

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

5 November 2018

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, A Austin, B Burdis,
N Huscroft, M Green, Janet Hunter,
A McMullen, A Newman, P Oliver,
J O'Shea, M Rankin and M Thirlaway.

In attendance:
Councillors B Pickard, C Burdis and J Stirling.

OV29/11/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Clark and N Craven, Rev M Vine and Mrs M Ord.

OV30/11/18 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members appointed.

OV31/11/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

OV32/11/18 Minutes

Resolved that minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

OV33/11/18 Safer North Tyneside Community Safety Strategy 2019-2024 (Previous Minute OV36/01/18)

In accordance with the Authority's budget and policy framework rules, the Committee gave consideration to the final proposals in relation to the Safer North Tyneside Community Safety Strategy 2019-2024. The strategy had been produced by the Safer North Tyneside Partnership, The Partnership brought together responsible authorities to work together to tackle crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending within the community. The Committee had previously considered the initial proposals in January 2018 when it had made a number of comments and suggestions.

Colin McDonald, the Council's Senior Manager Technical & Regulatory Services, attended the meeting to present the final draft version of the strategy. He was accompanied by Councillor C Burdis, the Cabinet Member responsible for

Community Safety and Engagement and Chief Inspector Ron Charlton and Inspector Michelle Caisley from Northumbria Police.

The Committee were presented with details of the key issues to emerge since the current strategy had been approved in March 2014. These included increasingly complex crimes such as child sexual exploitation that required a co-ordinated response from partners, increasing levels of reported crimes particularly in the south of the borough, changes in governance arrangements and the priorities of the Elected Mayor and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Taking into account these issues the Partnership had identified four key priorities for North Tyneside: Safeguarding, Public Protection, Alcohol and Drugs and Crime and Disorder. For each identified priority, the Partnership would review current service provision, available data and intelligence, resource levels and communication strategies. This work would help to shape an annual work plan to identify what actions needed to be taken to support delivery of the strategy over each of the next five years.

A formal consultation exercise on the draft strategy had taken place during March 2018. The Committee were presented with details of the comments received. The majority of respondents were in agreement with, and supportive of, the priorities identified by the Partnership. The consultation had led to an amendment being made to the strategy so that there was specific reference to domestic abuse and sexual assault within the safeguarding priority.

The Committee were invited to provide any comments on the strategy or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member prior to it being submitted to the Cabinet on 26 November 2018 and the Council on 17 January 2019 for approval.

In examining the proposals the Committee sought clarification as to how the approach to tackling crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending within the community would change as a result of the revised strategy. In response officers emphasised how the development of annual action plans would provide a more flexible approach to dealing with increasingly complex crimes and any newly emerging issues.

Officers confirmed that there had been an increase in the overall number of reported crimes in the borough, although crimes rates and trends varied across different wards. The overall increase was because the Police now recorded some incidents of anti-social behaviour as crimes and because victims were now more willing to report sexual offences.

The Committee examined how the Police and the Council were working to improve the sharing and analysis of information in recognition that local intelligence could help identify more significant issues. For example the Council and the Police regularly reviewed addresses of concern and considered the range of enforcement powers available to them to resolve the issues. Sometimes the Council was able to take action as a commissioner of services or as a landlord and, possibly in the future, as a regulator of the private rented housing sector.

It was suggested that the Council should adopt a single method for victims of anti-social behaviour to record incidents. Currently residents were sometimes asked to complete one form by housing officers and then later another separate form by

environmental health. Officers undertook to give the matter consideration as part of the preparation of a toolkit for residents in dealing with anti-social behaviour.

The Committee examined how Northumbria Police were working with schools in responding to cyber-crime and online bullying. Community Support Officers delivered training in schools and a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) was to be identified for every school.

It was **agreed** that the final proposals in relation to the Safer North Tyneside Community Safety Strategy 2019-2024 be noted.

OV34/11/18 Creating a Brighter Future Programme: 2018/19 Quarter 2 Progress Report (Previous Minute OV16/07/18)

The Committee examined delivery of the Creating a Brighter Future (CBF) Programme as at the end of the 2nd quarter of the financial year 2018/19. The CBF programme formed part of the 2017-20 financial planning process. It included a series of projects which would deliver efficiency savings whilst delivering the Council's key priority outcomes.

