

North Somerset Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 26th March 2015

Response of the Leader, North Somerset Council, to the Panel's recommendations of 5th February 2015 arising from its Public Health Contracts review

[Recommendations in italics and response in standard text]

“That consideration should be given to the appointment of a permanent Public Health Performance and Contracts Manager at the earliest opportunity”;

The need to strengthen the performance and contract management capacity within the Public Health service is acknowledged and this is considered an important aspect of the council's overall plans to strengthen the council's strategic procurement function. Immediate interim arrangements have been agreed with the Public Health service in order to provide capacity in this area whilst a more long term strategic opportunity is progressed.

“That there is a need to address identified issues about limited procurement competition, market development and strategic commissioning gaps, possibly by the creation of a Strategic Business Development Lead role. Strategic contract management could be provided by a shared post within the council or in partnership with another local authority”;

A shared strategic Procurement/Commission post is in fact being developed with South Gloucestershire Council (see Employment Committee 15 January 2015). This post is due to be advertised this week and we expect to be interviewing candidates for this senior role in the second week of April 2015. An early priority for this role will be a review of the current resources and practices employed across both councils, with the express intention of improving those areas identified within the recommendation above. This review of procurement will include strategic contract management within its remit.

“That any on-going discussion with other local authorities in respect of possible joint working on procurement should take account of the potential for a new structure to provide strategic contract management support to council directorates, including Public Health.”

This is an express outcome for strengthening and sharing of the strategic procurement function. Opportunity will not only be taken to review the current procurement/commissioning resources across North Somerset to ensure that are providing the appropriate challenge and support to Directorates, but also how these should be more optimally be deployed in the context of delivery to two local authorities to exploit synergies and efficiencies.

Councillor Nigel Ashton
Leader, North Somerset Council