

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Wednesday, 5 August 2020

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, B Burdis, M Green, Janet Hunter,
A Newman, M Ord, D Cox, J Kirwin, L Miller and
W Samuel

In attendance:
Councillors B Pickard

Apologies: Councillors A Austin, A McMullen, P Oliver and M Rankin

OV46/20 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitutes

OV47/20 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest

OV48/20 Minutes

Resolved that minute of the meeting held on 2 March 2020 be confirmed;

OV49/20 Covid-19 Recovery Framework and Progress in North Tyneside

The Committee received and report and presentation from the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure that provided an update to the progress of the Authority's Covid-19 Recovery Framework.

The framework was a structured approach with stages built upon the strategic objectives of the North Tyneside plan and with each objective having several workstreams of activity to move through the Recovery Framework phases:

Our People – Health & Wellbeing, Social Care, Community and support for Critically Vulnerable/Shielded, Schools.

Our Places – Housing Property and Construction, Highways and Town Centres, Covid Secure Workplaces, Culture, Sport & Leisure, Environmental Operations.

Our Economy – Business and Jobs.

Our Organisation – Finance, Digital Connectivity, Human Resources/Organisational Development, Political and Democratic Recovery.

A Member asked for clarification to how track and trace was operated within North Tyneside. The Director of Public Health provided information that every confirmed case of

Covid was automatically referred to test and trace. A Tier 3 call handler who would initially pick up the case and call the person to gain all relevant details of the contacts they have had and provide advice. If a person works in a high risk/complex setting the case would automatically be escalated to Tier 1 test and trace system who are in the Public Health England (PHE) Health Protection Team who take responsibility of the test and trace activity.

It was stated that North Tyneside had an 85% completion rate on the follow up of confirmed cases with PHE Health Protection Team having 100% completion rate of all cases that are escalated to them.

It was emphasised that even though the region was doing well in test and trace, the Authority was continuing to look at how to improve to get 100% completion rate.

Every business in North Tyneside had received a letter with information and contact details of the Health Protection Team to what to do if they think have had case.

In the respect of Care Homes, these again received a letter providing information and guidance that they could open if they wished, however, if any positive cases arose it was expected that they close immediately.

The Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure provided assurance that Members would be involved in the phase 1 review before the Authority would move onto the next phase to recovery.

A Member questioned the relaxation of Licensing laws and asked the number of application of premises wanting to use the public highway to deliver their services. It was also asked how the Authority would control the operation of the working hours extension on construction sites.

The Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure stated the relaxation of Licensing laws process was required to be implemented very quickly to support business and licensees to move out door spaces and stated that any applications had to be processed within a 10 day period. There had been 5 applications received. It was highlighted that North Tyneside has implemented further restrictions, be requiring that all extended outdoor spaces being designated as smoke free areas, and ensuring that there must be use spaces such as car parks. He gave assurances that the Authority would continue to use its public protection powers when necessary to ensure residents and public would not be overly affected by the relaxation in the law.

In relation to new planning legislation, which favoured developers to extended working hours, officers would ensure all practices followed the new legislation.

A Member asked in relation to Care homes, to what were the occupancy rates and what timescale to get occupancy rates back to normal.

The Head of Commissioning and Asset Management stated that a lot of dialogue with care homes had taken place and the Authority had supports homes by provided Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), Staff and the payments of Government Grants.

There was an occupancy rate of 80% at April – May, there was movement back in the right direction with some homes at full occupancy, however, the Authority was providing targeted support for those that were not. Reassurance was given that support was being provided.

A Member sought assurance that support was also being provided to those with care requirements that lived in the community and the agencies the supported them were getting support to help people in the community.

The Head of Environment, Housing & Leisure provided reassurance that PPE was delivered to all agencies that the Authority had contracts and that there was supported to provide their services.

A Member questioned the rush to get people back to work and what the Authority was doing to support its staff to work from home using its IT Systems differently.

The Head of Environment, Housing & Leisure stated that the authority was following the National Guidance that had not changed. The Authority was learning on how it could be more productive using IT for remote meeting etc. It had been noted that working remotely did have an impact on carbon emissions within North Tyneside and stated the future working environment could see a more a blended approach of home and office based working where possible.

A Member raised the possibility to look at a reciprocal arrangement with Newcastle Council to allow North Tyneside resident to use its recycling centres instead of travelling to the North Tyneside plant at Howdon.

The Head of Environment, Housing & Leisure stated household waste was not a recovery issue and that there was no government funding for it. The issue had been raised in the past and following investigation it would see an additional cost to the Authority and therefore its residents' and businesses.

A Member requested information on the impact of the change in legislation in respect to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities assessments and to the plans in place to deal with any gaps in assessments due to the legislative changes.

The Head of Commissioning and Asset Management gave assurance that support was being provided, however, would provide a written update to the member.

A Member questioned the level of confidence that schools could open in September safely.

The Head of Commissioning and Asset Management informed that all up to date information had been provided to support and help schools to be as ready as possible for opening in September. The Director of Public Health stated Schools can never be risk free but thorough risk assessments and support had been given to allow schools to be as safe as possible and everyone was following the Government Guidance.

Agreed that (1) the report and presentation on the Covid Recovery Framework progress be noted and (2) members to be involved in the review of phases one of the recovery before the move to phase 2.

OV50/20 Efficiency Savings Programme: 2020/21 Quarter 1: Progress Report

The Finance - Senior Business Partner attended the meeting and presented the Quarter 1 position of the key 2020/21 projects and business cases within the Efficiency Savings Programme.

The overall savings requirement for the 2020/21 business cases was £3.244m.

The Committee heard that the delivery of some of the savings proposed in 2020/21 were expected to be significantly impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic especially within Health, Education, Care & Safeguarding and Commissioning & Asset Management.

The update set out each project that would deliver the required savings whilst delivering priority outcomes within the agreed Efficiency Plan.

The financial position at the end of quarter one position was;

- (£0.571m) had been delivered against the overall target via project activities outlined in associated business cases;
- A further £0.802m was expected to be delivered against the targets during the course of the financial year;
- £3.013m of the overall target remained to be delivered.

Agreed that the Efficiency Savings Programme: 2020/21 Quarter 1: Progress be noted.

OV51/20 Technical Services Partnership - Capita Quarterly Update

The Committee received update for partnership performance for Q4 (January – March 2020) against the agreed Annual Service Plan for 2019/20. It also received the Annual Service Plan for 2020/21 for consideration.

The Council monitors performance of the Partnership on a monthly basis and Capita are required to meet a series of important performance milestones for each service they deliver on our behalf and these are known as Key Performance Indicators ('KPI's).

The KPI's, divided into Category 1 (not linked to the payment mechanism) and Category 2 (linked to the payment mechanism) and each have an explicit target.

Performance scorecards were reported for each of the following service areas:

- Property Services
- Engineering Services
- Regulatory Services

At the start of each financial year the Committee receives the Annual Service Plan, which was included in the agenda for consideration.

Agreed that (1) the Technical Services Partnership - Capita outturn performance Q4 2019/20 and (2) the 2020/21 Annual service Plan be noted.

OV52/20 Exclusion Resolution

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and having applied a public interest test in accordance with Part 2 of Schedule 12A the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

OV53/20 Technical Services Partnership - Capita Quarterly Update Further information

The Committee received the Capita financial outturn for 2019/20.

Agreed that the Capita financial outturn for 2019/20 be noted