



**North Tyneside Council**

# Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

24 March 2017

**Monday 3 April 2017** Room 0.02, Ground Floor, Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside **commencing at 6.00 pm**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>2. Appointment of Substitute Members</b>	
To receive a report on the appointment of Substitute Members.	
<b>3. Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted</b>	
You are invited to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.	
You are also invited to disclose any dispensation in relation to any registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.	
You are also requested to complete the Declarations of Interests card available at the meeting and return it to the Democratic Services Officer before leaving the meeting.	
<b>4 Minutes</b>	<b>4</b>
To confirm the minutes of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee meeting held on 16 February 2017.	

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and receive information about it. North Tyneside Council wants to make it easier for you to get hold of the information you need. We are able to provide our documents in alternative formats including Braille, audiotape, large print and alternative languages.

5	<b>Creating a Brighter Future progress update</b>	8
	To receive and monitor progress of the Creating a Brighter Future programme.	
6	<b>Our North Tyneside Performance report</b>	28
	To receive an update on the progress that has been made to deliver the aims and objectives of the Our North Tyneside plan.	
7	<b>Wallsend Customer First Centre – Update</b>	41
	To receive an update position of the work to sub-let the top floor of the centre to a third party	
8	<b>Process for implementation of new parking waiting restrictions</b>	43
	To receive a report that details the current procedure for introducing new waiting restrictions on the highway across the borough.	
9	<b>Overview, Scrutiny &amp; Policy Development Committee Annual Report</b>	51
	To consider the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Annual Report for 2016/17.	
10	<b>Report of the Business Support Sub-group</b>	62
	To consider the findings and recommendations of the sub-group on its scrutiny of Business Support.	
11	<b>Report of the Elective Home Education Sub-group</b>	77
	To consider the findings and recommendations of the sub-group on its scrutiny of Elective Home Education	
12	<b>Exclusion Resolution</b>	
	The Committee will be requested to pass the following 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 2 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 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.	
13	<b>Freedom of the Borough- Nomination</b>	88
	To consider nominations submitted and recommend to Annual Council on 18 May 2017 for final consideration.	

## **Members of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee**

Councillor Jim Allan (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Alison Austin  
Councillor Brian Burdis  
Councillor Steve Cox  
Councillor Naomi Craven  
Councillor S Day  
Councillor P Earley  
Councillor S Graham (Chair)

Councillor Janet Hunter  
Councillor Carl Johnson  
Councillor Anthony McMullen  
Councillor Tommy Mulvenna  
Councillor John O'Shea  
Councillor Martin Rankin  
Councillor Judith Wallace

Church Representatives  
Rev. Michael Vine  
Mr Gerry O'Hanlon

School Governor Representatives  
Mrs Michelle Ord  
Vacant

# Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**6 February 2017**

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)  
Councillors A Austin, B Burdis, S Cox, N Craven,  
S Day, P Earley, Janet Hunter, A McMullen, J O'Shea,  
M Rankin and J Wallace

## **OV51/02/17 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan and T Mulvenna  
Mrs M Ord – Parent Governor Representative,

## **OV52/02/17 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members

## **OV53/02/17 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported

## **OV53/02/17 Minutes**

**Resolved** that minute of the meeting held on 10 January 2017 be confirmed;

## **OV54/02/17 Office Accommodation Review - Update**

The Committee received a report that provided an update to the rationalisation of the operational estate of the Authority since the last update in September 2016. The Committee was reminded that the agile Working and Office Accommodation project was a commitment by its partner Capita to deliver property savings for the Authority.

Members requested that information be provided to all ongoing costs and rates for all buildings listed in the update to allow them to have a clear understanding of the financial position.

### **Camden House**

The Committee was reminded that at the September 2016 meeting it was informed that there was renewed commercial interest in subletting of this building.

It was questioned and confirmed that the Authority was able to sublet the building.

### **Meadow Well Centre**

The sale for this building to the Cedar Trust was complete.

6 February 2017

## **The Cedars**

The building was vacated in December 2016, with options of its future use to be considered by the Strategic Property Group in February 2017.

## **Howdon Community Centre**

The Committee heard that a team from Family Gateway were accommodated in this building, initially for a one year period whilst the Authority explored compatibilities and work approaches for a range of clients in Howdon.

## **Wallsend Customer First Centre**

The Committee was reminded that a report in relation to the position of the Wallsend Customer First Centre was programmed to be received in the spring.

## **Shiremoor Centre**

It heard that there had been a swapping of facilities with a phased relocation of the Moorbridge School to the Shiremoor Centre with the North Tyneside Disability Forum (NTDF) moving into the existing Moorbridge building. It was the expectation that all moves would be completed during the Easter holiday period. It was also stated that activities currently available in the Shiremoor Centre would continue for community groups in the evenings and holidays.

A Member asked to provide assurance to community groups that written agreements be drafted to ensure the arrangements to use the building would continue..

## **Quadrant Campus**

It heard that agreement had been made to have a phased subletting of the Quadrant West building and arrangements were in place for the first floor to be occupied by the end of January 2017. The benefit of the sublet would reduce the accommodation cost to the Authority.

Work had been progressing to ensure to staff were accommodated in the Quadrant East building, in other localities and to increase the use of agile working methods. It was commented that the Wallsend Customer First Centre vacant accommodation could be used utilised.

## **Irving House**

The Authority's commitment to the lease for this building was terminated in December 2016.

## **Depot Solution**

The Committee heard that the Authority was now committed to a new build depot solution and the report detailed the current indicative milestones for the project.

## **Community Hub Model**

The Community Hub Model offers a number of services via a reduced number of outlets. It heard that a project group had been set up to define what the customer offer would be in the hubs.

The report stated that a workshop session with staff across the service areas had taken place and resulted in receipt of positive feedback.

The Committee requested this feedback information relating to the staff workshop sessions. It was stated that a Managers update report was produced and would be circulated to Members.

In addition officers offered further information that would be circulated to the committee in relation to work that had been undertaken through the accommodation review project, these being;

- Strategic Property Group bi-annual report and
- Information to the actions taken for the number of buildings within the Hub & Spoke Model

**Agreed** that (1) the Office Accommodation Review – Update be noted; and (2) the requested information throughout the meeting be circulated to Members of the Committee.

## **OV55/02/17 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in North Tyneside – Cabinets Response**

The Committee received the response report from Cabinet to the recommendations submitted by the sub group of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee in relation to its study into Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in North Tyneside.

Appended to the report was the action to be taken and timescale for completion of each of the recommendations.

**Agreed** that the recommendation response from Cabinet in relation to the work of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee its study into the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in North Tyneside be noted;

## **OV56/02/17 Bereavement Services Sub-group report – Cabinets Response**

The Committee received the response report from Cabinet to the recommendations submitted by the sub group of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee in relation to its study into the Bereavement Service.

Appended to the report was the action to be taken and timescale for completion of each of the recommendations.

A Member questioned Cabinets response to recommendation 8 which related to assessment of potential risk to officers and the provision of personal alarms.

It sought assurance that assessments had taken place immediately and asked that the Committee be informed to the outcome of the assessment and to what safeguards if any had been implemented.

**Agreed** that (1) the recommendation response from Cabinet in relation to the work of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee its study into the Bereavement Service be noted; and  
(2) that the Committee be updated to the outcome of the officer risk assessment as detailed at recommendation 8 of the action plan.

