

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

3 April 2017

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, B Burdis, S Cox, N Craven,
S Day, P Earley, Janet Hunter, P Mason,
A McMullen and M Rankin

Church Representative
Mr G O'Hanlon

Also in attendance
Councillor B Pickard

OV57/04/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Austin, C Johnson, J O'Shea and J Wallace.

Mrs M Ord – Parent Governor Representative,
Rev M Vine – Church Representative

OV58/04/17 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute Member was reported:-
Councillor P Mason for Councillor J Wallace

OV59/04/17 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Janet Hunter declared a non- registerable personal interest in item 13 Freedom of the Borough – Nomination (Minute OV69/04/17), as she was related to a nominee and stated she would leave the Chamber.

OV60/04/17 Minutes

Resolved that minute of the meeting held on 6 February 2017 be confirmed;

OV61/04/17 Creating a Brighter Future progress update

The Committee received a report that identified what had been delivered through the 2016/17 Creating a Brighter Future Programme.

The four key areas of progress were:

- Implementation of new locality-based teams to support children and young people aged 0-19, bringing together a range of partners to provide more effective early help and support

- Development of new service delivery models to support adults with learning disabilities to maintain their independence and wellbeing, whilst also reducing demand for costly services
- Significant progress was made to deliver key regeneration initiatives, including construction commencing on the High Point site in Whitley Bay and progress on restoring the Dome to its former glory
- Invested in new technical capability and mobilization of the Customer Journey programme to support the authority's Target Operating Model and increase opportunities for self-service

The Committee were also informed that there were 4 areas of financial risk in the programme these being:

BC09: Commissioning Value for Money Adult Social Care Services

This business case had a financial shortfall of £1.5m in savings within the 2016/17 financial year. This was due to a delay in the completion of some assessments, increasing demographic pressures and increased costs that related to the introduction of the National Living Wage. Work would continue in the new financial years where there was expectation that full realisation of savings would be achieved.

BC11: Looked after Children Services

Delivering services to Looked After Children (LAC) continued to be a challenging due to fluctuations in the number of cases that come forward and the complexity of the needs for the children involved. This continued to present a financial pressure on the services although there had been a reduction in the number of looked after children throughout the year.

BC01: Citizen Interaction & Delivery of Services

This business case had seen a shortfall in savings of £0.9m in the current year and this was due to the delay in the introduction of the Office 365 collaboration platform. The platform was now being implemented and the savings requirement of this business case had been factored into 2017/18 target. These would be met through identified staffing, service redesign through self service technology and the collaboration tooling.

BC09: Commissioning Value for Money Adult Social Care Services

There was an expected delay in the completion of some individual review packages for the care of adults with learning disabilities assessments and the realisation of the savings in the financial year ending March 2017, however, this would continue into the new financial year.

Negotiations were on going with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with regards to the Continuing Healthcare Checklist (CHC) assessment work that the authority had been undertaking on their behalf.

Services experienced continuing financial pressures through increasing demographic pressures and the increased costs relating to the introduction of the National Living Wage.

Agreed that the Creating a Brighter Future progress update be noted.

OV62/04/17 Our North Tyneside Performance report

The Committee received the second report which updated the progress that has been made to deliver the aims and objectives of the Our North Tyneside Plan.

The Committee was provided performance information to the three main themes:

Our People

This theme set out a range of outcomes in relation to ensuring that the people in North Tyneside are: ready for school; ready for work and life and, cared for safeguarded and healthy.

Latest performance figures showed

For the fourth year in a row, there was an increase of almost 20% in the number of children who had reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, compared to 2012/13. In addition, there has been an improvement in the attainment gap between the least and most affluent parts of the Borough.

It was highlighted that there still remained a gap in attainment at this stage between girls and boys and this would be the future focus for schools and the School Improvement Service.

In terms of young people ready for work and life, there was an increase in the number of people achieving a A*-C grade at Key Stage 4 (GCSE) and a reduction in the gender gap for attainment at this level.

A Member questioned if there was any available data in respect of the gender gap and attainment into STEM subjects. In response it was stated that this would be investigated and any information would be circulated to Members.

