

North Yorkshire County Council
Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 20 April 2015 at 10.30 am.

Present:-

County Councillor Derek Bastiman in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, Bernard Bateman MBE, Eric Broadbent (sub. for Steve Shaw-Wright), John Blackburn, Jean Butterfield, Michael Heseltine (sub. for John Ennis), Stuart Parsons, Tony Randerson, Elizabeth Shields and Tim Swales.

Also in Attendance

County Councillor Carl Les (Executive Member)

Officers: Paul Cresswell, Assistant Director (Strategic Resources), Lesley Dale, Corporate Development Officer, Neil Irving, Assistant Director (Policy & Partnerships), Jonathan Spencer, Corporate Development Officer, Mary Weastell, Assistant Chief Executive (Central Services)(Chair of North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership), Neil White, Corporate Development Officer, Penny Yeadon, Head of HR (CYPS)

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Sam Cross, John Ennis, Andrew Lee, Steve Shaw-Wright, and Tim Swales.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

47. Minutes

Resolved that – the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2015, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

49. Executive Member Update

County Councillor Les advised that he had been experiencing some IT problems which were not surprising as the Hardware was seven years old and the software twelve years old. He wondered if a refresh of members ICT might be added to the committee's work plan.

Councillor Les commented that the upcoming issues were:

- Constitutional changes at the next Full Council meeting
- Quarter four Performance Report to the Executive
- Property Disposal that the Council's Audit Committee had expressed an interest in and was on the committee future work plan
- Library report to the Executive

50. 2020 North Yorkshire Cross-Cutting Theme: Organisational Development

The Committee received an oral report from Penny Yeadon, Head of HR - Children and Young People's Service updating the Committee on the Council's 2020 Cross Cutting Theme Organisational Development.

Penny Yeadon advised that the 2020 workforce vision was that "The success of the Council, the satisfaction of our customers, our efficiency, overall performance and effectiveness all depend heavily on our workforce's skills, abilities, knowledge and motivation".

This meant that the County Council needed to ensure that it has the right people, with the right skills working in the right way within effective roles and structures.

Penny Yeadon advised the Committee of the results of a staff focus group that took place last year which showed what the staff felt were the strengths and weaknesses of the Council. This has helped shape the Organisational Development Priorities which were now to:

- Increase visibility of senior leaders
- Value staff and especially high workloads & pressures
- Encourage joint working across Directorates and sharing of good practice
- Encourage genuine listening and consultation with staff
- Make improvements to working environments and mobile working
- Create a more positive, less risk averse ethos
- Ensure less bureaucracy and better team meetings.

Furthermore, the Key achievements within this theme were:

- Detailed plans for each of the sub groups and themes
- Briefings to senior managers and leadership teams
- Revitalising office user groups
- 'Go-to People' for help with IT systems
- 'On-line' Locality forums
- 2020 Bright ideas scheme
- Pilot Staff volunteering scheme
- Leadership principles agreed.

The medium term goals for the Organisational Development were:

- Staff engagement survey
- Update behaviour & skills framework for 2020
- Improve experience of staff appraisal
- Help staff to make best of use of new technology
- NYCC Innovation Awards
- Continue to influence culture change
- Promote volunteering more widely

Members made the following key comments:

- That to ensure that the 2020 vision was successful a key element was the training and development that staff received. Staff needed to understand and be effective in the future role they might take. The Committee expressed an interest in a greater understanding of what training was currently generally available and how this training was going to be tailored to reflect the needs of the council as the structure and level of services moved towards the 2020 vision.
- Councillor Les reflected that the Executive had not cut the Human resources budget as it had understand that more work was needed for ongoing Training and development across the council to achieve the 2020 Vision.

- That it would be appropriate for the Council's Internal Workforce Development Group to consider this issue at a future meeting.
- That the presentation had referred to work being done to assess critical gaps within the Council yet the report to the Executive in March on the new structure in the Children's Young People service did not do this.
- In response to a question, Penny Yeadon stated that the Council did not learn from service complaints and they formed part of the workforce development plan. An example of this was the Social Care development work plan which was considered the best in the region and was referred to by Ofsted.
- It was asked how the Bright Ideas programme was measured and where there any reward for staff that came up from good ideas. Penny Yeadon stated that managers had a number of ways of saying thank you to such staff and were reminded to share the good ideas widely across the council.
- The Committee agreed that it would like further updates on the progress of the Bright Ideas Programme.
- It was queried whether there was any member involvement in the Council's Joint Consultative Committee that was the employer/employee committee looked at staffing issues. Councillor Les advised that the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader were involved but did not attend. He would find out if it was appropriate to attend.
- That it would be useful to be clear about how the council used the term volunteers and there was a difference between those volunteers who were paid and those who were unpaid.
- Following a question, Penny Yeadon advised that there were no savings target assigned to the Organisational Development theme as the work and savings achieved under this theme would be reflected in the departmental savings.
- How the work of the theme was being evaluated and what measures were being used to assess whether the theme was being successful. Penny Yeadon stated that this year's staff engagement survey would set a benchmark and the survey would be undertaken on an annual basis with the results measured against that benchmark.

