

FINANCE, RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 3rd September, 2015

Present:- Councillor Mike Stubbs – in the Chair

Councillors Fear, Hambleton, Huckfield, Loades, Sweeney, Wallace, Waring, Wilkes and Williams

Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets

Officers Executive Director Resources and Support Services
Business Improvement Manager
Business Improvement Officer (Performance and Procurement)
Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th June 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The following topics were considered at the last Constitution Review Working Group held on the 14th July 2015:-

Procedure Rules for Committees

The Group considered the recent changes that had been made to Section 3.1(a) and 3.1(b) regarding changing an earlier resolution.

Resolved:-

That a future update be brought back to Scrutiny on whether Appendix 9 of the Constitution, section 3.1(b) was required.

Access to Information Rules

Resolved:-

Committee agreed to the updated access to information rules which are found at Appendix 11 of the Constitution.

Chief Officer Appointments, Dismissal, Review and Appeals Committee

It was advised this was an ad hoc Committee. Those Members nominated would be given the appropriate training.

A Member disagreed as it was up to the group leaders from every group to attend and felt the existing people on the Committee were adequately trained.

Resolved:-

That the Chair would seek the views of the group leaders and the Democratic Services Manager.

Planning Committee Members' Protocol

Legal advice was still awaited from the Legal Advisor at Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Resolved:-

- (a) That the Protocol be forwarded to Members for consideration prior to the next meeting of Scrutiny.
- (b) That the Protocol be submitted to Full Council.

5. QUARTER ONE FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Quarter One Finance Position 2015/2016

At the end of the first quarter, the general fund budget showed an adverse variance of £55,000. The main reasons to date were:-

- (a) The implementation of the staff related savings required to deliver the 2015/2016 target of £50k was still in progress.
- (b) Jubilee 2 and Kidsgrove Sports Centre were both operating at a net overspend, primarily due to income shortfall. Officers were looking at ways to both retain current income levels and pursue additional income.
- (c) Income from commercial rents was below the amount budgeted for. Active marketing of properties was continuing in order to try and secure new tenancies.

With regard to 5.2 of the report a further payment had now been received and would be included in the quarter two financial report.

The Executive Director Resources and Support Services advised that there was no anticipated over spend on any capital schemes.

Further meetings with the trade unions were scheduled for September with implementation on the 1st October 2015.

The total staff related savings in the current financial year would amount to approximately £15,000.

A Member asked if the overspend from Jubilee 2 and Kidsgrove Sports Centre would be ongoing.

The Chair advised that this question would be passed to an Officer within the Leisure Section.

Resolved:-

- (a) That a marketing plan for Jubilee 2 and Kidsgrove Sports Centre be circulated to Committee showing ways to retain current income levels and pursue additional income.

Quarter One Performance Review 2015/2016

The Committee received the Performance Management report to the end of Quarter One (April-June) 2015. Five indicators were off target:-

- 1.7 The amount of residual waste per household.
- 2.6 Percentage of minor planning applications determined within time.
- 2.7 Percentage of other planning applications determined within time.
- 4.3 Average number of days per employee lost to sickness.
- 4.5 % Unmet demand (number of calls not answered as a % of total call handling volume) – these were confirmed as external calls and were being managed. Four of the sickness cases were in Customer Services Division and the staff had returned to work.

Concern was raised regarding sickness. The Executive Director Resources and Support Services advised that unfortunately there had been a series of serious operations and illnesses during the first quarter. There was only one case relating to stress in the workplace. The short term sickness figures were very low.

It was asked under 1.1, Percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating, if it was due to deterioration or to a new business opening up?

The Business Improvement Officer (Performance and Procurement) advised that the programme covered a range of premises. A breakdown of what the programme covered would be supplied to Committee at the next meeting.

Indicator 1.7, the amount of residual waste per household. These were seasonal figures. There was a slight improvement compared to quarter 1.

Resolved:-

- (a) That a detailed breakdown is produced for the next meeting, in relation to the percentage of food premises that have a zero or one national food hygiene rating.
- (b) That a comparative report is produced showing the number of homelessness cases where positive action was successful preventing homelessness, to see if the system was working.
- (c) That the percentage of minor planning applications determined within time be noted in the quarterly monitoring reports.
- (d) Indicator 3.4, number of referrals from GPs to organised sporting activity and indicator 3.5, percentage of people referred for exercise by GPs whose health improves. Both of these indicators to be monitored as there had been a drop in Jubilee 2 referrals and a drop in the public seeking the recreational facilities.

6. NEWCASTLE PARTNERSHIP COMMISSIONING PROSPECTUS

The Business Improvement Manager presented the report which highlighted the progress on the delivery and ongoing development of the Newcastle Partnership Commissioning Prospectus 2015-17.

The Newcastle Partnership launched the Newcastle Partnership Commissioning Prospectus 2015-17 in December 2014 which set out a number of 'lots' and service outlines, inviting local service providers to submit delivery proposals to address two commissioning priorities, within the Borough:-

- Enhancing economic growth
- Tackling vulnerability

The closing date for the submission of service proposals to address the identified priorities within the 'Commissioning Prospectus' was 4th February 2015, with the Partnership receiving a total of 55 applications across the 12 lots established. The total values of the applications received were in excess of £780,000. No applications were received for 2 of the 12 lots. Following a series of panel evaluations a total of 16 projects were awarded in Phase 1 comprising of Arch, Street Chaplains, Loggerheads Parish Council, Social Youth Clubs etc. An engagement process had been undertaken with each of the successful providers, where KPIs had been established; monitoring frequencies agreed and payment schedules in line with each communicated.

Following the closing date of Phase 2 on the 21st August 2015, 26 applications had been received with the total value in year 1 in excess of £315,000 with a budget of £220,000. Year 2 was estimated in excess of £115,000

A multi-agency working group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis to begin to realign some of the processes and try to improve the engagement in the market place.

Resolved:-

That a complete list of the projects and services available be circulated to Committee.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION TIME

Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets presented Committee with an informative presentation on the subjects of land and property disposals and Newcastle Business Improvement District.

It was asked if the May Bank land disposal consultation was authorised, which the Portfolio Holder confirmed it was and planning applications were being submitted to the Planning Committee.

A Member asked if a profile paragraph could be included in the planning report as there seemed to be no investment in the rural areas.

It was asked if a gradual increase in rates could be considered but was advised that business rates were governed by central government regulations.

A report would be made available on Tuesday 8th September 2015 concerning the Ryecroft redevelopment, with a Special Council meeting to be held on Wednesday 23rd September 2015.

Resolved:-

(a) That information from consultations is included in a newsletter.
That a profile paragraph be included in the planning report concerning investment in the rural areas.

8. **WORK PLAN**

Resolved:-

That the following items are included on the work plan:-

Wednesday 4th November 2015

Co-operative Council

Thursday 3rd December 2015

Procurement Champion

Future Items; Newcastle Partnership Board, Putting People First and Workforce Development

9. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions submitted.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR MIKE STUBBS
Chair