With regard to the skills needed to access jobs available. A total of 6% of businesses reported a problem recruiting due to a skills shortage. In January 2017, Cabinet agreed a strategic approach on employment and skills and the new approach would include activities that are focused on reducing this skills gap

Our Places

This theme set out that our places will be great places to live, and attract others to visit or work in North Tyneside. To offer a good choice of housing, provide a clean,

green and safe environment as well as having an effective transport and physical infrastructure.

The latest performance figures indicated that the percentage of North Tyneside primary and secondary schools that were rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted remained above the national average. The Authority was ranked in the top 10% of the national figures for local authorities. In addition, in North Tyneside 9 in 10 pupils obtained their first choice of primary and secondary school which was in the top 10% nationally.

In terms of being a great place to work there continued to be an increase in the number of active enterprises in North Tyneside, with an additional 250 companies operating this year compared to last. This amounted to 4,370 enterprises operating in North Tyneside.

With regards to business survival, the latest figures indicated that over 90% of businesses are still operating twelve months after starting.

With regard to a great place to visit Visitor satisfaction was extremely high with 95% of visitors stating that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied' with their visit.

Visitors (100%) rated the cleanliness of beaches as either 'very good' or 'good.' This reflected the three North Tyneside beaches retained their Blue Flag Awards, the international award for beach quality. In addition, these beaches (Tynemouth Longsands, King Edwards Bay and Whitley Bay Beaches) as well as Cullercoats Bay also retained Seaside Awards.

It was questioned to the number of parks in the Borough that had green flag status and which authority parks had and which did not have this status. In response it was stated that the large authority parks held the green flag status, however, there were a number of smaller parks that did not and these would be forwarded to members for their information.

Our Economy

This theme builds on growing the existing world-class companies, small and growing businesses by having the right skills and conditions to support investment, and create and sustain new, good-quality jobs and apprenticeships for working-age people.

The latest performance figures showed that 91.4% of North Tyneside businesses were still in operation after one year, which was higher than the Tyne and Wear average.

A Member questioned to the number of businesses that had failed in the last year. In response it was stated that there was no data available to the number of failed businesses.

It was questioned and stated that the majority of the increase of the 250 new businesses in year had only one employee.

North Tyneside business survival rates out performed the Tyne and Wear average as set out below

- 73.9% of North Tyneside businesses are still operating after two years
- 59.8% of North Tyneside businesses are still operating after three years
- 49.6% of North Tyneside businesses are still operating after four years
- 43.3% of North Tyneside businesses are still operating after five years.

The borough had been very successful in attracting inward investment to create new jobs in recent years, with the increase in business start ups and the high numbers of businesses surviving the number of jobs in North Tyneside were 80,400 jobs, which was an increase of over 10,000 since 2013.

With regards to ensuring that young people had the right high level skills and qualifications to progress and succeed in the jobs market, the latest performance was strong with 88% of young people progressing to Key Stage 5 (A level).

In addition, 2610 people started an Apprenticeship in the past year and the number of apprenticeships on offer across the Borough was expected to increase further with the introduction of the Government's Apprenticeship Levy.

Agreed that the Our North Tyneside Performance report be noted.

OV63/04/17 Wallsend Customer First Centre – Update

The Committee had received an update report and a further addendum was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Committee was informed the reasons why no officer was in attendance, however it expressed its disappointment that there was no one available to respond to its questions.

It therefore asked for a full clear report to answer the following areas:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a number of reports in since 2014 where it had reviewed and questioned arrangement that were to be put in place in respect to the Wallsend Customer First Centre WCFC.

The Committee's primary concerns in early 2014 were expressed at the rental value for the centre. At this time the committee had been informed that the 2nd floor of the building would be available to be sublet and rental figures were provided.

In subsequent updates, the committee was informed that to sublet the 2nd floor would require further negotiation with the new freeholder to gain permission.

The Committee therefore requested that the report should detail who negotiated and was responsible to finalise the signed off the original lease.

With regards to the report the Committee received on the 3 April and in particular to paragraph 3.2.

The Committee's understanding was that the Council agreed a lease with New River Retail (NRR). It heard that this lease was subsequently sold to an investment company and that lease does not allow sub letting of the 2nd floor of the building.

The report stated that 'NRR have said they would work with the Council to encourage the investment company to release the clause'. The Committee questioned why NRR would be involved with any further negotiation with the lease holder.

