

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	11 November 2019
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, Hunter, Rowley, D Taylor, Vassie, Wann and Musson

Apologies

34. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, prejudicial interest or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

Councillor Vassie declared a personal interest in relation to item 6 of the agenda, as his partner worked as a teacher.

35. Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 14 October 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record, subject to the following amendment:

- i. The Committee Chair and not the Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee Chair raised concerns about the cost of temporary CCTV camera instalment due to the Council's current contract.

36. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. The speaker registered to speak in regards to item 5. Annual Complaints Report from March 2018 to April 2019.

John Young raised his issues with the current complaints process, in regards to his complaint about noise and earth vibrations in South Bank from the Chocolate Works site. He requested that planning enforcement protect residents and the Have Your Say team be renamed to Complaints.

37. Update Report on Wellbeing Project

Members considered the report on the wellbeing of staff, through updated management information, staff survey results, and the ongoing activities to support the wellbeing of staff and to reduce absence levels.

The Head of HR noted that there was not one solution to improving the wellbeing of staff. Therefore, a multifaceted approach was being taken including working with Public Health around poor mental health and the introduction of Absentia Day One Absence Monitoring to support staff on their first day of absence. The council had also signed up to the Time to Change Employers pledge. She then responded to a number of questions around staff surveys, in terms of completion and results.

Members expressed particular concern about hotspots in sickness absence within the Economy and Place Directorate, making links to the comparatively high levels of complaints the received by the Directorate highlighted in the report supporting minute no. 38 below.

Members identified stress and poor mental health of staff within the workplace as an issue in the council and invited Economy & Place Scrutiny Committee to look further at the results of the focus group around issues in that Directorate, concentrating in particular on enforcement and the impact of stress and resources within that team.

Resolved:

- i. That the content of the report be noted.
- ii. That the Chair, Vice Chair, and other voluntary Members of the Committee meet with Public Health to gain a greater understanding of the Time to Change Action Plan.

- iii. That further investigation be taken into what other authorities and organisations do to support wellbeing in particular around Stress and Mental Health and to see what best practice could be shared.
- iv. That the Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee be asked to further investigate staff wellbeing in the Economy and Place Directorate, starting with receiving 'Update report on Wellbeing Project' before reporting back to CSMC and with looking at the picture within enforcement as part of their ongoing scrutiny of planning enforcement;
- v. The Head of HR, in conjunction with the Chair and other voluntary Members of the Committee, to gather further information from existing HR networks to compare City of York Council's position on wellbeing with that of other authorities.

Reason: To ensure the Committee is properly informed of the latest sickness absence figures and to ensure the organisation considers the impact of stress and mental health across all its workforce.

38. Annual Complaints Report from March 2018 to April 2019

Members considered the Council's annual complaints report For April 2018 to March 2019. The Complaints and Feedback Manager explained the complaints procedure to the Committee, including the process for assessing and identifying the level of a complaint.

Officers responded to various queries relating to the complaints process and concerns raised through that process. In particular, Members drew attention to the Directorate figures on Stage One complaints, commenting upon the comparatively high proportion of complaints within the Economy & Place Directorate upon which there appeared to have been no response or a late one to the complaints team, in addition to those on which there appeared to be a lack of action.

Officers reminded Members that those figures could be construed as being proportionate to the size of the directorate, and should also take into account the level of contact that Directorate had with residents and direct service delivery.

Members also highlighted results from the staff survey's (see minute No. 37 above) and noted the staff responses showing more than 50% of responders did not agree that they had a manageable workload or realistic time pressures and deadlines in the Economy & Place Directorate. Members raised concerns from these results that a lack of resources could have impacted the Directorate's ability to adequately deliver services and respond to subsequent complaints within the timescales required.

Resolved:

- i. The contents of the report were noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Council provided the most appropriate and up to date complaints management and monitoring processes.

