

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 September 2013

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, B Burdis, A Cowie, S Day,
John Hunter, Marian Huscroft, P Mason, A McMullen,
L Miller, M Rankin and J Walker

School Governor Representatives
Mrs M Ord

Church Representatives
Rev Vine

Others in attendance
Elected Mayor – Norma Redfearn
Councillors B Pickard, E Darke, J Harrison,
C Gambling, R Glindon, L Spillard and J Stirling

OV19/09/13 Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors D McGarr, P McIntyre, A Normand, School Governor Representative Mrs Little and Church Representative Mr G O'Hanlon

OV20/09/13 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute Member was reported:-

Councillor G Bell for Councillor D McGarr

OV21/09/13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

OV22/09/13 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 1 July 2013 be confirmed.

OV23/09/13 Mayors Annual Address

The Elected Mayor, Norma Redfearn, attended the meeting to present her annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on her and the Cabinet's key priorities.

The Mayor thanked the Committee for inviting her to share her priorities for the year ahead.

The Mayor stated that she was committed to the people of North Tyneside and her priority was to residents and communities first, she would ensure value for money, with efficient and effective services that would meet local needs.

Our People

Over the last year the Mayor indicated that she had spoken to many residents from Wallsend to Whitley Bay from Cullercoats to Camperdown. She had visited a range of community groups and organisations across North Tyneside. This was to hear first hand from residents about the things that were important to them.

Residents had indicated that they felt that they weren't being listened to. They wanted to know that the Council and its partners would put them first and would be there to support them.

Residents had indicated that they needed support to reach their full potential through education and training and also helping to live healthier, safer and longer lives.

Our places

The aim for the year ahead was to challenge the Council and its partners to deliver the best services to residents and for North Tyneside to be a place where people are proud to live and call home.

Therefore North Tyneside should be clean and tidy and be a place that attracts others to live in, to work and visit.

One of the main priorities was to have more affordable and better housing. The first Council homes for over 24 years would be built and the Council would provide better quality homes for older people and their Wardens would be restored.

Other priorities would be to:

- deliver a new household efficiency partnership;
- work with residents to determine the future of the Dome and Spanish City.
- work with partners to reduce the risk of future flooding;
- carry out repairs to roads and pavements;
- work with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- invest in the infrastructure and working with residents and businesses to regenerate North Tyneside.

Our Economy

The Mayor remained committed to supporting businesses, existing employers and encouraging innovation and inward investment in North Tyneside and recognised that need to have the right conditions in place to support investment and create jobs, in particular apprenticeships.

It was the intention to launch a new borough wide programme across schools and major employers to provide better work experience opportunities and improve advice and access to job opportunities.

It was also important to help residents to gain the skills that businesses need for the future was provided.

Our Partners

The Mayor stated that it was recognised that the Council could fulfil all of its priorities to the residents of North Tyneside by working in isolation and would continue to work with its partners, schools and colleges, businesses and the voluntary sector.

That work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Combined Authorities (LA7) needed to be developed to encourage investments from International Companies into the region.

Our North Tyneside

The Mayor reminded the Committee that due to reduced government funding there was a greater need to prioritise what is needed and it recognised that there would be some difficult budget choices to make.

The Council would be looking to make savings in the region of £20m for 2014/15. However, the commitment to ensuring that service delivery to residents remained top priority.

Many good Council services were being delivered, however where improvement was needed there would be a robust approach taken.

To deliver the Councils priorities a new Chief Executive had been appointed and further arrangements had been undertaken to appoint a Deputy Chief Executive.

Agreed that the Annual Address delivered by the Elected Mayor the Council priorities be noted.

OV24/09/13 Council Plan 2014 -18 – Final proposals (Previous Minute OV15/07/13)

The Committee received final proposals for the Council Plan 2014-18, 'Our North Tyneside'.

The Committee was reminded that the plan would provide the policy direction for Financial Planning and Budget process for 2014/18. The plan would be delivered in partnership with local people, business, communities and other local public sector and volunteer organisations.

There was agreement with the Authority and the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership that the Our North Tyneside Plan would replace the Sustainability Communities Strategy.

The Our North Tyneside Plan had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. The Plan detailed the Authority's priorities and how they would be measured for success, the actions to be taken and their associated Cabinet Member portfolio/service area/partner responsible for the delivery each action.

A member requested to how Councillors would be informed to what partnership work was being undertaken. Councillor B Pickard – Deputy Mayor indicated that there was to be a review of the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP) and Councillors would be informed of the proposals to how the partnership would work.

