

# Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**1 September 2014**

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)  
Councillors J Allan, B Burdis, P Earley, Janet Hunter,  
John Hunter, N Huscroft, A McMullen and J O'Shea

School Governor Representatives  
Mrs J Little  
Mrs M Ord

Church Representatives  
Rev Vine

Others in attendance  
Norma Redfearn – Elected Mayor  
Councillors B Pickard, J Harrison and J Stirling

## **OV08/09/14 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Hall, J McLaughlin, J Pickard and Mr G O'Hanlon – Church representative.

## **OV09/09/14 Substitute Members**

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

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor M Hall

## **OV10/09/14 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported.

## **OV11/09/14 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minute of the meetings held on 7 July 2014 be confirmed;

## **OV12/09/14 Mayors Annual Address**

The Elected Mayor, Norma Redfearn, attended the meeting to present her annual report that informed the Committee of the progress of the Council and her priorities for the year ahead.

The Elected Mayor stated her commitment that North Tyneside was a Listening Council, putting residents and communities first, whilst delivering value for money services that met local needs.

In the 2013/14 year, 15 successful Listening Events with residents, organisations and businesses had been held throughout the borough with involvement of the Cabinet Members.

Special Listening Events that included carers who have an important role and deaf or hard of hearing had also taken place.

The feedback from the engagement activities had been overwhelmingly positive and provided an opportunity to discuss issues of particular importance, to residents.

The themes of the Council Plan 'Our People', 'Our Places' and 'Our Economy' had been created by focusing on areas that are important to residents.

In the 2013/14 financial year, the Council delivered its programme and saved £2.65m and transferred to the Strategic Reserve without increasing Council Tax.

However, it is anticipated that the budget will reduce by a further 15% against the 2013/14 figure, from £176m to £151m by 2017/18, which would have further financial pressures on our ability to deliver services with reduced Local Government Settlements.

To ensure that services continue to be delivered to the 201,000 residents, the Council is responding to the challenge through the Creating a Brighter Future programme. The programme will reshape services against priority delivery themes, joining with partners to make best use of resources and maximising easy to access self service, including through wider use of ICT.

The Committee was reminded that the Creating a Brighter Future Programme consisted of 4 main areas:

- ready for school;
- ready for work and life;
- cared for, safeguarded and healthy; and
- a great place to live, work and visit.

### **Ready for School**

All children in North Tyneside should be able to grow up to be happy, healthy individuals and this starts with them being ready for school.

There will be some re-organising of services, taking a whole family approach to making sure all children are ready for school.

Using public health responsibilities to work with our partners across the public and community and voluntary sectors to make sure that every child is:

- Receiving the love and support needed to be emotionally healthy;
- Living in a safe clean and smoke free home;
- Up to date with immunisations;
- Breastfed wherever possible and eating healthily; and
- Enjoying play and being physically active.

The Children's Centre services review will deliver some services differently, to enable them to be directly accessed in the community, in a range of locations and available at more flexible times including evenings and weekends from later in 2014. Maintain to operate four 'children's centre hubs' at Howdon, Riverside, Shiremoor (which includes Killingworth) and Wallsend.

It is likely that the school based centres (Whitley Bay, Cullercoats, Fordley, Battle Hill and New York) will start to deliver a wider range of services such as childcare for 2 year olds, holiday activities and playgroups under the direct management of the schools.

### **Ready for work and life**

It is essential that residents of any age and especially our young people in North Tyneside are able to access sustainable employment. To achieve this, the Council will continue to work with schools, colleges, businesses, and training providers.

North Tyneside schools are some of the best in the region and in the top 10% in the country.

The Council's Familywise programme that supports unemployed people in Troubled Families has supported 62 residents to access work.

The Council has worked regionally to secure over £4m for a Youth Employment Programme, assisting businesses to create employment opportunities, including apprenticeships for unemployed 18-24 year olds.

To ensure the right schools are in the right places to meet the needs of the population and deliver excellent education.

Significant capital investment will be sought to deliver new schools in:

- Longbenton Voluntary Aided
- Backworth Park
- Whitehouse Primary
- Longbenton High
- Marden High
- John Spence High

The Council will continue to work with its partners to reduce unemployment and increase job opportunities for residents. Including the securing of funding to continue the Working Homes Outreach Team project that supports unemployed people that are affected by welfare reform or are having housing issues.

The Council's training arm, Adult Learning Alliance had recently produced the annual joint prospectus with Tyne Met College and enrolments for courses continued to rise year on year, with delivery to over 4000 learners each year.

Working closely with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and the North East Combined Authority in preparation for the availability of European funding for employment, skills and inclusive communities would be a priority for the Council to ensure residents and organisations maximise the availability of these funding streams.

### **Cared for, safeguarded and healthy**

The Council provides many different services that support the same people or families however there was necessary to integrate existing services to allow more joined up care and support.

Along with adult social care a new multi agency single front door process will be launched and successes have been seen with the Troubled Families Programme that involves a different way of working to support the most challenging families.

Improved placement for Looked After Children both short and long term has been seen and therefore more vulnerable young people have been placed with the right families the first time around.

### **A great place to live, work and visit**

North Tyneside has a beautiful coastline, public parks, thriving business parks and a wide variety of facilities and events to keep residents of all ages active and happy. It is also the safest metropolitan borough in England.

Therefore all the components for a fantastic place to live, work and visit

Investment will be made to improve the Coast and work has begun with the Spanish City Dome. There had been some acquisitions of the Avenue, High Point Hotel and Whisky Bends by the Council and demolition had started.

Stage 1 and 2 bids to Heritage Lottery Fund for restoration and improvements to the Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade building were approved and work began in August 2014.

Agreement has been reached with the owners of Crusoe's for a new café development on Long Sands North, which would also have new public toilets.

In North Shields and the Fish Quay area, the new North Shields Customer First Centre in the refurbished Central Library was opened and a significant increase in number of users with footfall benefits for the town centre as a whole has been realised.

Discussions with NewRiver had started on developing a outline plan for improvements to the Beacon Centre and the regeneration of the town centre.

A Heritage Lottery Fund bid had been submitted for a Townscape Heritage Initiative centred on Northumberland Square.

In Wallsend, the River Tyne North Bank area remains a significant area of regeneration work, with the re-instatement of Swans as a major manufacturing site being a key priority.

As part of the focus for the regeneration of Wallsend Town Centre, the completion of Richardson Dees Park this year has been realised and a programme to tackle empty properties in the area begun.

Eight properties were being looked at to be brought back in to use as affordable housing. Designs for 41 new build affordable homes had been completed for the site of the former Wallsend Police Station and the former Temporary Accommodation Unit in Alexandra Street with delivery anticipated in 2015/16.

The opening of the Wallsend Customer First Centre this year, footfall had quadrupled and positive feedback received from the public.

NewRiver, owners of the Forum Shopping Centre had confirmed that since opening the Customer First Centre and the new ground floor shops footfall throughout the shopping centre has increased significantly.

The demolition of former Council properties on Hedley Place and York Drive to create the development site for phase 2 of the shopping centre plans was complete and included a new supermarket for Wallsend.

## **Borough wide projects.**

The Council was working with its partners to deliver 3,000 affordable homes throughout the borough over the next ten years.

In March, the Council reached financial close on the Quality Homes for the Future Project and work began immediately with our partners, Solutions for North Tyneside delivering more than 900 apartments for rent and 16 refurbishment schemes over the next three years.

The promise to reinstate Sheltered Housing Officers had shown that the service had gone from strength to strength and there were 31 full time Sheltered Housing Officers and a bank of reserves able to cover for annual leave and sickness absence. The entire Sheltered Housing Team are also Dementia Friends.

## **The Environment**

Since September 2013, North Tyneside Warm Zone scheme had delivered energy efficiency works in over 300 homes in North Tyneside.

A new Statement of Licensing Policy had been agreed in January, and following extensive consultation a Cumulative Impact Policy was agreed for Tynemouth in July 2014 restricting the number of licensed premises in Tynemouth.

Work was continuing to ensure that North Tyneside was 'Flood Ready, Flood Safe' with work complete to relieve the flood risk in Longbenton (April) and due to start in Dudley in September.

In response to concerns raised by residents/beach users regarding anti social behaviour at some beaches, four seasonal Beach Wardens were introduced in a joint initiative between the Council and the police at the beginning of August.

The Beach Wardens were responsible for dealing with problems associated with anti social behaviour (dog fouling, littering and use of jet skis), enforcing relevant legislation, making sure beaches are clean, safe and healthy environment for beach visitors, residents and local businesses.

Due to recent warm and wet weather, North Tyneside had experienced an increase in weed and vegetation growth, therefore an new teams to carry out a weed blitz across the borough were introduced and would be in place until the end of October.

To protect the environment the Council had extended fixed penalty notice powers relating to environmental issues such as dog fouling, across other services in the council, increasing the number of officers who could issue fixed penalty notices. The first joint patrol by North Tyneside Homes Safer Estates Team, Beach Wardens and Environmental Wardens took place on 19 August and more are planned for the future.

With regards to parks the Council had achieved 5 green flags in parks across the Borough with the addition of 3 blue flags for its beaches.

Responding to residents concerns about litter, delivery and installation of three hundred new litter and recycling bins along the coast and in town centres would be carried out in the next few months.

The refurbishment of Tynemouth Crematorium had also started which will see significantly improved facilities.

## **A Vibrant Borough**

The 2014 Mouth of the Tyne Festival saw the return of the street theatre programme and was regarded a success from the feedback residents and visitors. The cultural offering across the borough will continue with additional events organised at Christmas for town centres.

The main indoor facilities continue to be well used and aim to increase participation through the Sport England funded schemes for disability sport and hard to reach groups.

Work started on a £370,000 scheme to provide an all weather pitch, new car parking and other improvements to our sports facilities in Lockey Park, Wideopen.

Work continued with colleagues in the Public Health to launch Active North Tyneside with the aim to greater increase participation in Physical Activity by those individuals and those communities that need the most support.

## **Working with Businesses to Gain Employment Opportunities**

In February 2014 the Mayor wrote to over 2000 local businesses launching an Apprenticeship challenge. The campaign resulted in an additional 50 apprenticeships being created and 23 directly trained by the Council's training arm.

Increased joint working with key training providers such as Tyne Met College, Tyne North Training and Training Development Resource focussing on simplifying the North Tyneside offer to businesses was underway with providers sharing business contacts and supporting each other to increase the number of apprenticeships.

In last 6 months the Council had provided 17 Apprenticeship bursaries to local employers funded from external funding.

In March as part of the national Apprenticeship week the council hosted the Get Up and Go apprenticeship event that over 600 young people and their parents and 32 organisations attended and supported business workshops in their premises to promote apprenticeships.

The Council will continue to work with Inward Investors and our Strategic partners, including Kier, Capita and Cofely to increase the number of apprenticeships available locally. The Council was also working to encourage the creation of up to 30 new apprenticeship opportunities related to the construction sector.

Business growth, last year was the most successful ever for Cobalt Business Park, with 1,800 additional jobs and 80% occupied.

Quorum Business Park, the borough's other major office park, had similar growth with a series of high profile lettings.

Both office parks are making a major contribution to our success in attracting jobs and investment to the borough and accommodate 12,000 and 5,000 jobs respectively.

The Council has worked with the private sector and the Homes and Communities Agency in order to bring Indigo Park at Weetslade to market, providing one of the largest industrial and distribution facilities in the region.

North Tyneside's allocation of Local Growth Fund, part of a regional package secured by the Local Enterprise Partnership and local authorities amounted to a multi-million pound package that would benefit North Tyneside and the wider North East and included:

- £8m for the Swans site to infill the redundant wet berth to open up more space for development linked to the offshore and renewable energy sector.
- Funding of over £10m for key road schemes that will support the Borough's plans to attract investment and create jobs - including funding for the A19 Employment Corridor (Silverlink/ Cobalt) and the A1056-A189 Weetslade roundabout that will support Indigo Park.
- £1m to create a newly refurbished STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and Innovation Centre at Tyne Met College in partnership with the Council. It will provide a base to support vocational training for engineering and manufacturing industries.
- The Mayor then went on to future challenges and the changing organisational capacity.
- Corporate projects to be delivered as part of the Creating a Brighter Future Programme that will deliver the Council's priorities included:
  - Improving ICT systems and encouraging more digital innovation helping the Council to make services more accessible and providing services to residents when and where they are needed.
  - Improving commissioning, commercial capacity and procurement.