The Committee were presented with a report setting out progress in relation to each project in terms of project delivery and achievement of savings. The position as at the end of the 2nd quarter was summarised as follows:

| Project Delivery | | | Savings Delivery | | |
|------------------|--|----|------------------|---|----|
| Blue | All milestones complete | 29 | Blue | Full saving realised | 27 |
| Green | All milestones met within timescales; no concerns about delivery of future milestones | 4 | Green | Majority of savings already realised and/or no concerns about realization of full saving | 8 |
| Amber | Some milestones delayed and/or minor concern about delivering some future milestones | 9 | Amber | Projected shortfall in savings and/or savings will be accrued throughout the financial year | 5 |
| Red | Milestones significantly delayed and/or major concern about delivering future milestones | 1 | Red | Significant shortfall in savings currently projected | 3 |

It was reported that to date £6.997m of the total £10.143m required savings had been delivered, or were on track for delivery, which meant that there was certainty or a high level of confidence at this point in time that around 69% of the savings target would be delivered.

The Committee paid particular attention to the following projects rated as red, where milestones had been significantly delayed, there were concerns about delivering future milestones or a significant shortfall in savings was currently projected.

A review of residential care costs and quality bands had been delayed and so the entire anticipated saving (£300,000) was therefore unlikely to be achieved. Officers

confirmed that savings achieved from other projects beyond their targets would help mitigate the shortfall, for example from healthcare funding.

Proposals put forward by ENGIE to deliver additional efficiency savings (£150,000) from customer services had been rejected as the reduced customer service offer proposed had not been acceptable and because the savings offered (£80,000) fell short of the target. It was therefore highly unlikely any savings would be delivered this financial year however discussions about future customer service delivery were continuing with ENGIE.

A savings target of £1.5m had been set from the procurement of goods and services. To date £151,000 of savings had been secured and a further £692,000 of savings was being investigated. Work continued with service areas to identify remaining savings. It was noted that the Cabinet had agreed to work towards returning the procurement service to the direct management of the Authority to gain greater control over procurement activity.

The Committee also considered the impact of increasing fees and charges. Service areas had reported that there had been no reductions in the number of children taking up school meals or in the use of leisure and swimming facilities. The Committee acknowledged that services with income targets such as the registrars and bereavement services were sensitive to a competitive market. Members referred to an earlier report produced by the Committee in relation to bereavement services in November 2016 and it was suggested that it might now be timely to receive an update on the action taken in response to the recommendations contained in the report.

It was **agreed** that the Creating a Brighter Future Programme: 2018/19 Quarter 2 Progress Report be noted.

OV35/11/18 Equality and Diversity Policy

(The Chair had agreed to the following item of business being considered at the meeting as an urgent item in accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as consultation on the draft policy closed on 25 November 2018.)

The Committee were advised that a review the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy had commenced in August 2018 to ensure that the Authority continued to meet its statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity. A draft revised policy had been prepared for consultation and this was presented to the Committee for comment. Following the consultation exercise, which was due to close on 25 November 2018, a report would be submitted to Cabinet in January 2019 seeking approval for the revised policy.

The Cabinet had agreed to amend the current policy in October 2018 to include the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Antisemitism and supporting guidelines.

The Committee sought and received confirmation that all Council buildings used by its customers were accessible. With regards to access to buildings and services, Members suggested that further consideration be given, as part of the review of the

policy, to the needs of people with Dementia, to creating Dementia Friendly Communities and to meeting the needs of people of all ages with learning difficulties.

It was **agreed** that the Deputy Mayor be requested to give further consideration to the needs of people with Dementia, to creating Dementia Friendly Communities and to meeting the needs of people of all ages with learning difficulties when reviewing the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy, particularly in terms of ensuring these customers have access to the Authority's buildings, facilities and services.

OV36/11/18 Capita Sub-Group

The Committee gave consideration to a report and recommendations formulated by a Sub-Group appointed by the Committee to review the partnership arrangement with Capita. The purpose of the review had been to assess if the Authority and its residents were receiving the service specified at its inception.

The Committee expressed its support for the recommendation that the Cabinet give consideration to increasing enforcement activity within the Authority.

It was **agreed** that the report and recommendations of the Capita Sub-Group be approved for submission to the Cabinet on 26 November 2018.