A member enquired in relation to the action to establishing a plan for the development of affordable homes and asked what part of the borough they would be built. Councillor J Harrison – Cabinet Member responsible for Housing and Environment responded by stating that work was being carried out to look at all options of rent, part renting and buying and that there was a need to ensure that any homes developed would meet the needs of future. The plan would also look at new homes being of a better than Standard 4, the homeless situation and that the plan would go to Full Council for approval.

A member enquired if developers could be encouraged to provide good service solutions in their developments such as ways to alleviate flooding water and systems to provide lower heating costs such as solar panels. Councillor Harrison informed the committee that a scrutiny sub-group had been established to look at affordable housing that would investigate all aspects of this kind.

The Committee agreed for the Our North Tyneside Plan to proceed to Council on 26 September 2013.

Agreed that the 'Our North Tyneside Plan 2014 -2018 & Action Plan 2013-14 be noted and proceed to Council on 26 September 2013.

OV25/09/13 Change Efficiency and Improvement Programme – Update (Previous Minute OV5/06/13)

Councillor B Pickard, Cabinet Member responsible for the Change Efficiency and Improvement Programme presented the update.

The report was in a new format that provided more details of the key milestones, projected 2013/14 savings and rating per project than previous updates.

Councillor Pickard stated that most of the projects would realise the projected savings, however a number of proposals would need further consideration by Cabinet.

A member asked in relation to A4 Procurement and to the number of contracts that had been awarded and had not gone through the tendering process and to the costs per transaction. Councillor R Glendon, Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources stated that this was an area that was being looked into and he was awaiting updates from the Partner responsible.

In relation to C4 Streetlighting a member questioned the reasons around the project having a red risk. Councillor J Harrison, Cabinet Member responsible informed the Committee that a scrutiny study-group had been established to investigate streetlighting.

In relation to B3: Legal Shared Services a member enquired to the length of the trail on the collaborative Legal Service and to the level of potential savings.

Councillor B Pickard indicated that Cabinet had asked the Legal Section to carry out review for both B3: Shared Legal Services and B12: Trading Opportunities. It was stated that the saving and opportunity potential would be apparent once the review was completed.

In relation to A19: Redefining Housing Related Support and A31: Supporting People Charges a Member enquired to what services were to be decommissioned. Councillor Lesley Spillard – Cabinet Member responsible for Adult Social Care stated that areas that were being looked into were support to alcohol issues/budgeting and homelessness.

However it was emphasised that there was a new model for the Adult Social Care Gateway and the changes to Crisis Response Services had been rolled out. It was also stated that the Council was working with Public Health colleagues with respect to Alcohol issues.

A Member questioned if the savings to projects B12: Trading Opportunities and B38: Library Provision were achievable. Councillor B Pickard indicated that for both of these projects were under further review.

With regards to A24: Extra Care Housing it was questioned to the reasons for the project not being progressed. Councillor L Spillard indicated that there was a possibility that the Council would be open to legal challenge. It was stated that the Council needed to be sure that its legal position was secure before it was placed in the budget and making any charges.

A Member asked if suggestions put forward at a previous meeting with regards the trading opportunities for the council had been investigated with particular reference to training opportunities. It was indicated that by Councillor Glindon – Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources that he was unaware of the particular opportunity raised but it was stated that suggestions would be looked at and only progressed if some income generation could be realised. Councillor Glindon did however state that he would look into the particular request made and respond to the member.

Agreed that (1) the Change, Efficiency and Improvement programme be noted and (2) an update be provided to the Members on the Trading Opportunity that had been previous suggested.

OV 26/09/13 Community Safety Strategy

The Committee received a report that detailed the initial proposals for the Community Safety Strategy that forms part of the of the Council's Policy Framework.

Councillor Carole Gambling, Cabinet Member responsible presented the report and the draft Strategic Assessment Summary 2013 along with the consultation process was appended to the report.

The Strategic Assessment included:

1. An analysis of the levels and patterns of crime, disorder, substance misuse, reoffending and behaviour adversely affecting the environment in the area;
2. An analysis of the changes in those levels and patterns since the previous strategic assessment;
3. An analysis of why those changes have occurred;
4. The matters which the responsible authorities should prioritise when each are exercising their functions to reduce crime and disorder, combat substance misuse and reduce reoffending in the area;

5. The matters which the persons living and working in the area consider the responsible authorities should prioritise when each are exercising their functions to reduce crime and disorder, combat substance misuse and reduce reoffending in the area.