## **Meeting:** Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**Date:** Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April

**Title:** Creating a Brighter Future Programme: 2016/17 Summary Report

**Author:** Lisa Clark

Tel: 0191 643 7760

**Service:** Commercial Services & Business Redesign

**Wards affected:** All

### **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee with an update and overview of the Council's progress towards delivering the Creating a Brighter Future programme, particularly through the key business cases in 2016/17. The report will be accompanied by a presentation delivered to the committee which highlights the key areas of progress in the programme.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to note the positive progress made to delivering the CBF outcomes through 2016/17, particularly through the implementation of business cases. The Committee is also recommended to note the work outlined in the Efficiency Statement, which will be delivered in 2017/18.

### **3. Details**

Throughout 2016/17, the authority has implemented significant change to support delivery of its Creating a Brighter Future programme and its four key priority outcomes:

- Ready for School
- Ready for Work and Life
- Cared for, Safeguarded and Healthy
- Great Place to Live, Work Visit

Cabinet agreed 12 business cases on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015, subsequently agreed by Council, to progress delivery of these outcomes, whilst delivering required savings to balance the budget.

For each theme and each business case, this summary report identifies what has been delivered through 2016/17, any issues that remain outstanding, and plans for the next year of the CBF programme.

In summary, key areas of progress throughout 2016/17 include:

- 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 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 Mayor and Cabinet, and subsequently Council, agreed the authority's Efficiency Statement which was submitted to government in November 2016. This sets out the key projects and activities that will be delivered over the next three years to continue to deliver the CBF programme whilst delivering financial savings required to manage resource reductions and increased demographic pressures. Work is already underway to deliver these projects in 2017/18 and regular progress updates will continue to be provided to this committee.

#### **4. Background Information**

The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report:

- CBF Programme 2016/17 Summary Report (attached)

# Creating a Brighter Future Programme

2016/17  
Summary Report



**North Tyneside Council**

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# Executive Summary

Throughout 2016/17, the authority has implemented significant change to support delivery of its Creating a Brighter Future programme and its four key priority outcomes:

- Ready for School
- Ready for Work and Life
- Cared for, Safeguarded and Healthy
- Great Place to Live, Work Visit

Cabinet agreed 12 business cases on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015, subsequently agreed by Council, to progress delivery of these outcomes, whilst delivering required savings to balance the budget.

For each theme and each business case, this summary report identifies what has been delivered through 2016/17, any issues that remain outstanding, and plans for the next year of the CBF programme.

Against a backdrop of increasing external pressures, such as rising demand for services, financial challenges in the NHS, and cost rises associated with government policy (for example, the National Living Wage), significant achievements have been made in the past year.

In summary, key areas of progress throughout 2016/17 include:

- 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 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 Mayor and Cabinet, and subsequently full Council, agreed the authority's Efficiency Statement in November 2016, which was submitted to government. This sets out a range of projects aligned to the CBF priority outcomes which will be the focus for the coming three years. In the majority of cases, this represents the next stage of the delivery of business cases outlined in this report. These are referenced under the 'what next' section for each business case in this report.

*Note: This report contains information that is accurate at the point of writing, which is mid-March 2017. For some business cases, the final year-end position with regards to delivery of savings cannot be confirmed until the final accounts are signed off. This is highlighted in the relevant section, where appropriate.*

## Ready for School

The majority of young people in North Tyneside are ready for school; they have had the right support to be ready to learn and to spend time with others. However, some of our young people have a tougher start in life.

Our aim is to redesign our services and focus the £15million we spend in this area in a targeted way to make sure that more of those who are most vulnerable are ready for school. We know that will ensure they have better life chances and we also know they are less likely to require support and intervention from public services in the long term.

We have worked with the range of people involved with North Tyneside's very young people and their families to develop an entitlement for each young person. We will use that to redesign our services and to check that we are giving those young people the best possible start in life.

### 2016/17 Business Cases

- BC06a – Community Provision of Family Services (Nurseries) - £102,000
- BC06b – Community Provision of Family Services (0-19 Services) - £953,000
- BC07 – Support for Schools - £175,000

## **BC06a: Community Provision of Family Services (£102,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

In line with legislation set out in the Childcare Act 2006, we undertook a review of local authority-maintained childcare. The legislation makes clear that the authority must ensure there is sufficient childcare provision to meet need, and is the commissioner of such provision - only becoming the provider as a last resort.

We consulted on changes to the childcare offer in Wallsend, Shiremoor, Battle Hill and Denbigh. As a result, the authority withdrew its directly provided childcare provision and supported parents to access the diverse range of childcare provision already available within those areas.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and all savings have been delivered.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to 'Continue to redesign 0-19 services'. The authority has recently consulted with parents and carers regarding the model of delivery for Oaktrees and Riverside nurseries and this will inform implementation plans for 2017/18.

## **BC06b: Community Provision of Family Services (£953,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

This project involved a fundamental review of all services that the authority and its key partners provided to support children and young people aged 0-19.

As a result, we have designed and implemented new 0-19 locality teams. The teams bring together a range of staff and agencies to deliver a 'whole family working' approach, supported by staff with specialist knowledge around, for example, mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence, and child health.

The locality model is integral to the delivery of our preventative commitment and is also expected to deliver positive outcomes for higher demand services such as for looked after children.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and all savings have been delivered. A small projected shortfall in savings had been reported earlier in the financial year; however, effective work to manage this pressure has mitigated this risk.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to 'Continue to redesign 0-19 services'. The authority is in the process of transferring School Nurses and Health Visitors into the employment of the Council from the NHS Foundation Trust. These staff will be a key element of the new 0-19 locality teams.

## **BC07: Support to Schools (£175,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have reviewed staffing functions relating to services that provide support to school. Through a re-alignment of management responsibilities and deletion of posts that have become vacant through the year, we have been able to deliver the required savings.

Recent performance analysis demonstrates the quality of schools in the borough, with 96% of primary/first schools judged as Good or Outstanding (top 10% in the country) and a continued increase in the same measure for secondary schools (81%) placing North Tyneside in the second quartile in the country.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and all savings have been delivered.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to 'Remodel and trade our services to schools'. We are reviewing all services we provide to schools to ensure they are as efficient and effective as possible, and we are maximising the income we can generate from providing these services to schools and other partners.

## Ready for Work and Life

The majority of young people and adults are ready for work. The people of North Tyneside make a remarkable contribution to the economy of the North East and the nation. Many are employed in nationally and internationally significant organisations. However, too many are not in work, in part time work or are underemployed in jobs unsuitable for their skills level. In addition some of our important strategic businesses are struggling to find the right people with the right skills. We, therefore, plan to spend the £175million the Council commits to this work in a way that prioritises those who find it most difficult to get ready for work and to match our talented people to our businesses.

We know that high quality employment is the key difference in making sure families are protected from poverty. We also know that young people and adults who are ready for work and find the right employment suited to their skill set, have significantly improved life chances as well as a much-reduced need for public services.

We have, therefore, worked with the range of people involved with North Tyneside's economy to develop an entitlement for each young person, or adult seeking employment. We will use that to redesign our services and to check that we are giving those people the best chance of being ready for work.

## 2016/17 Business Cases

- BC12 – Supporting Young People and Adults into Employment – £250,000



## **BC12: Supporting Young People and Adults into Employment (£250,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

An important aspect of the sustainability of these services is the securing of ongoing income from external sources, reducing the dependency on council funding. We have secured additional external income of approximately £100,000 from a number of sources through 2016/17.

We have also managed staffing budgets and deleted posts vacated by staff leaving the authority.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and full savings and income generation have been delivered.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to 'Deliver the Employment and Skills Strategy'. The Mayor and Cabinet agreed the new Employment and Skills Strategy in February 2017. Work is ongoing to re-shape the staffing model we have in support of this.

## Cared For, Safeguarded & Healthy

This is a significant part of Our North Tyneside Plan and the priority placed on Our People. Benchmarking and peer review suggests that North Tyneside has strong services in this area and that the £108million associated with this work is well spent. However, these services also have the highest individual impact and risk. And our adult, children's and public health services are all operating in an environment of national policy change and rising demand.

Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board, commits partners to a strong set of priorities. Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment continues to shape our commissioning intentions. Our Integration Programme has developed better shared working. However, we are also required to take account of the Care Act and national changes in social care as well as the creation of the Better Care Fund.

### 2016/17 Business Cases

- BC03 – Creation of Wellbeing Services - £941,000
- BC04 – Single Front Door & Supporting Gateways - £926,000
- BC09 – Commissioning VfM Adults Social Care Services - £3,700,000
- BC10 – Effective Housing Solutions - £650,000
- BC11 – Looked after Children Services - £886,000

## **BC03: Creation of Wellbeing Services (£941,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have renegotiated and re-shaped contracts for externally delivered public health services to meet key priority outcomes. Internal delivery of services through Sport and Leisure is now well embedded through the Active North Tyneside programme and is ensuring delivery of public health outcomes.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project in 2016/17 is complete and all savings have been delivered.

### **What next?**

The focus continues to be on maximising the use of our Leisure Centres and our workforce to deliver a high-quality leisure and wellbeing service that improves health outcomes and reduces inequalities across the borough.

## **BC04: Single Front Door and Supporting Gateways (£926,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

There were a number of elements to this project, which have all been delivered.

We reviewed our staffing model for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and created an Integrated Disability Team. This created staffing efficiencies in the respective teams that have been brought together. We also reviewed and remodelled our Reablement Support Team, with the new model affording greater flexibility to meet changing demands on the service.

Alongside these changes, we have also taken the opportunity to review the administrative support to these and other teams across the service, as well as the staff subsistence policy. This has generated additional efficiency savings.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; a shortfall in delivery of some of the staffing savings had been projected earlier in the financial year; however, effective vacancy management and an acceleration of the reablement support team restructure has addressed this potential issue.

### **What next?**

We have reviewed our model for Adult Social Care and developed proposals for a re-engineered customer pathway, in line with the proposed work in the Efficiency Statement. This is focused on developing a range of new online tools to enable people to help themselves, increasing support within the community, and developing new locality-based teams to help individuals who require care and support.

## **BC09: Commissioning Value for Money Adult Social Care Services (£3,700,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

There are a range of elements to this project.

We have implemented a revised approach to the commissioning of Independent Supported Living (ISL) services and have applied this through a schedule of care package reviews and by working with care providers to ensure appropriate application of the policy.

We have developed a new ISL service at Emery Court, Dudley (operational since June 2016) to provide additional community-based provision to support better outcomes for individuals and reduce demand on residential care.

We have de-commissioned two high cost services delivered by the Council and re-commissioned these from an external provider. The transfer and transition processes for both Wilson Terrace and Glebe Villas is complete, with external providers operational.

We have also reviewed packages of care for clients who are receiving commissioned day care and support with transport, to ensure they are in line with our policy of promoting independence, wellbeing and progression.

We reached agreement with the CCG to undertake the role of CHC assessment on their behalf. Work is continuing to review all clients that receive Continuing Healthcare to ensure that the package of care is most appropriately meeting their needs. We also continue to review the rates paid for this care, to ensure we are maximising value for money for the Council and CCG.

We have also re-aligned funding costs for drug and alcohol services between Adult Social Care and Public Health.

### **Any outstanding issues**

Progress on individual reviews of packages of care for adults with learning disabilities continues, although there is expected to be a delay in the completion of some assessments and the full realisation of savings within this financial year. This work will continue into the new financial year.

Negotiations have been ongoing with the CCG regarding the CHC assessment work that the authority has been undertaking on their behalf.

Increasing demographic pressures and increased costs relating to the introduction of the National Living Wage continue to place financial pressures on these services.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to ensure we are providing 'Value for Money Tested Social Care'. We will conduct reviews of our home care and extra care models to ensure we are maximising value for money and supporting our demand management strategy.

## **BC10: Effective Housing Solutions (£650,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have reviewed our Shared Lives service, which provides an effective alternative to residential care (similar to Fostering) for adults with a learning disability. A recruitment and advertising campaign to attract carers has been successful in recruiting 5 additional carers to provide family settings for care, and we have matched an additional 9 service users to shared lives carers, reducing costs to the authority.

We have also been able to deliver some small staffing efficiencies through effective vacancy management.

The other key element of this business case was a review and remodel of our housing-related support services, which support a range of client groups including people with learning disabilities, mental health, and young people at risk. The review of provision recommended a consolidation of multiple contracts into two: an over 25 service and an under 25 service, which was agreed by Cabinet on 14 March 2016.

The over 25 service contract has been awarded and the service is operational. The contract for the under 25 service was not awarded following evaluation of tenders and the existing service contracts were extended to ensure no disruption to provision.

### **Any outstanding issues**

Options for the delivery of under 25 service provision are under consideration as part of the wider review and development of 'A New Model to Support Children', as described in the Efficiency Statement.

Full savings have been realised from this business case, as savings have been delivered from existing contracts.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to develop 'A new model to support children'. A key element of this work is ensuring that we have sufficient, high quality accommodation options for care leavers, as well as more effective (in terms of quality and cost) housing solutions for those in our care. This is closely linked to the project to 'Develop specialist housing products and services', which is also focused on developing new adult social care housing solutions, such as additional extra care and independent supported living schemes.

## **BC11: Looked after Children Services (£886,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have introduced a new team which works with children and young people who are on the 'edge of care', providing intensive support and respite to enable them to return to their home, rather than needing to become 'looked after'.

We have introduced a campaign to attract more specialist foster carers – recruiting an additional three throughout the year - to support our strategy of reducing the need for the most costly out of borough placements.

We have also:

- Strengthened the capacity of the Safeguarding and Placements Service
- Improved our targeting of 0-1 and 15+ year olds for early help support
- Increased the availability and use of permanency solutions at home.
- improved the skill mix available in teams, through additional Family Support Workers
- Extended the remit of the LAC Team from 0-16 years to 0-18 years
- Re-focused the work of the Leaving Care Team on 18-25 year olds

We have also reduced expenditure on legal fees for care proceedings and delivered savings in the cost of the management structure.

### **Any outstanding issues**

Throughout the year, we have seen a reduction in the number of looked after children; however, this continues to fluctuate and presents a financial pressure on the service, particularly with a changing mix of placements.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to develop 'A New Model to Support Children'. A range of project workstreams are underway, including engagement with colleagues across the authority and key partners. Design workshops with frontline staff are underway to consider how we can further redesign our services to ensure more support is provided at 'early help' before additional support is required.

## Great Place to Live, Work and Visit

Feedback from residents, business and visitors confirms that North Tyneside is a great place to live, work and visit. In order to maintain and develop that important aspect of the Borough we have been working with residents and partners to understand just what it is that makes North Tyneside so popular. We have then begun to shape the £74million we spend in this area to develop and maintain our core offer.

That means thinking about our streets and communities, our businesses and employment space and the river and parks, retail opportunities and events, coast and river that bring people the Borough.

We have worked hard to focus on what is important to residents, businesses and visitors while thinking carefully about our core offer and where that is delivered from. We have also continued our successful work to make North Tyneside sustainable and reduce our impact on the environment: Where we have had success, we can demonstrate we are saving money.

### 2016/17 Business Cases

- BC08 – Maintaining the Environment - £200,000
- BC14 – Review of our Estate - £82,000

## **BC08: Maintaining the Environment (£200,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have reviewed our environmental standards to ensure they comply with relevant legislation, and we have introduced a range of new biodiversity areas across the borough.

We have also generated additional income for arboricultural work that we carry out on behalf of others, and we have reduced the staffing structure by five posts.

We have continued to receive recognition for the quality of our public spaces, including six North Tyneside parks receiving the national Green Flag Awards and three beaches receiving the international Blue Flag Awards in 2016.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and all savings have been delivered.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement protects environmental services from any further changes in 2017/18. We will also be investing in additional seasonal resource to help respond to pressures on the service throughout the year.

## **BC14: Review of Our Estate (£82,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have renegotiated and reduced the level of PFI payments on our leisure facilities.

We have renegotiated and reduced the level of our payments to the Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums service for George Stephenson museum.

### **Any outstanding issues**

Discussions are ongoing with the Linskill Centre regarding the future model of delivery for Royal Quays Community Centre. Mitigating savings have been identified to deal with the delay in this element of the business case.

### **What next?**

We are continuing to develop our long-term Estates Strategy, in line with the Target Operating Model. The Efficiency Statement describes the ongoing work to review our office accommodation needs, our commercial estate, and future requirements for depots.



## Enabling

As well as four large-scale service redesign projects, there is a constant need to ensure the internal and cross-cutting operations of the Council are as efficient as possible. In order to move towards the authority's Target Operating Model, these cross-cutting and enabling initiatives will be absolutely critical to support services to change to continue to meet demand with ever reducing financial resources.

These projects aim to support services to redesign their offer through the maximisation of technological solutions, a modernised workforce, increasing income, and managing corporate financial resources in the most effective way.

### 2016/17 Business Cases

- BC01 – Citizen Interaction & Delivery of Services - £2,924,000
- BC02 – Workforce Change - £861,000
- BC05 – Payment Strategy, Fees & Charges - £833,000
- BC13 – Corporate Debt / MRP Strategy - £2,254,000

## **BC01: Citizen Interaction & Delivery of Services (£2,924,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have mobilised the Customer Journey and Digital Strategy programme and invested in new technical capability to enable delivery of the Target Operating Model.

We have procured the OutSystems development platform, which will enable us to rapidly develop a number of new applications to increase internal and external self-service.

We have developed a new Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards application to help reduce demand for this statutory service in Adult Social Care.

We have developed a new SIGN directory, alongside a range of other new online tools to support the adult social care strategy.

A range of other projects across the authority are being scoped and will be further progressed in the new financial year.

### **Any outstanding issues**

There has been a delay in the introduction of the Office 365 collaboration platform, although this is now being implemented, which has impacted on the full delivery of savings for this business case. This has been factored into savings requirements for 2017/18, with proposals identified for staffing and service redesign through use of self-service technology and collaboration tooling.

### **What next?**

We will continue to deliver the Customer Journey and Digital Strategy programme, including developing a range of new applications via the OutSystems platform to enable people to help themselves.

We will also introduce Office 365 to increase the agility and mobility of the workforce, streamline processes, and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

## **BC02: Workforce Change (£861,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have introduced a new generic workforce model, which will afford the authority greater flexibility in its staffing models. We have begun to roll this out across the management tiers of the organisation.

We have begun a root and branch review of HR policies and procedures to simplify the system, enable greater self-service by managers, and reduce demand on the central team.

We have reviewed and introduced a new workforce development programme across the authority, which is aligned to the priorities of the CBF programme and the Target Operating Model.

We have also concluded a range of restructures across the authority to deliver the required savings for this business case.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and full savings have been realised.

### **What next?**

The Efficiency Statement describes a project to review 'How we are organised'. This will look to re-shape the organisation to reflect changes in services, in line with the Target Operating Model.

## **BC05: Payment Strategy, Fees and Charges (£833,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

We have reviewed fees and charges in line with the principles of the Target Operating Model. Although we need to maximise income to reduce the impact of reduction in resources, we are focused on ensuring that any increases are targeted, wherever possible, at those who can afford to pay.

All relevant fees and charges increases have been implemented and we are monitoring the impact of this in terms of increased income generation.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and realisation of projected income is expected to be confirmed at year-end.

### **What next?**

The fees and charges policy has been reviewed for 2017/18 and increases across various services have been agreed by Cabinet and Council as part of the budget setting process. We will continue to closely monitor demand, usage, and income generation throughout the year.

## **BC13: Corporate Debt and MRP Strategy (£2,254,000)**

### **What we've delivered**

The Capital Finance Regulations require the full Council to agree an annual policy for the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The MRP is the amount that is set aside to provide for the prepayment of debt (principal repayment).

Following consultation with Legal Services and the authority's external auditor, Cabinet and Council agreed to reduce the debt repayment levels for 2016/17.

### **Any outstanding issues**

None; the project is complete and the savings have been delivered.

**Meeting:** Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

**Date:** 3 April, 2017

**Title:** Our North Tyneside Performance Report

**Author:** Jacqueline Laughton Tel: (0191) 6437070

**Service:** Corporate Strategy

**Wards affected:** All

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress that has been made to deliver the aims and objectives of the Our North Tyneside plan.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the progress that has been made against the delivery of the Our North Tyneside Plan.

## **3. Information:**

3.1 The refreshed Our North Tyneside Plan was agreed by Council on 17th March 2016. It refreshed the Plan which had been agreed by Council on 26 September 2013. The priorities in the Plan provide the strategic policy framework for the Authority.

3.2 Performance against the Our North Tyneside Plan is managed on two levels:

### Strategic level

The Our North Tyneside Plan, which is being delivered with partners, represents the strategic policy aims and objectives of the Authority. The Plan includes the strategic outcome focused measures which are used to assess progress.

Cabinet receives a report on performance against these strategic outcomes twice a year. This report is the latest of these.

### Service level

Alongside the focus on the strategic outcome measures, monthly performance reports are produced for each service area to monitor the progress against the outcomes of the Our North Tyneside Plan.

These reports include lower level performance measures, which are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet Members

- 3.3 This report includes only those measures that have been updated since the last report on performance against the Our North Tyneside Plan to Cabinet in October 2016.
- 3.4 The detail of these measures is attached at Appendix 1 and an overview of performance against each of the themes in the Our North Tyneside Plan is set out below.

#### Performance against the Our North Tyneside Plan

- 3.5 The Our North Tyneside Plan has three main themes
- Our People
  - Our Places
  - Our Economy
- 3.6 An overview of the latest performance against each of these is set out below.

#### Our People

- 3.7 The Our North Tyneside Plan sets 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 show that

- for the fourth year in a row, there has been an increase in the number of children who are ready for school. There has been an increase of almost 20% in the number of children who have 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 gap in attainment at this stage between the least and most affluent parts of the Borough.

However, there remains a gap in attainment at this stage between girls and boys and this will be the future focus of work in schools and the School Improvement Service.

- In terms of getting our young people ready for work and life, excellent progress has been made with 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.
- As well as educational attainment, a key element of ensuring that people are ready for work and life concerns whether or not people have the skills needed to access jobs available. Since 2011, we have seen a reported year on year rise in the number of some categories of employers who are reporting skills shortages when trying to recruit into vacancies. However, almost all of the increases were in skilled trades and machine operatives with a smaller number in caring, leisure and other services – sectors which represent a relatively small proportion of the total employment within the Borough. In total only 6% of businesses reported a problem recruiting due to a skills shortage.

In January 2017, Cabinet agreed a strategic approach on employment and skills to make sure the people of North Tyneside are ready for work and life. This new approach will include activities that are focused on reducing this skills gap.

## Our Places

- 3.8 The Our North Tyneside Plan sets out that our places will be great places to live, and attract others to visit or work here. In addition they will 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 show that

- the percentage of North Tyneside primary and secondary schools that are rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted remains above the national average. We rank in the top 10% of the national figures for local authorities for such ratings. In addition, in North Tyneside 9 in 10 pupils obtain their first choice of primary and secondary school which again places us in the top 10% nationally.
- in terms of being a great place to work there continues 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 means that there are now 4,370 enterprises operating in North Tyneside. This increase has come from two main sectors - construction and information and communication.
- our position as being a great place to live is further strengthened by our very strong record for business survival. The latest figures show that over 90% of businesses are still operating twelve months after starting. (More detail on this is set out below under Our Economy).
- being a great place to visit benefits the local economy by £271 million, up from £205 million in 2003. Just under 4,000 jobs are supported by tourism into the Borough. Visitor satisfaction is extremely high with 95% of visitors stating that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied' with their visit.
- the most highly rated aspects from our visitors were the cleanliness of beaches where in fact 100% of respondents rated their experience as either 'very good' or 'good.' This is reflected in the fact that 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, have also retained Seaside Awards, which is the quality standard ensuring visitors are guaranteed to find a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal area.
- in the future the number of visitors into the borough is expected to increase further as the Seafront Master Plan continues to be delivered. For example work to create a new 68 bedroomed hotel at The Dome site at Whitley Bay is on programme for completion in April 2017, with internal fit out and opening May 2017. The hotel will provide 69 full time and part time jobs as well as be an excellent addition to the overall visitor offer for North Tyneside.

## Our Economy

- 3.9 For Our Economy the ambition is to grow by building on our strengths, including our existing world-class companies, and small and growing businesses. This will be supported 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 show that

- 91.4% of North Tyneside businesses are still in operation after one year, which is higher than the Tyne and Wear average.
- In fact, for each of the five years where survival rates are recorded, North Tyneside out performs 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.
- Over the past few years the borough has been very successful in attracting inward investment to create new jobs, including global brands such as P&G, Accenture, HP, IBM and Siemens. This, along with an increase in business start ups and the high numbers of businesses surviving have all contributed to an increase in the number of jobs in North Tyneside. There are now 80,400 jobs in the Borough, which is an increase of over 10,000 since 2013.

The latest data suggests the pay of those working in North Tyneside has increased since 2012 and by a similar level to the North East average. Pay in North Tyneside remains below the UK average but the gap may have decreased slightly since 2012.

- Ensuring that young people in North Tyneside have the right high level skills and qualifications to progress and succeed in the jobs market is key to a successful economy and to individual health and well-being. Our latest performance on this is strong with 88% of young people progressing to Key Stage 5 (A level) and of these, 90% progress into a positive destination after Key Stage 5. This has been increasing year on year over the past few years and continues to be higher than the national rate.
- In addition, 2610 people started an Apprenticeship in the past year. The number of Apprenticeships on offer across the Borough is expected to increase further with the introduction of the Government's Apprenticeship Levy.

#### **4. Appendices**

Appendix 1 Our North Tyneside Corporate Level Performance Management Report March 2017.

# Our North Tyneside Plan

Performance report

March 2017

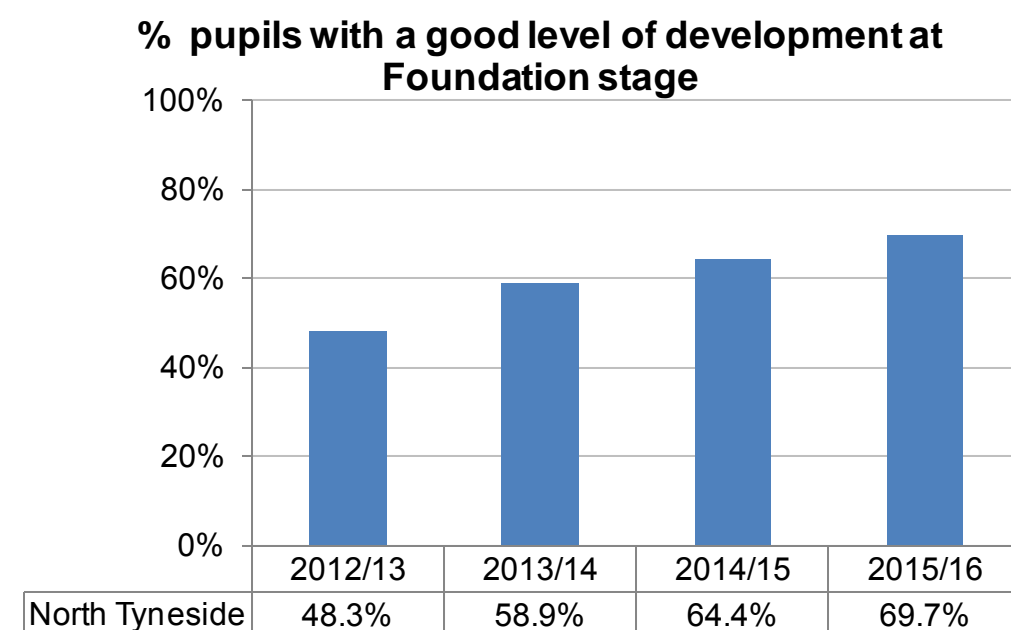


North Tyneside Council



# Our People

**AIM:** Be ready for school-giving our children and their families the best start in life.



## Measure 1

A key ambition for the Plan is that every child is ready for school. The research is clear that ensuring that this happens will provide the best start in life for both the children and their families.

The percentage of pupils reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased since 2013.

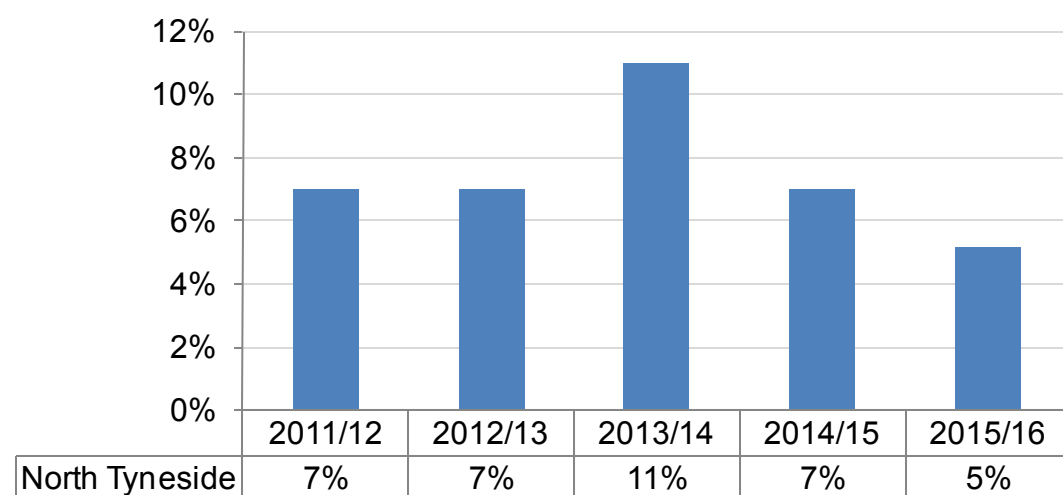
It is well understood that there are gaps in attainment within the Borough and the Plan is focused on reducing those gaps. An improvement has also been seen amongst the pupils living in Riverside and Chirton and the gap with North Tyneside overall has reduced to 12%.

Currently an assessment of the readiness to learn of children between the ages of 2 and 2 ½ is carried out by health visitors and nurseries. At the moment the data focuses on the number of assessments carried out. In the future we will be looking at developing more local measures and using these to monitor concerns.

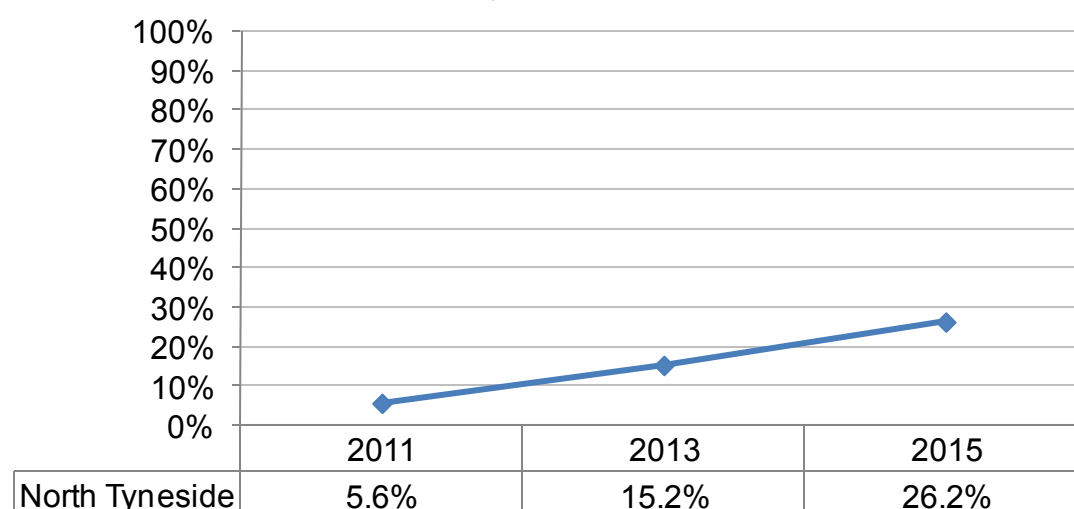
However a gap exists between boys and girls, which will be a focus of schools and the School Improvement Service in the coming years.

**AIM:** Be ready for work and life-with the skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet the needs of local businesses

**% achievement gap between girls and boys achieving Basics (A\* to C in English and Maths) at KS4**



**Skills gap-skills shortage vacancies as a proportion of all job vacancies**



**Measure 2**

Ensuring that all young people are ready for work and life is a key part of the Plan.

The gender gap in North Tyneside is generally smaller than national (8.2% gap) though the gap varies between schools.

The North Tyneside gender gap is smaller than national because boys' performance far exceeds national boys' performance, and it should be noted that attainment in Basics for both boys and girls in North Tyneside is significantly better than national attainment for each gender. North Tyneside girls exceed the national attainment by 3.7% points and North Tyneside boys exceed the national attainment level by 6.3% points. In addition the attainment for both boys and girls has improved since 2013.

In addition the measure appears to have been affected by changes in the measurement methodology for that year and differences in the reactions schools showed to these changes.

**Measure 3**

Alongside supporting local businesses to create jobs the Plan aims to support local people to have the right skills to access them. This measure highlights the gap that is recorded from local employers. The aim is to reduce the gap that local employers have recorded.

This information is based on a national survey and the results are based on a small sample of North Tyneside businesses. Further work is required to better understand this issue and a revised measure will be included in the next report to Cabinet.

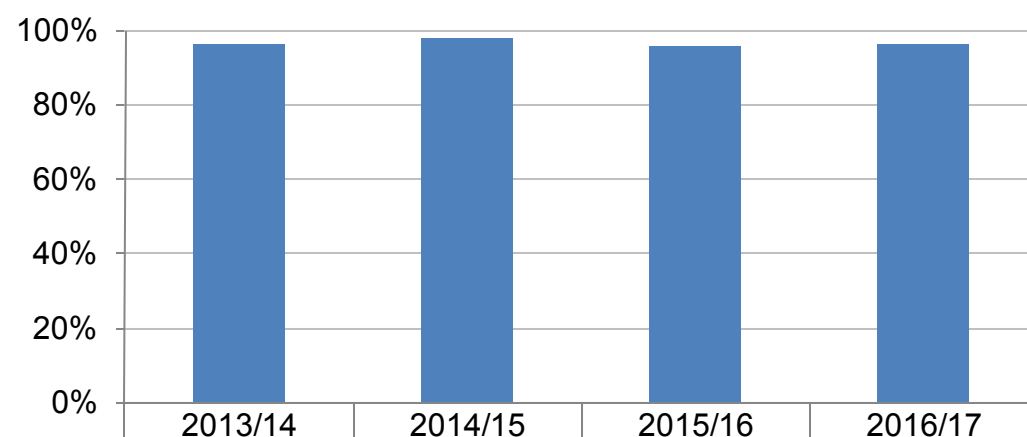
Almost all of the increase in skills shortage vacancies between 2013 and 2015 was in skilled trades and machine operatives, with a smaller increase for caring, leisure and other services. These occupations accounted for 78% of the skills shortage vacancies in 2015 but for only 27% of those people employed in North Tyneside. While the survey sample is small and reflects only a small proportion of our business base it does appear to mirror anecdotal reports. Businesses in the engineering and manufacturing sectors have indicated that they are facing skills shortages in particular niche and technical skilled roles.

We are undertaking a wide range of activities to promote these sectors amongst schools pupils and young people to support replacement demand within the sectors. Programmes, such as Primary and Secondary Engineer, have been successful in supporting these approaches. In addition, as shorter to medium measures the engineering and manufacturing sectors now represent the third highest sector for apprenticeship starts in North Tyneside with 480 out of a total of 2,610 starts in 2015-16.

# Our Places

**AIM:** Be great places to live, and attract others to visit or work here.

## % of Primary Schools rated Good or Outstanding



North Tyneside	96.4%	98.2%	96.0%	96.4%
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## Measure 4

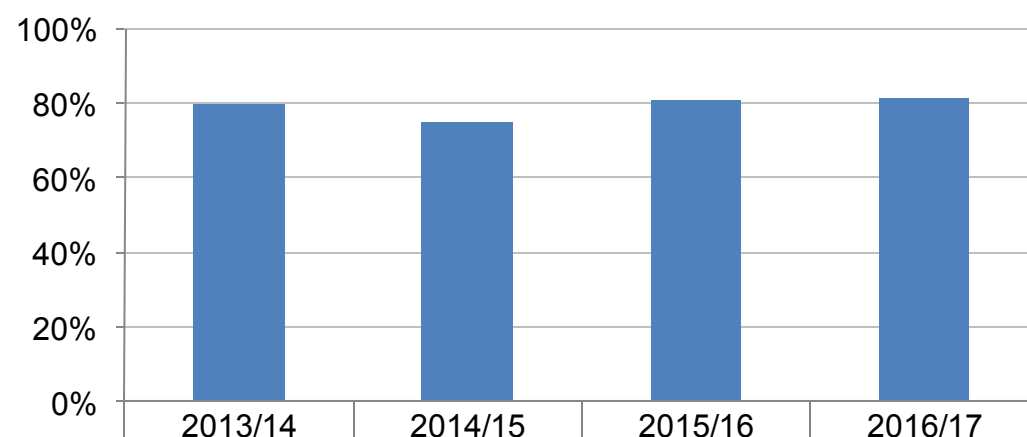
The quality of education in North Tyneside is a key driver for making the borough a great place to live.

The percentage of primary schools rated as Good or Outstanding is well above national average and ranks in the top 10% of Local Authorities.

In addition 92.8% of pupils obtain their first choice primary school.

The Council, through the School Improvement Service, will continue to work closely with schools to ensure that these high standards are maintained.

## % of Secondary Schools rated Good or Outstanding



North Tyneside	80.0%	75.0%	81.0%	81.3%
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## Measure 5

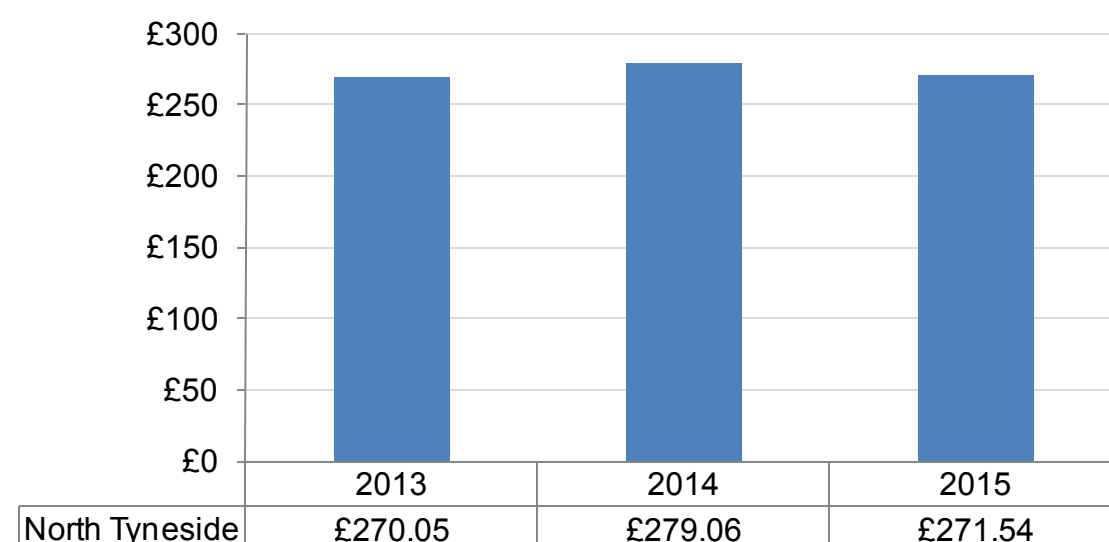
The quality of the educational offer in North Tyneside is a significant strength for the local economy but also a major factor in attracting and retaining people to the Borough.

This performance sets North Tyneside in the second quartile nationally, and work continues to maintain this strong position.

In addition 96% of pupils obtain their first choice secondary school, which places North Tyneside top 10% nationally

The Council, through the School Improvement Service, will continue to work closely with schools to ensure that these high standards are maintained.

### Value of tourism (£millions)



### Measure 6

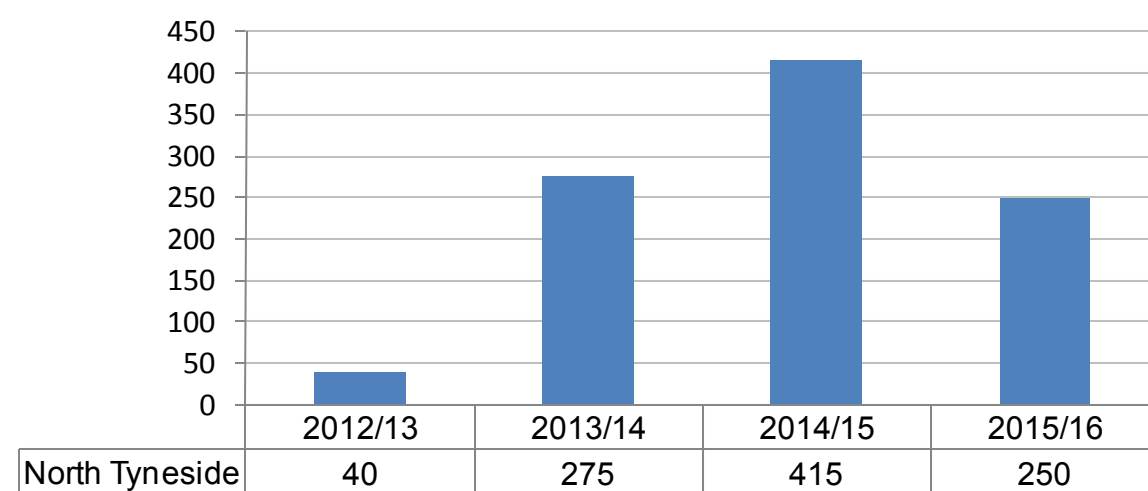
North Tyneside is a great place to visit and the value of tourism to the local economy has increased steadily from £205m in 2003 to £271m in 2015 and supports 3,598 jobs.

The results of the Annual Visitor Survey conducted during summer 2016 showed that 75% of visitors were either very satisfied with North Tyneside as a place to visit and 20% fairly satisfied. The most highly rated aspects were 'cleanliness of the beach' whereby 92% of respondents rated as very good and 8% rated as good.

There has been a slight decrease in the number of visits compared to 2014, which is due to a small reduction in serviced accommodation and lower visitor attraction numbers. However, there was an increase in event attendances and people visiting friends and relatives.

The long term trend remains positive overall and visitor levels are expected to show improvement at attractions over the next 2 years with Wet'n'Wild re-opening, Premier Inn opening, Tynemouth's maze opening and Hadrian's Cavalry at Segedunum.

### Net changes in the number of enterprises



### Measure 7

The Our North Tyneside Plan sets out a clear ambition that North Tyneside will be a great place to work.

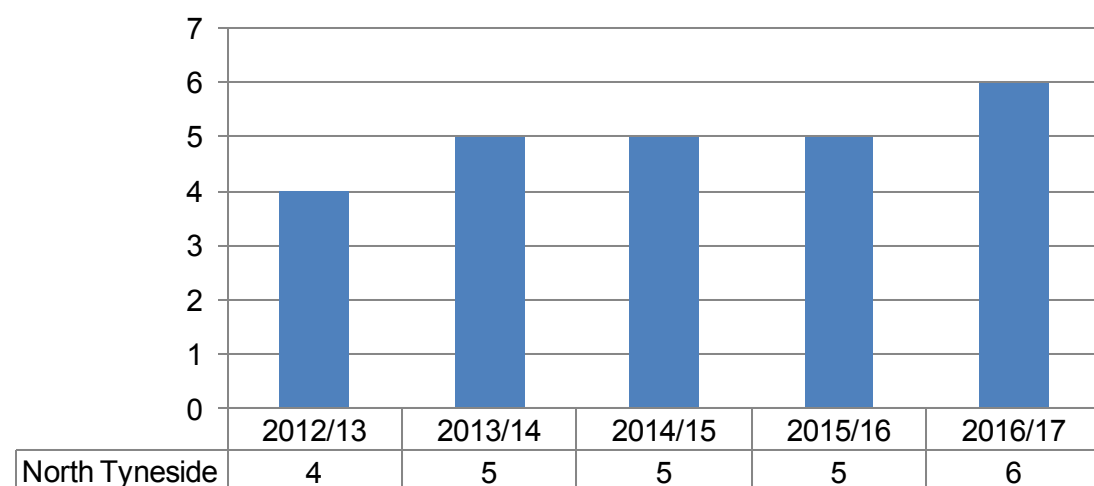
The latest data shows there were 4,370 enterprises in North Tyneside in March 2016, 250 more than in March 2015.