The Committee agreed that they would regularly like to see the evaluation from the staff engagement surveys.

Resolved that – (A) the Workforce Development Group be requested to consider the issue of how the training and development being offered to staff will enable them to fulfill their roles so that the Council can achieve its 2020 vision,

(B) the Committee receive further updates on the progress of the Council's Bright Ideas Programme, and

(C) the Committee receive regular updates on the evaluation from the Council's annual staff engagement surveys.

51. Annual Report for Procurement Services 2014/15

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director - Strategic Resources providing a summary of procurement activity, benefits and improvements created for

the Council during the year ended 31 March 2015, providing the Committee with details of the tenders awarded, savings achieved and results from service user feedback and presenting an overview of the revised five year Corporate Procurement Strategy and supporting Action Plans.

Members made the following key comments:

- The approach to set up a Board and a Group to consider procurement was queried and whether it would be more effective to have one group. Paul Cresswell, the Assistant Director (Strategic Resources) stated that in the past having one group had proved to be too cumbersome and the split to two groups had enabled one to deal with strategy and one to focus with the delivery of the strategy and operational issues.
- In response to a number of questions on individual procurement projects and whether the savings would affect the level of service, Paul Cresswell advised that the questions should be answered by the individual directorates as the role of the procurement service was how to get the best value out of a project rather than to specify the level of service that would be provided.
- Paul Cresswell responded to questions regarding the contract managing of highways projects by advising that the newly appointed Contract Manager would be involved in the design of these contracts so that the Council improves the value received.
- It was questioned whether the £3.76million of procurement savings which equated to 1% of the Council's overall procurement projects was a strong enough target as the departmental savings were about 30%. Paul Cresswell advised that the target was £12million by the end of 2017 and that with many contracts running for several years it was not always possible to make more substantial savings each year. A 30% saving would equate to £30 million of savings and would not be possible without affecting the level of service provided.
- The Committee agreed that it would like to have the level of savings that had been generated by the procurement service detailed within the annual report that it received on the procurement service.
- It was queried whether the proposed savings for Young Carers would be achievable as the number of young carers was expected to rise. Paul Cresswell advised that he would provide a response in writing to the Councillor's question.
- In response to a question, Paul Cresswell advised that the target for the contract manager was to provide more than the on cost of his salary, which he had exceeded this year although there wider non cashable benefits to the role. The work of this post would be a bigger feature of the report next year.
- It was queried how the council would enable itself to become more commercial. Paul Cresswell stated that an analysis of what was needed would be undertaken and training given to those specific areas that needed it.
- Paul Cresswell advised that, in response to a question, he would provide information to the Committee on the two Building Control projects within the Procurement Projects list.

Resolved that – (A) the procurement activity, progress and savings achieved during the year and the revision to the Corporate Procurement Strategy and Governance arrangements for the delivery of the associated Act Plan be noted, and

(B) the Committee receive within the annual report on the procurement service the detailed level of savings that had been generated by the service during the year.

52. North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership Plan

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership Executive providing the Committee, as part of the consultation process, with the opportunity to influence and support the draft North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2015-18 and informing Members of the remit of the newly formed North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and Local Delivery Teams, the development areas of work for the forthcoming year and the countywide priorities for North Yorkshire.

Members made the following key comments:

- Members noted that the Scarborough Community Safety Partnership worked well but queried why Domestic Abuse was not a priority for the Scarborough partnership in the partnership plan although making couples safe has had funding allocated to the partnership for this priority. Neil Irving, Assistant Director (Policy & Partnerships) advised that the funding was linked to the action plan in the Domestic Homicide Review recently undertaken in the Borough of Scarborough, in particular to better understand and pilot interventions in response to cyclical violence amongst couples. Domestic Abuse was a countywide priority but as partners felt that their overall approach was already working well in Scarborough it was not included as a priority in the partnership plan.
- The Committee noted that there was a number of principal development areas set out in the partnership plan and queried how these would be met. Mary Weastell (Chair of North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership) stated that there was work being undertaken to establish baselines for these areas which would be used to measure future performance. There was also an opportunity to look at the partnership and explore opportunities for better joint working. York University had been engaged to look at a number of specific projects and undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the projects.

Resolved - that the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership Plan be supported and noted.

53. Work Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's programme of work scheduled for future meetings.

It was noted that there was an item on Transforming Rehabilitation on the work programme and it was confirmed that this item was expected to be considered at the 18 January 2016 meeting.

Resolved – that the content of the work programme report and schedule be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 12pm.