high as demonstrated by a 92% customer satisfaction rating in 2015-16.

There had been significant reductions in the numbers of staff engaged, not least in more recent times with an on-going review of Care for Your Area underway and an expectation of more job losses in both the street cleansing and grounds maintenance service. The Council had previously agreed that CFYA would be required to identify savings of £650k as part of the Council-wide savings programme.

Members were advised that an all Member seminar would be held in December when the specific impacts on both of these services would be communicated.

The Director of Community Services noted that it would be important to manage expectations as to what will be possible in future, and that the changes to Street Cleansing arrangements would become noticeable.

The Chair wished to place on record the Committee's appreciation of the work the Care for Your Area Teams.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The update provided regarding the consideration of issues of Parking on Grass Verges and Street Cleansing be noted.

2. The Director of Economic Growth & Development update members of the national picture regarding charges levied upon utility companies by local authorities for reinstatement works.

5 Scrutiny Review of Youth Services

Members considered a report relating to the Children & Young People Select Committee's Review of Youth Services.

Discussion included:

- the need to communicate our offer more to encourage greater awareness;
- engagement with the local police, including with the programmes ran by the Police Commissioner;
- strengthen our links to the services provided by the Voluntary & Community Sector, including signposting to available funding;
- inclusion within the report of the overall budget for the service.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6 Statutory Forward Plan

At the time of issue there were no matters detailed on the Statutory Forward Plan.

There were no matters detailed on the Statutory Forward Plan for consideration.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

7 Scrutiny Developments

Members were provided with a copy of the recent guide published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny entitled 'Risk and resilience' which provided both members and officers with scrutiny responsibilities advice on how to tackle major change.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

8 Chairs' Updates

Members considered the Chairs' updates on Select Committees' reviews and other work.

It was noted that the Action Plan for School Parking would be considered at the next meeting of Crime & Disorder Select Committee.

Members commented on the need to maximise pupil entitlement to Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) that provided additional funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds. Members were encouraged to promote take up by their own constituents wherever possible through Members Newsletters etc. Schools were required to publish details of the amount of EYPP attracted and how that funding had been spent.

RESOLVED that the updates and discussion be noted/actioned as appropriate.

9 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

Members considered the work programme. It was noted that both the Review of Flooding and Resilience and Dog Fouling/DNA Final Reports would slip to January 2017.

The Chair wished to place on record her appreciation for the support and hard work of officers within Democratic Services working to support Members in their roles.

RESOLVED that the work programme and discussion be noted/actioned as appropriate.