

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Council

### Date: 23 July 2015

## ITEM 6

Title: A New Approach to  
Ward Member Briefings

Portfolio(s): Deputy Chief Executive's  
Office

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Bruce Pickard

Responsible Officer: Paul Hanson, Deputy Chief Executive (Tel: (0191)  
6437000)

Wards affected: All

### PART 1

#### 1.1 Purpose:

Cabinet Members have previously discussed how to ensure Ward Members are better briefed and how they might have greater influence in local investment decisions. Additionally, how they might understand the team delivering key services in each Ward and how Ward Members might be able to make a difference to community capacity.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on the outcomes of the Ward Briefings held in March 2015 and agree the next set of actions.

#### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Council

- (1) Note the outcomes of the evaluation set out in 1.5; and
- (2) Endorse the future plans for the September 2015 briefings.

#### 1.3 Forward Plan:

It has not been practicable to give twenty eight days notice of this report. However, it is required to be considered without the twenty eight days notice being given because it is for information and the evaluation of the briefing has just been completed.

#### 1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority in the 2014/18 Our North Tyneside Plan 'Our Place will be places that people like living in and will attract others to either visit or live'

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

The briefings were held throughout March 2015 to allow all 60 Members to attend individual briefings specific to their Ward. A briefing pack was distributed to all Members who attended the sessions, the pack included information on:

#### Responsibilities

- Environment
- Housing Management
- Highways

#### Investment

- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Education

#### Local Issues

- Environment and infrastructure issues
- Community Capacity Grant

1.5.2 In total 14 Wards took up the offer of a briefing session. A total of 21 Officers attended all 14 sessions.

1.5.3 15 Councillors out of 42 completed the evaluation form and 13 out of the 21 Officers returned completed forms. The overall satisfaction gathered from the returned forms was very positive.

1.5.5 A list of promises and actions were noted. The majority of issues raised from the briefings have been completed, outstanding actions are in hand and Officers are continuing to keep Members fully updated.

1.5.6 Local Infrastructure Projects, Members will remember there are a set of straight forward tests including ownership and responsibility, value for money, impact and deliverability which will be applied and a programme agreed via Cabinet.

Once that is complete a draft programme this will be considered by the Investment Programme Board.

1.5.7 Members will remember Cabinet's decision to make small grants of £200 per Member to increase community capacity. To date there have been 5 Local Community Capacity Grant forms received.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

### **Option 1**

1.6.1 It is recommended that the next round of briefings take place in September, with updated briefing packs. These briefings will include the draft 2016/17 investment programmes and allow Members to comment in advance of Cabinet's proposals.

## Option 2

1.6.2 Council may choose to reject Option 1 and propose the September briefings do not go ahead.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

### **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

These briefings have been tried and tested throughout March 2015, the evaluation forms confirm that these sessions were very successful with little need for change.

### **1.8 Appendices:**

No appendices.

### **1.9 Contact officers:**

Paul Hanson, Deputy Chief Executive, tel: (0191) 6437001  
Julie Patton, Assistant to Deputy Chief Executive, tel: (0191) 6437000  
Alison Campbell, Strategic Business Partner, tel: (0191) 643 7038

### **1.10 Background information:**

Ward Briefing Background Note to all Members dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The 2015/16 the General Fund Investment Programme approved by Council included an additional £0.100m for ward-led local infrastructure investment projects and the Housing Revenue Account budget for environmental schemes was also increased by £0.050m to £0.100m for 2015/16. There is also a small local capacity grant fund within the general fund, which provides up to £200 per ward councillor for activities in their ward.

### **2.2 Legal**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

#### **2.3.1 Internal Consultation**

A range of briefings were given to Managers and staff. A full briefing note was circulated to all Members.

### 2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

There was no external consultation/engagement.

### 2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

### 2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

### 2.6 Risk management

There are no risks directing arising from this report.

### 2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

### 2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

## PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Deputy Chief Executive
- Head(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy