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Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Monday, 15 March 2021

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors B Burdis, K Clark, M Green, Janet Hunter,
A McMullen, A Newman, P Oliver, Rev M Vine, D Cox,
J Kirwin, W Samuel and S Fallon

In attendance:
Councillors B Pickard

Apologies: Councillors M Rankin and M Ord

OV77/21 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

OV78/21 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor P Oliver declared a non-registerable personal interest in item 6 Efficiency Savings Programme. She has a family member in receipt of Independent supported living services.

OV79/21 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 be confirmed.

OV80/21 Accommodation Update March 2021

The Head of Commissioning and Asset Management gave a presentation that provided an update on changes within the Authority's operational accommodation that were aligned to the Authority's three-year Estates strategy 2018-2021.

The strategy's aim was to ensure the optimum numbers of buildings and land holdings were being used as effectively as possible, with the minimum carbon impact and running costs and supported the Our North Tyneside Plan and the Ambition for North Tyneside.

The committee was provided an overview of the accommodation changes and what had been achieved for specific properties.

It also heard of the further key projects in relation to;

- the review of depot accommodation at the Killingworth site, Norham Road and E1 depot.
- Quadrant East and West
- Wallsend Customer First centre
- The Cemetery Review

- Housing Delivery

It heard that by the end of 2021 it was hoped to achieve to provision of a Borough wide depot service on the Killingworth site, with continued ambition to reduce the overall running costs of the operational estate.

Work would continue to reduce revenue costs of the Quadrant campus through sub-letting/sharing opportunities, whilst bringing remaining vacant space into use at the Wallsend customer First Centre.

The committee was informed work was on-going to the new Estates Strategy for the period 2021-2025.

In questioning a member enquired to the level of surplus accommodation that the Authority held. In response it was stated that an on-going review was held for a range of categories, such as reducing any vacancy within the office accommodation and industrial estates to ensure efficiency. It was offered that further information would be provided to give an understanding to the number and type of property, in beneficial use and how vacant properties are marketed to potential tenants.

A member asked the length of the lease for the Quadrant campus and that consideration was being taken to the changes to how services were being delivered through home working the covid-19 pandemic with the expectation for its continuation. In responding it was acknowledged that the site was on lease with associated rental/service charge and work was continuing to consolidate Authority service into the buildings, whilst vacant space was being sub-let or shared to ensure efficiency.

A member asked to the reference of the marketing of cemetery lodges within the cemeteries through the borough. In response it was stated that those mentioned in the presentation were those being actively marketed, however there were still a number in the accommodation estate not mentioned and a full list would be circulated.

Agreed that (1) the Accommodation update be noted and (2) further information to be circulated in relation to the accommodation estate, the Quadrant campus and the marketing of cemetery lodges.

OV81/21 Efficiency Savings Programme - update report

The Committee received the quarter 3 position of the key 2020/2021 projects and business cases within the Efficiency Savings Programme.

The report provided the financial position and highlighted that;

- £0.017m had been delivered against the overall target via project activities in associated business cases
- A further £1.714m was expected to be delivered against the targets during the course of the financial year.
- £1.891m of the overall target remained to be delivered.

It was report that the £1.891m was being reported as having been impacted by covid-19 and

was forecasted to be allocated against the Local Authority Support Fund.

A member raised a concern with the services responding to Rising Complex Needs and in respect to the work delivery status and stated there was a divide with the service provided to those with physical and those with neurological conditions and how this could be addressed. The Head of Resources stated that the Multi- Disciplinary Team that delivers the service would be asked to respond to the member's concern.

A member raised a question in relation to Social Care Customer Experience – Assistive Technology and asked what technology would be used and available. In response it was stated that the indicative technology was in relation to lifting equipment and that a further update would be circulated to the committee.

A further question was asked to the need to hold a vacancy within the Youth Offending Service. In response it was stated that any post that was held vacant for a period of 6-12 months was deleted, it was stated that the service would be contacted to confirm the position.

A member raised the budget reduction in relation to legal and professional fees was expected not to be met and asked for the reason of this position. In response it was stated that there had been an increase in caseload in the current year which had been impacted to the occasion that courts were open and stated that the service would be contacted to confirm the position.

Agreed that the Efficiency Savings Programme (Quarter 3) update be noted

OV82/21 Our North Tyneside Plan Performance Report

The Policy & Performance Manager presented a report that provided an update on the progress of the Our north Tyneside plan 2020-2024.

The report detailed the performance for each of the plans themes and highlighted;

Our People

- Continued progress with supporting young people to be ready for school
- More young people being 'ready for work'
- People being cared for and supported, especially if they become homeless.

Our Places

- People being happy to live in North Tyneside
- Delivering a clean, green, health, attractive, safe and sustainable environment
- Regeneration as part of the 15 year 'Ambition for North Tyneside' Plan
- Good choice of quality housing appropriate to need
- Promotion pf parks, beaches, festivals and seasonal activities

Our Economy

- Grow by supporting new businesses and building on our strengths, including our

existing world class companies and small and growing enterprises.

It was stated that work was ongoing to understand the impact of the covid-19 pandemic and national restrictions on residents with protected characteristics and socio-economic inequalities in the borough, which would inform where further work was required as part of the stage 3 recovery plan.

A member raised their concern with the effect of inequality gap in life expectancy and asked what the Authority was able to do. In response the committee was informed that officers were looking at local data and investigating the disparities for different characteristics and the area of the borough they live.

A member asked how the 15 Year Master Plan was being developed and could experts from World Heritage or the British Museum be accessed to enhance its development, concern was also raised to the length of the plan and should it be shorter. It was stated that a response would be provided by the Arts and Heritage Team and circulated to the committee.

Agreed that the Our North Tyneside Performance Update be noted.

OV83/21 Engie Sub-group Report

The Chair informed the committee that it had been hoped that the report would be available for presentation at the meeting but due to unforeseen circumstances the report had not been finalised. The report would be presented to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

OV84/21 Scrutiny Annual report

The Committee receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report that provided details of the work of scrutiny in the last year in scrutiny the Authority's response to the pandemic and the continued provision of essential services across the borough.

The Chair expressed her gratitude to all officers that ensured that scrutiny was able to continue and allowed members to keep fully engaged using technology and virtual meetings.

A member paid tribute to all for ensuring that meetings were able to continue following the rapid change to how they were delivered.

Agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report be approved.