With reference to the challenges of the strategic assessment it was asked what the reasons for areas within the borough with high crime and disorder problems compared with the rest of the borough.

Chief Inspector M Shea, indicated that some of the high crime and disorder problems can be accounted to individuals who continue to carry out a number of criminal activities.

A member suggested that consultation should be undertaken with re-offenders to gain their experience and to gain an understanding to the reasons why they re-offend. It was also suggested that members of school council's in secondary schools in particular could be consulted to gain their view of crime.

The Community Safety Manager stated that consultation with offenders on the pathways for reoffending could take place. She also stated that the Young Mayor/Cabinet will also be consulted.

Agreed that (1) the initial proposals for the Community Safety Strategy be noted and (2) recommended for re-offenders be consulted on their experiences/reasons for re-offending and members of the school council's in secondary schools on their perceptions of crime.

OV 27/09/13 Local Plan Sub-group report (previous minute OV8/6/13)

The Committee received the report from the Local Plan Sub-group (previously known as the Core Strategy Sub-group) with identified recommendations to be incorporated into the Local Plan Consultation draft.

Councillor J Allan, Chair of the sub-group presented the report that identified a number of priority areas for consideration as part of the review and detailed the reasons for each recommendation.

It was raised that the timetable of October 2013 was set for Cabinet to approve the Local Plan Consultation draft. The sub-group had raised some concern that the proposals did not allow Full Council an opportunity to be consulted on the Local Plan Consultation draft prior to the public consultation. It therefore recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Local Plan Sub Group reports, together with the Consultation Draft of the Local Plan, be referred for consideration by Full Council in September 2013.

The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Local Plan Sub-group to be considered to be incorporated into the Local Plan Consultation draft.

The Chair reminded the Committee that the Local Plan Sub-group would undertake further work with in relation to the Scaffold Hill Farm planning application that had been agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in June.

Agreed that (1) the recommendation of the Local Plan Sub Group be put forward for consideration to be incorporated in the Local Plan Consultation Draft:

- a. The Local Plan Sub-group report, together with the Consultation Draft of the Local Plan, be referred for consideration by Full Council in September 2013.

In relation to the Draft Local Plan, the Sub-group recommend that:

- b. The following are considered for inclusion in the schedule of infrastructure projects:
 - Projects in relation to health services;
 - A19/Silverlink improvements.
- c. Careful consideration is given to any allocation of land around the A19 corridor to avoid any negative impacts on the status of the A19 as a major transport link which could effect future access to funding streams for road improvements to the A19.
- d. A criteria based policy is developed as part of the plan in relation to mobile phone masts to allow the Council to steer the location and design of masts in the borough.
- e. Careful consideration is given to the allocation of employment land to ensure there are enough allocated industrial sites in the right areas, and that particular attention is given to possible future requirements linked to the developing offshore wind industry which has the potential to be a major employment growth area for the borough in the future.
- f. The major areas to be considered for employment in North Tyneside should be at locations including:
 - the River Tyne North Bank,
 - the A19 corridor,
 - Weetslade,
 - Balliol East and West, and Gosforth Business Park and
 - Whitley Road.
- g. Specific policies are developed to encourage housing development within town centres, and within secondary shopping frontages.
- h. Consider Wallsend, North Shields, Whitley Bay and Killingworth as town centres within the retail hierarchy in North Tyneside.
- i. Consider expansion of the Northumberland Park district centre to further improve the overall retail offer in the area and meet identified requirements particularly for comparison retail floorspace.
- j. Officers ensure that the outcome of the current consultation in relation to the North West area is reflected in the final draft of the Local Plan
- k. The consultation is based on a net level of housing growth of between 12,000 and 10,500, but that officers continue to work with neighbouring authorities on evidence that could mitigate towards a lower figure.
- l. All of the housing sites considered by the group are put forward for inclusion in the draft plan for public consultation;
- m. A principle is agreed that current greenbelt land should be retained and should not be considered for housing development

- n. The Cabinet Member ensures coordination between the New Affordable Homes Strategy and the Local Plan and ensures that policies within the plan support the Council's aspirations in relation to affordable housing.
- o. The Plan identifies adequate space for recycling activities within existing areas of allocated employment land.
- p. The Plan identifies and safeguards existing licensed waste management facilities for continued use in that sector – subject to acceptable impacts in terms of local environment and amenity.

and; (2) the Local Plan Sub-group continue to undertake further work with in relation to the Scaffold Hill Farm planning application as agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in June.