The Committee requested that officers arrange to meet with the Chair/Deputy Chair of Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee to clarify the position in respect to the information provided in the addendum report (received on the 3 April) and to agree all outstanding issues and the responses required for the meeting scheduled for the 5th June 2017.

Agreed that (1) the Committee receives a detailed report to its next meeting on the 5 June 2017; and (2) the Chair/Deputy Chair and committee members meet with officers prior to the meeting of 5 June 2017 to clarify the position in respect to the information provided in the addendum report (received on the 3 April) and to agree all of the outstanding issues to be reported.

OV64/04/17 Process of implementation of new parking waiting restrictions

The Committee had requested and received a report that detailed the current procedure for the introduction of new waiting restrictions on the highways across the borough.

Officers presented the methods and process of receiving requests for waiting restrictions with the associated timescales before they could be implemented.

The Committee was informed that once a scheme had been identified for implementation the overall process would generally take 24-36 months.

To highlight the process, the implementation of a recent no waiting scheme was provided as an example.

Officers explained that the Local Transport Plan was grant funded from Central Government and it was this fund that financed work to public rights of way and parking schemes.

It was questioned if more enforcement officers were needed to fine drivers who breach restrictions. In response it was stated that the majority of drivers did adhere to the restrictions in place. It had also been proven that better outcomes were realised when good consultation was undertaken with those who are requesting further restrictions to gain a clear understanding of the issues.

A member stated that it was their belief that the process that had been demonstrated could be streamlined to reduce the timing for implementation of schemes. Officers stated that there were alternatives being investigated and there was a suggestion of using a pro forma that would require specific information to be supplied before a scheme would be considered.

Members agreed that before a scheme was to be considered all relevant information and evidence should be provided.

A Member asked to the number of waiting restrictions schemes in the borough that were not supported by the required order in place. It was stated that all waiting restrictions should have the necessary orders in place.

The Chair thanked the officers for the information received and stated that this element of work would be further considered by the Committees Capita Partnership Sub group that was to be established.

Agreed that the process of implementation of new parking waiting restrictions be noted.

OV65/04/17 Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Annual Scrutiny Report

The Committee received the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Annual Report 2016/17.

The report highlighted the role that scrutiny had in policy development and outlined various pieces of work undertaken by Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees during 2016/17 municipal year.

Agreed that the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Annual Report be submitted to Annual Council on 18 May 2017.

OV66/04/17 Report of the Business Support Sub Group

The Committee received and considered a report produced by the Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee's Business Support Sub Group, with the remit to:

- a) examine the range of support available to start up businesses;
- b) examine the sustainability of new businesses in their 3rd and 4th years;
- c) consider whether providing extended and enhanced support for businesses in their 3rd and 4th years would reduce the likelihood of businesses failing and consequently have a positive impact on the local economy; and
- d) formulate recommendations as to how existing support might be enhanced or how additional services might be developed to improve the success rate of start up businesses. Any recommendations to be supported with an assessment of the financial implications.

Agreed that the Business Support Sub-group report and recommendations listed be referred to Cabinet for consideration:-

R1: The Cabinet request the Council's Business and Enterprise Team to signpost SME's to the Growth Hub, record and analyse substantive interactions between the Council and SME's and review the LEP's list of scale up businesses to identify any unknown businesses requiring support.

R2: The Cabinet should seek to maintain the Council's investment in the provision of business support for start up businesses through programmes such as the work currently delivered through the Business Factory.

R3: The Cabinet, through its risk management processes, continue to monitor the likely impact of Brexit on European funding for business support and take appropriate action to mitigate against the risk of funding for business support programmes delivered in North Tyneside being withdrawn and not replaced by alternative funding from the UK Government.

R4: The Elected Mayor and Cabinet Members, in conjunction with local Members of Parliament, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and the local business community, take every opportunity to lobby the Government for continuing investment to replace the European funded business support programmes following the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

R5: The Cabinet give consideration to ways in which the Council can enhance access to finance by micro and small businesses in North Tyneside, including the possible use of revolving funds and the promotion of crowd funding schemes.

R6: Cabinet ask officers to undertake an evaluation of the levels and nature of demand among SMEs for commercial property in North Tyneside to determine whether there is evidence of a significant shortfall in small and medium sized industrial units or office space.

R7: If the evaluation shows substantial unmet demand, Cabinet give consideration to investing in the refurbishment of surplus property to provide more small incubator units and the provision of small and medium industrial units aimed at start up and growing businesses.

R8: The Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee monitor the detailed proposals to emerge from the Government in relation to the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme and consider undertaking an in-depth investigation to consider its impact on the future shape of business support services.

R9: The Cabinet ask the Heads of Finance and Business and Economic Development to consider the possibility of incorporating promotional material relating to the Business Factory and other business support services with business rate bills.

R10: In reviewing the Council's procurement strategy, the Cabinet give further consideration to how trade with local small businesses might continue to be encouraged by measures such as:

- a) simplifying the processes through which companies are required to quote or tender for the supply of goods and services to the Council;
- b) providing further training and support for local businesses on how to quote or tender for the supply of goods and services to the Council; and

c) reviewing and refining how social value is evaluated within procurement exercises so that the process derives economic benefits for the people and communities of North Tyneside.

R11: Cabinet to ask the Head of Business and Economic Development to work with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure those officers who work to support business have a good understanding of what support is available.

R12: The Cabinet work with the North Tyneside Business Forum to develop and strengthen business to business networks and peer support in North Tyneside.

OV67/04/17 Report of the Elective Home Education Sub Group

The Committee received and considered a report produced by the Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee's Elective Home Education (EHE) Sub Group.

The EHE sub group was established due to the concern of the lack of powers held by the local authority to check the quality of education provided to those children outside of the school setting.

The key areas the sub group reviewed were:

- What are the key motivations for parents wanting to home educate their parents?
- Is the increased demand on school places impacting on the number of parents that choose to home school?
- Do parents feel supported by the local authority in their choice? Do they require additional assistance?
- Should the government be lobbied to change the law to permit local authorities access to elective home educated children?
- To advise the officer team on the authorities policy statement on home education and what networks could be established to reassure Members that all children being home educated were known about.

The sub group consulted with officers and some elective home educating parents. The recommendations made were to try and change the powers of local authorities in relation to accessing electively home educated children and also to make some small changes to the way the authority currently engages with parents to provide more efficient and effective support.

Agreed that the (1) Elective Home Education (EHE) Sub-group report and recommendations listed be referred to Cabinet for consideration:-

R1: The Mayor write to the Minister for Education asking for a change to the law which would give local authorities guaranteed access to children being home educated and provide a clear definition of a 'suitable' and 'efficient' education, along with some minimum educational standards and also encourages other Leaders, Elected Mayors and Executive Members for Education at other Local Authorities to do the same.

R2: Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to establish a 'notice board' page on the relevant section of the Council's website to allow parents to share advice and tips in relation to elective home education.

R3: Officers in the Attendance and Placement Team liaise with schools to explore the possibility of offering, for a small cost, surplus text books and equipment to electively home educating parents.

R4: Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to review (and establish a continuous review process) all forms of written correspondence with parents electively home educating to ensure that material is clear, jargon free and demonstrates mutual respect.

R5: Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to review the consultation processes currently in place, with a view to increasing the feedback the authority gets from electively home educating parents.

R6: Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to arrange for information on inoculations to be sent to all electively home educating parents on an annual basis.

R7: Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to liaise with colleagues in Public Health to ensure that all public health messages sent out via schools are also circulated to families that are home educating.

R8: Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to write to all schools in the borough to establish whether a buddying system is already in place and if not to enquire if schools would consider such a system in future especially in circumstances of home educated young people returning to school.

And (2) refer the matter of Elective Home Education to the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee and ask them to consider recommending that the Chair of the North East Leadership Board also writes to the Minister for Education asking for a change to the law which would give local authorities guaranteed access to children being home educated and provide a clear definition of a 'suitable' and 'efficient' education, along with some minimum educational standards.

OV68/04/17 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

OV69/04/17 Freedom of the Borough - Nomination

The Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development 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 any nomination submitted and recommend a maximum of two to Annual Council on 18 May 2017 for final consideration.

Any nomination 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 nomination recommended for the award of the Freedom of the Borough be submitted to Annual Council on 18 May 2017 for final consideration.