## **The Year Ahead**

During the year ahead the aim was;

- to see the completion of infrastructure on Swans, including road connections to the site, roads within the site, quay wall works, dredging of the riverbed and erection of the crane.
- construction work to begin on Spanish City.
- the reconstruction of Central Lower Promenade to start.
- continue work with NewRiver on the development of Wallsend Town Centre and develop plans for North Shields Town Centre.
- to develop a plan for the Coastal regeneration which would include the demolition of the former High Point Hotel and Avenue also finalise development plans for the sites and begin construction work.
- aim to build over 300 affordable home including Council houses.
- complete 111 apartments as part of the North Tyneside Living project.
- complete the development of the Local Plan.
- aim to appoint 50 new apprenticeships to the Council.
- continue to attract new businesses to our business parks and enable existing businesses to grow.
- finalise the plans for the Education Review for implementation in 2015 following public consultation.
- continue with the review of industrial estates and implement the recommendations of the review of depot rationalisation.
- see the introduction a new Council website allowing better communication with residents and businesses.

- see the implementation of the Single Front Door for both adults and children's social care.
- aim to increase the number of adoptions in the Borough.
- complete preparations for the implementation of the Care Act.
- complete the review of Independent Supported Living for people with Learning Disabilities.
- continue to support people affected by the Welfare Reform changes.
- establishing a Task Group to look at issues around anti-social behaviour in the borough which will involve partners, for example the Police, community groups and residents.
- deliver a wide cultural programme including a fantastic summer events programme and a range of Christmas Events throughout the Borough.
- develop proposals for financial year 2015/16 within the context of the Creating a Brighter Future Programme.
- play a full part in the Combined Authority.
- committed to working to shape future plans around the priorities that residents have stated are important to them.
- continues to put our residents first and to listen to their views about the Borough.

The Mayor thanked Councillors, her Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and all employees who were working extremely hard for all those in North Tyneside.

**Agreed** that the Mayors Annual Address be noted

### **OV13/09/14 Report of the Local Plan Sub-group: Review of the Council's Processes – Scaffold Hill Planning Application and Appeal**

Councillor J Allan (Sub-group Chair) presented the findings and recommendations of the Local Plan Sub-groups review of the Council's processes in relation to the Scaffold Hill Planning Application and Appeal.

The Committee was reminded that the decision to undertake the study had been taken following a Motion at Council on 14 March 2013 that asked for Overview & Scrutiny Committee to review why the Council withdrew the remaining reasons of refusal just prior to the opening of the planning inquiry.

It had been agreed that a report be produced by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the findings be submitted to Cabinet and then presented to Full Council for consideration and discussion.

The report detailed the work undertaken by the sub-group that included the consideration of background information on the planning application and appeal, discussion with the Council appointed highways consultant, Ward Councillor information & comments and meeting with resident members of the Holystone Action Group that campaigned against the development.

The sub-group acknowledged the number of actions that had been taken following the appeal to identify what went wrong and the preventative measures introduced to reduce future occurrences of this nature.

The sub-group viewed a demonstration of a new transport model that was under development that visually illustrated traffic flows and the possible impact from new developments.

The group made 5 recommendations and these were set out in the report.



Members raised the benefits of expanding the traffic flow modelling to show the cumulative impact of traffic movements throughout the Borough and the accessing of education and health facilities etc when applications of large scale developments are being considered.

It was also raised that children & young people were not regularly included in consultation exercises of this nature. It was thought that they should be included as the young people of the borough were the residents of the future and applications of this nature would have a direct effect on them.

The Committee decided that the recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet be amended to reflect the consultation of children & young people and modelling the cumulative traffic flow impact.

**Agreed** that (1) the relevant Cabinet Member monitors the impact of the revised systems that have been put in place in relation to traffic modelling to ensure they are effective in preventing future errors occurring;

(2) Officers, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, consider whether the transport model could be introduced as a visual aid at Planning Committee where it would assist Members of the Committee in understanding the traffic impacts of proposed large developments and aid the understanding of the possible cumulative impact any such developments would have on local amenities such as accessing education and health facilities in the borough;

(3) the relevant Cabinet Member explore with officers whether the transport model could be made available to developers on a fee basis as part of the planning application process;

(4) Cabinet review the Council's consultation policy, particularly in relation to planning matters, and ensure that processes are transparent and that wider consultation is undertaken to include children & young people in addition to residents to have real input into the process and to observe that their contributions are being respected; and

(5) the recommendations are implemented within the next 6 months.