

Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee

Monday, 9 October 2023

Present: Councillor J Montague (Chair)
Councillors L Bartoli, D Drummond, M Murphy,
M Thirlaway, M Wilson, P McIntyre, C Davis,
L Marshall, J O'Shea and A Spowart

In attendance:
Rev M Fine – Church Representative
Ms F Burton – School Governor Representative

Apologies: Councillors D Cox, L Bones, T Mulvenna, A Newman,
P Oliver, W Samuel and J Shaw.

Mr S Fallon – Church Representative

OV17/23 Appointment of Substitute Members

The Chair made the Committee aware that Councillor Wallace was no longer a member of this Committee.

Pursuant to the council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute members was made:

Councillor O'Shea for Councillor D Cox
Councillor Spowart for Councillor Samuel
Councillor Marshall for Councillor Shaw

OV18/23 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Martin Murphy declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 5 2023/24 Performance & Financial Management Report to 31 July 2023, he has a family member who is employed by North Tyneside Council.

Councillor Matthew Thirlaway declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 5

2023/24 Performance & Financial Management Report to 31 July 2023, he has a family member who is employed by North Tyneside Council and he is employed by a social care provider who receives funding from North Tyneside Council.

Councillor Lewis Bartoli declared a disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 7 – Emergency Care in North Tyneside – Task and Finish Group, his wife is Chief Operating Officer of Northumbria Healthcare Trust.

OV19/23 Minutes

Resolved that the minute of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 be **agreed**.

OV20/23 Annual Report of the Elected Mayor

The Mayor gave her apologies due to illness, and this item was added to the agenda for the 11 December 2023 Committee meeting.

The Board wished the Mayor a speedy recovery.

OV21/23 2023/24 Performance and Financial Management Report to 31 July 2023

The Committee received a report that had been considered by Cabinet at its 18 September 2023 meeting.

The report set out the forecast outturn position to 31 March 2024, and summarised the overview of both the service delivery performance position and the budget across the Authority as of 31 July 2023.

The Committee was informed that the General Fund will outturn with a pressure of £11.311m. The Authority's key pressures were described as consistent with both the expected areas of concern and with those across the country as a whole.

The report sets out the programme of work which is in place to manage and mitigate the 2023/24 budget pressures and form part of the 2024-2028 Medium Term Financial Plan.

In terms of performance, whilst service delivery remained strong there continued to be high levels of demand in children in need residential placements, transport linked to Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Needs Assessments, home care costs and school catering.

It was noted that a number of schools submitted a deficit budget plan for 2023/24 and deficit review sessions had started with these schools during July 2023 and continued through September. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) extended their offer to provide School Resource Management Advisors (SRMA) to visit these schools in deficit and provide a full financial review.

The projected outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is an underspend of £0.053m. The Housing Repairs service continues to face inflationary increases on materials and subcontractor prices, but the overall spend for repairs is forecast to come in on budget. There is also an anticipated pressure due to the 2023/24 pay award that is expected to be greater than assumed in the HRA Business Plan. The deputy chair queried if much of the overspend noted was statutory, and officers confirmed that this was the case.

A member sought assurance that the catering Services pressures were being addressed, and the Head of Finance stated that a realignment of the service with the current budget was currently being investigated. The Director of Commissioning and Asset Management added that these concerns were being addressed within both the current workstream and choices to be made in service provision.

It was **Agreed** that the 2023/24 Performance and Financial Management Report to 31 July 2023 be **noted**.

OV22/23 Procurement – Supply Chain and Social Value

The Head of Commercial and Procurement gave a presentation based on the supplied report providing an overview of the procurement service. The committee were asked to note the information provided.

The presentation noted that the service was tackling concerns with the supply chains in areas such as taxation, equality and diversity and Modern slavery.

The Head advised robust taxation checks took place as part of the procurement exercise, Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken at both point of tender and throughout the contract, as well as ensuring compliance with the 2015 Modern Slavery Act.

An update on the maximisation of social value was discussed, and how this worked with the supply chain, subcontractors and increasing use of small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) in order to get best value alongside ensuring the ability to monitor and capture this information beginning at the point the bid comes in.

A discussion took place on the how often the service was finding, and refusing/cancelling, bids based on taxation or shell company issues. Officers answered these issues would be identified in up to a handful of bids a year. It was stated that businesses had to declare any irregularities and incidents of discrimination through the procurement process.

A member asked what areas of Equality and Diversity we would be concerned with in terms of a bid from a company. Officers responded that these would include issues such as a robust recruitment procedure and Health & Safety compliance. It was noted that any refusal of a bid based on these criteria would be able to appeal under procurement legislation. Officers stated that thorough checks took place throughout the supply chain in order to identify overseas businesses who did not match UK legislation, as these would be identified as a possible high risk.

The Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources responded to questions about companies keen to highlight their social value, whilst not providing it. He stated that he had seen the procurement process highlighting local work that was part of SMEs work ethic rather than an addendum to the bidding process.

The Head of Commercial and Procurement stated that there was more work to do over the next three to four years and highlighted the Strategic Action Plan 2022 – 2025 for members.

The chair thanked the officers for the report. It was **Agreed** that the Commercial and Procurement Information report be **noted**.

OV23/23 Update – Emergency Care in North Tyneside Task and Finish Group

The Committee received a report from the Head of Governance giving an update about the Emergency care In NT – Task and Finish group. The Committee were asked to note the information provided.

The group was set up in response to a Motion agreed at Council on 16 March 2023 relating to Emergency Care in North Tyneside and agreed at Committee on 12 June 2023. With the agreement of a further motion at full Council on 21 September 2023, the Group's remit has been widened to include 'all aspects of healthcare provision and policy which impacts on the workload of the NHS emergency response services'.

The Chair asked the Board if there was an agreement that there would be an opportunity for the Committee to have input but that they would hold the pen. The Chair will report to Cabinet on 27 November 2023 and to OSCFC on 11 December 2023.

It was **Agreed** that (1) the Emergency Care in North Tyneside – Task and Finish Group Update report be **noted**, and (2) that the Chair will present the completed report to the Committee on 11 December 2023.

OV24/23 Work Programme

The Chair update the Committee with the current Work programme and the schedule for the next few meetings.

A member commented that the recent update from Capita had been lacking in some important detail and supporting information. The Director of Commissioning and Asset Management stated that he would pass along any comments and would ensure the correct officers would be able to attend the relevant Committee meeting for the follow-up report.

The Chair asked members to email him directly with suggestions for potential Scrutiny items to begin conversations about.

The Chair noted a request for a subsequent return to the areas covered in item OV12/23 at later date for an update.

OV25/23 Date and Time of next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on 11 December at 6:00pm