39. Report of the Chair of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Members considered a report that provided them with a six-monthly update on the work of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee highlighted that over the last six months the Committee:

- Had been joined by officers and multiple partner organisations, to update the Committee regarding work that has taken place and work that they have planned;
- Had not undertaken any in-depth Scrutiny Reviews, partly due to being satisfied with initial overview reports, however, the Committee has also received so many overview reports that there had not been the time to do any in-depth Scrutiny Reviews;
- Remained concerned that there was a shortage of officer time to support any in-depth Scrutiny Reviews.

The Chair of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee confirmed to the Committee that, the Directorate continued to engage in Peer Reviews.

The Committee was informed that as part of the proposed cross Scrutiny Review into Poverty (see Minute No. 40 below), the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee, could explore access to Early Years Provisions as it appeared that current policies were not necessarily driving engagement with those most in need of the provisions. An evaluation by City of York Council into this would to be undertaken in 2020.

Resolved:

- i. That the content of the update report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the work of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

40. Scoping Report for Corporate Review into Poverty in York

Members considered a report inviting the Committee to consider whether it wished to undertake a corporate review on the theme of 'poverty' in York and involving all Standing Scrutiny Committees, some of which were already looking at work streams on this theme. Each Committee would set its own remit and gather their own information for report back to CSMC, which would a final corporate report for submission to Executive.

Members discussed the proposal in some detail and unanimously supportive of the suggestion, whilst recognising that an initial definition of 'poverty' for these purposes would need to be agreed. The Committee was also keen to ensure that any work undertaken was done so alongside those work strands already identified in the new Council Plan (2019-23) to avoid any duplication of officer and external resources and provide clarity of purpose.

Resolved:

- i. A corporate review to be undertaken into poverty in York, with each individual Scrutiny Committee agreeing its own remit and reporting back to CSMC with a final report for inclusion in a corporate report.

Reason: To provide a corporate, cross-party response to poverty in the city.

41. Annual Scrutiny Review Support Budget 2020/21

Members considered a report seeking their views on the level of funding they wished to request, as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21, for research support in connection with scrutiny review work. The Head of Civic and Democratic Services gave an overview of how in previous year's scrutiny committees had used their budget. In recent years, the budget had been underspent and so far during 2019/20, had not been spent at all.

Members were presented with options to retain the budget at current levels in view of the historical lack of spend in recent years or to recommend an appropriate increase in light of the increased number of meetings and business from 2019/20 onwards. They then discussed how the budget for 2020/21 could be used including a potential Public Consultation on Climate Change, scrutiny training for Members, and if funds could be used to garner wider public engagement with scrutiny reviews. Member's queried whether or not the budget from 2019/20 could be rolled over into 2020/21 and it was agreed to explore that option.

Resolved:

- i. That, subject to the remainder of the budget for 2019/20 being carried over to 2020/21, the Executive be asked to retain the current level of funding for this budget, at £5,000. In the event, that the remaining budget from 2019/20 could not to be carried over, the Head of Civic and Democratic Services be delegated to review the position in consultation with the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs.

Reason: To address the Committee's constitutional right to comment to Executive on setting the above scrutiny budget.

42. Schedule of Petitions

Members considered a report providing them with details of new petitions received to date, together with those considered by the Executive or relevant Executive Member/Officer since the last report to the Committee.

Members were concerned that where petitions were being listed as noted by the decision taker, it did not provide enough information to the Committee to properly assess whether appropriate action had been taken or was planned and therefore made it difficult for, the Committee to review satisfaction with the process.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. That the Head of Civic and Democratic Services be asked, in consultation with the Chair, to review and gain a better understanding of the current wording of petitions where the information provided by Directorates was simply to note petitions and also to review progress with petition 138 (living wage).

Reason: To ensure the Committee carries out its requirements in relation to petitions.

43. Work Plan 2019/20

Members received and considered the Draft Work Plan for 2019-20 and noted that overview reports on procurement and budget setting would be considered at the meetings of the Committee on 13 January and 10 February, 2010, respectively.

Resolved:

- i. That the draft work plan was approved, as submitted, subject to the above clarification.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 7.39 pm].