Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee   23 July 2019

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Culture)

Refresh of Ward Committees

Summary

1. This report asks for some initial views from the scrutiny committee about key issues concerning the council's approach to ward committees.

Recommendations

2. The committee is asked to comment on the key issues to be included in a forthcoming report to the Executive.

   Reason: To help shape the Executive paper.

Background

3. A report will be taken to the Executive on 29 August entitled: "Refresh of the Council's Approach to Ward Committees". This scrutiny committee is invited to help shape this Executive paper.

Potential Issues

4. **Allocation of any additional funding allocated to wards through the Supplementary Budget Proposals 2019/2020 to be considered at 17 July Council:**

   This will be an opportunity for the scrutiny committee to contribute to the development of criteria for any funding agreed by Council.

5. **Members' knowledge of and confidence with the ward committee system:**

   Are ward teams now established and meeting and are local priorities being developed?

Are ward members getting the best from their Community Involvement Officer (CIO)? Are they getting the kind of support they need?

Would some member sessions be useful to share best practice in operating the ward system and developing action plans?

6. **Resident Engagement:**

There are many excellent examples of innovative methods used by members to engage their residents.

Which methods are members finding most effective?

How can good practice be further developed? What other methods might be investigated?

7. **Proving the value of ward working:**

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. We are currently trialling tools to measure social value of ward schemes. How can we encourage its use?

How else should we assess the outcomes that we are achieving?

8. **Ward Highway Schemes**:

Difficulties have been experienced in progressing ward highways schemes in a timely manner. To address this, the following could be proposed:

- Communities and Equalities Team CIOs to liaise with ward councillors, residents and key partners to identify and highlight highways issues.

- Highways team to bring concerns and suggestions for consideration by wards to inform decision-making, including data about the key issues in the ward (condition surveys / customer requests / safety audits) to give further insight into priority issues and increase the relevance and robustness of decision-making.

- Wards key issues to be taken to a "walk about" with a highways engineer for initial assessment, comment and broad brush stroke feasibility, leading to a rough estimate being produced.

- CIO to complete a highways form of all schemes the ward would like to see acted on following the walk about, prioritising them where ideas outstrip budget.

- Highways to progress schemes from there, sending requests for clarifications or further actions to the Communities and Equalities Team Scheme Manager and bringing updates to a quarterly "capital schemes programme board meeting."

- CIO to distribute updates to wards on a quarterly basis following programme board meetings.

Scrutiny members' comments are requested. Are there any other suggestions.

9. **HEIP:**

The Housing Environment Improvement Programme is a four year programme with funding allocation to wards according to number of CYC housing properties. HEIP funds physical improvements to CYC housing land and property. It is managed by the Communities and Equalities Team with projects delivered by CYC teams or a contractor appointed in line with procurement processes.

Are members confident about the systems in place to identify and deliver appropriate schemes?

10. **Parish Liaison:**

Effective working with the city's parishes is essential.

How well are wards working with their parishes (where applicable)?

Is there a need for any collective liaison arrangements?

11. **Other Possible Future Developments**:

What do other authorities do at ward / local level?

What else could usefully be devolved to a community level in the future?

Implications

12. The report has no Finance, Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property or other implications.

Risk Management

13. There are no risks to consider that arise from this report.

Contact Details

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| **Report Approved** | ✓ | **Date** | 11 July 2019 |

Wards Affected: All ✓

Abbreviations

CIO- Community Involvement Officer
CYC- City of York Council
HEIP- Housing Environment Improvement Programme