

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**3 March 2014**

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

School Governor Representatives  
Mrs J Little

Church Representatives  
Rev M Vine

Others in attendance  
Councillor E Darke  
Councillor J Harrison  
Councillor B Pickard

### **OV64/03/14 Apologies**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors B Burdis, D McGarr, P Mason, J O'Shea and School Governor Representative Mrs M Ord

### **OV65/03/14 Substitute Members**

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

Councillor B Caithness for Councillor J O'Shea

### **OV66/03/14 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported.

### **OV67/03/14 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meetings held on 4 February 2013 be confirmed.

### **OV68/03/14 Kier North Tyneside**

The Committee received a report and presentation delivered by Mike Furze and Simon Bullen of Kier North Tyneside Limited, Joint Venture Company (JVCo).

The Committee was reminded that following a review by the Scrutiny - Joint Venture Working Group to the service provided by the JVCo a number of recommendations had been made. Many had been completed and closed quickly in 2012, with a remaining seven outstanding. The report detailed the action taken with regard to the seven remaining recommendations.

With regards to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) the Committee was informed of the 25 performance targets:

Gold grading - 13 targets equal to, or greater than enhanced;  
Green grading - 6 targets less than enhanced;  
Amber grading - 2 targets less than penalty;  
Red grading - 4 targets less than threshold.

The report detailed a number of capital schemes that had been completed and included examples of customer feedback. There had been a 17% reduction in the number of corporate complaints with the three main complaint themes being in relation to fencing works, damp problems, roofing and working at heights activities.

Of the 27 new apprentices (administration and trade) that had joined the company, 8 had been offered Full Time Equivalent (FTE) contracts of employment and a number had obtained positions with local companies.

Efficiency savings in relation to fuel usage and CO2 emissions were detailed along with activities undertaken to fleet, waste & recycling and shared savings.

Since the start of the contract, almost £65m had been invested in North Tyneside. Significant investments had been made through people development (£1.1m), vehicle fleet (£2.62m), using the local supply chain (annual average £15m) with an additional £12,500 invested to support them and their activities.

Communications and engagement was improving through continuing the series of events that take place that included Tenant forums, Estate walkabouts, invitations to Area Housing Boards, Newsletters etc.

Significant improvements to Members engagement had been realised following the creation of the Partnership Development Manager. The position provided a direct contact to answer daily and hourly updates to issues with often out of hours access. This was additional to a number of other initiatives implemented.

The Committee was informed that the Cabinet Member for Housing had further challenged the JVCo to provide more support and added value to the residents of North Tyneside. The business improvement plan to do this covered 6 main topics/themes:

- Value for Money
- Performance Management and Behaviour change
- Key Performance Indicators to measure the right things
- Customers - increase engagement at all levels
- Overhead reduction – internal/external benchmarking activity
- Wider Kier Group leverage – how the group can support the Borough

It was detailed of how progress had been made in a number of the challenges.

A Member stated that due to the number of negative reports of the services provided by the JVCo, its image had suffered and asked what attempts would be made to overcome the negativity.

Mike Furze – Kier, Regional Director Housing Maintenance, stated that there was to be a review of the service and a rebranding exercise would be a consideration.

A Member noted fencing was an area of concerns for residents and asked to the plans in this regard. In response it was stated that an investment plan was in place and £1.5m was in place for fencing works in 2014/15.

A Member questioned to reports that the Kier Group was to centralise its business in its Norwich site. Mr Furze stated that discussion had taken place on the centralisation of some services and reassured the Committee that all services provided by Kier North Tyneside JVCo would remain in the borough.

**Agreed** that the report and presentation on Kier North Tyneside be noted.

**OV69/03/14 Change, Efficiency and Improvement – Update (Previous Minute OV54/01/14)**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the monitoring of the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme (CEI). The report provided details of all the schemes within the CEI programme as at 6 February 2014 and highlighted the status of each scheme.

It was noted that all the schemes had a rating of Green and were either complete or on track to make the required savings.

**Agreed** that Change, Efficiency and Improvement - update be noted.

**OV70/03/14 Apprenticeship Sub-group report**

The Committee received the findings and recommendations from the review undertaken by the Children, Education and Skills sub committee.

Councillor G Madden presented the sub-groups findings and recommendations.

The initial remit for the study was to establish whether apprenticeships provided were fit for purpose and what opportunity they provided to young people. It was noted that the gathering of performance information was undertaken by the Skills Funding Agency and that little information was shared in regards to long-term success rates of apprenticeships.

The sub group therefore decided it would concentrate on ensuring that the Council was delivering the best service possible to apprentices and encouraging employers to create apprentice positions.

Members raised concerns to the quality and content of courses of some of the training provision to apprentices. It was asked how the Council could monitor and influence training provided.

Councillor B Pickard, Cabinet Member stated that work was underway with the Council and its partners on proposals to create apprenticeships. That the proposals would ensure training was provided on a core set of skills that would be transferable across employers, together with a workforce plan forecasting the requirements of skills needed in the future jobs market.

**Agreed** that Apprenticeship sub-group report and recommendations be referred to Cabinet:-

**R1:** Cabinet ask officers to devise a North Tyneside Apprenticeship standard (with criteria as detailed in the report) to award to employers within the borough that demonstrate a commitment to working with apprentices

**R2:** Cabinet ask officers to review the marketing strategy currently in place in relation to employer engagement and devise an e-flyer that could reach as many employers as possible.

**R3:** Cabinet ask officers to ensure that all opportunities are maximised to illustrate the benefits and rewards that be achieved through apprenticeships, both for the apprentice and the employer

**R4:** Cabinet ask officers to ensure that mechanisms are in place to routinely capture information on the short and long term success of apprentices.

### **OV71/03/14 Wallsend Customer First Centre (Previous Minute OV61/02/14)**

Consideration of the report was deferred until the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting 31 March 2014.

**Agreed** that the Wallsend Customer First Centre report be deferred until the meeting on the 31 March 2014.

### **OV 72/03/14 Exclusion Resolution**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and having applied a public interest test as defined in Part Two of Schedule 12A of the Act the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 and 3 of Part One of Schedule 12A of the Act.

### **OV73/03/14 Freedom of the Borough**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which outlined the process for the award of the Freedom of the Borough and sought approval of the eligible nominations submitted.

The Committee was required to assess the nominations submitted and recommend a maximum of two to Annual Council on 15 May 2014 for final consideration.

Nominees for the award of Freedom of the Borough of North Tyneside must be persons/organisations of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the borough and have either:

- a) lived in the borough; or
- b) worked or been based in the borough; or
- c) been born in the borough.

**Agreed** that the two nominees recommended for the award of the Freedom of the Borough be submitted to Annual Council on 15 May 2014 for final consideration.