Around half of the increase came from two sectors, construction (+60) and information and communication (+60). Most of the increase in information and communication was from computer programming, consultancy and related activities (+50). The majority of other sectors saw increases, with the highest being in professional, scientific and technical (+20) and administrative and support services (+20). Since 2012, the largest increases have been in the professional, scientific and technical sector (+235), information and communication (+125), construction (+115) and administrative and support services (+115).

This continues an annual adjustment of approximately 150 per year. North Tyneside has a strong record for business survival. The latest figures show that over 90% of businesses are still operating twelve months after starting.

Work continues to create the right environment to support local businesses to grow in North Tyneside

### Number of Green Flags awarded



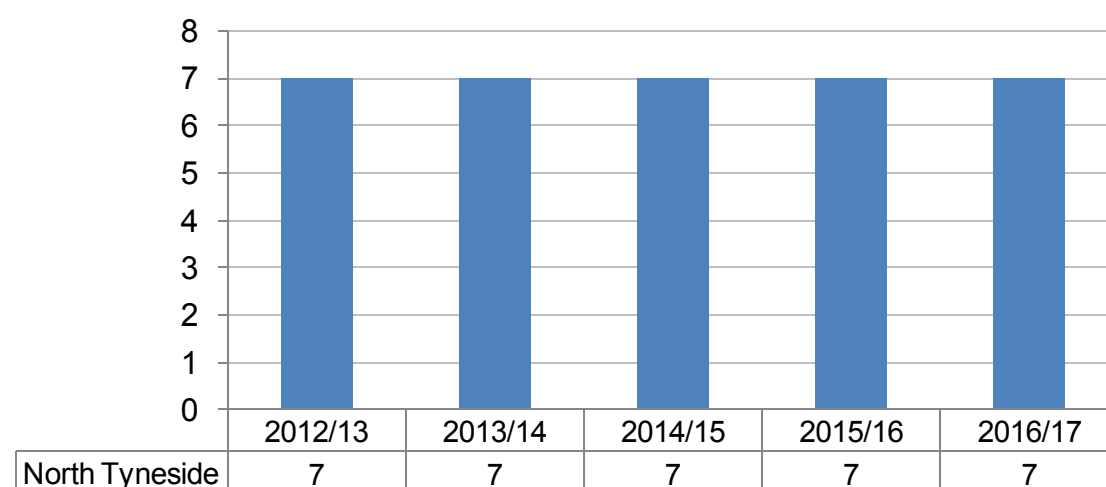
### Measure 8

Six North Tyneside Parks have been awarded Green Flag Awards during 2016.

Northumberland Park was awarded the national standard for the first year after undergoing major restoration and improvement works.

Wallsend Parks, Benton Quarry, Marden Quarry, Killingworth Lakeside and The Rising Sun Country Park all retained their Green Flag Awards status.

### Number of Blue Flag and Seaside Awards achieved



### Measure 9

Three North Tyneside beaches have retained Blue Flag Awards, the international award for beach quality, for Tynemouth Longsands, King Edwards Bay and Whitley Bay Beaches.

These three beaches, as well as Cullercoats Bay, have also retained Seaside Awards, which is the quality standard ensuring visitors are guaranteed to find a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal stretch.

# Our Economy

**AIM:** Have an effective transport and physical infrastructure-including our roads, cycleways, pavements, street lighting, drainage and public transport

## Measure 10

### **Swans infrastructure projects** - redevelopment of former shipyard to create new advanced manufacturing site

Centre for Innovation officially opened in July 2016 following £2m of investment. This is 90% occupied and has seen the transfer of businesses as far a field as Aberdeen, which signifies the sites strategic location and appeal.

Business Plan in development for Swans Quay and an operating manual will be produced reflecting the outcomes of the Strategic Review. This is in addition to a number of conversations with interested developers regarding taking space on the site.

## Measure 11

### **Coast infrastructure project** - high quality improvements and new facilities for residents and visitors.

Successful bid made to Heritage Lottery Fund for £3.47m to carry out a major restoration of The Dome. Work began in September 2016 and has seen significant progress internally. The first floor of the dome has been removed to provide full floor to ceiling space and take the building back to how it was in 1920.

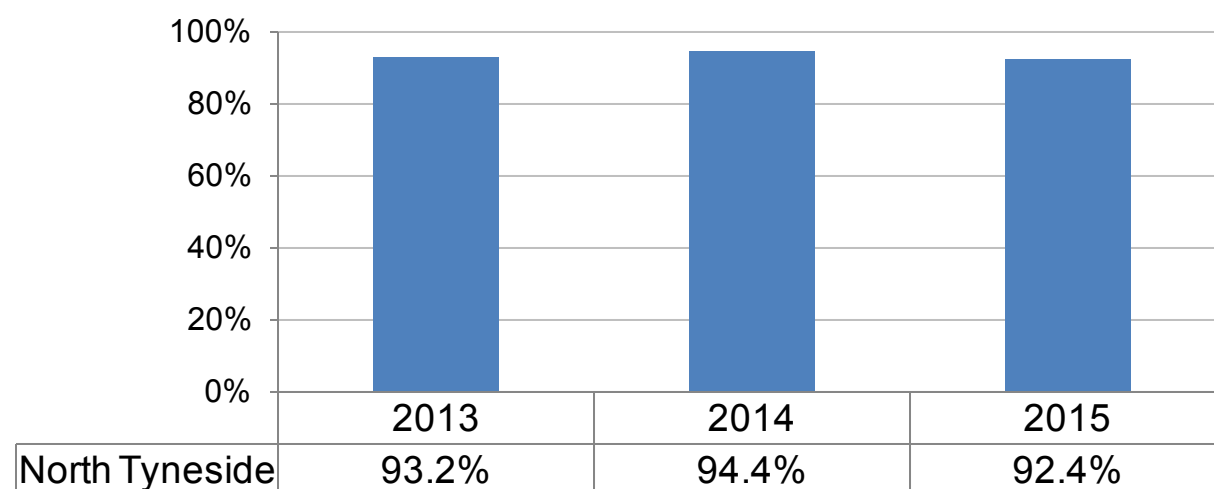
St Mary's Lighthouse stage 1 Development bid to Heritage Lottery Fund also successful for £164k. Work to develop a stage 2 HLF bid worth £2.2m is underway and will be submitted early 2017. Development will restore St Mary's Lighthouse and create a new development on the headland.

Work to create a new 68 bedroomed hotel at The Dome site commenced in June 2016 and is on programme for completion in April 2017, with internal fit out and opening May 2017. The hotel will provide 69 full time and part time jobs.

Negotiation to agree a contract to develop the former site of the High Point Hotel underway and expected to complete in Summer 2017. Now on site and due to complete by the end of 2017  
Works at Northern Promenade commenced September 2016, and on programme to be completed up to the Rendezvous cafe by August 2017

**AIM:** Grow by building on our strengths, including our existing world class companies, and small and growing businesses

### Business survival rate



### Measure 12

North Tyneside is focused on being a great place to work. This involves supporting existing businesses to survive and grow.

The figure is one year survival for businesses started in previous year.

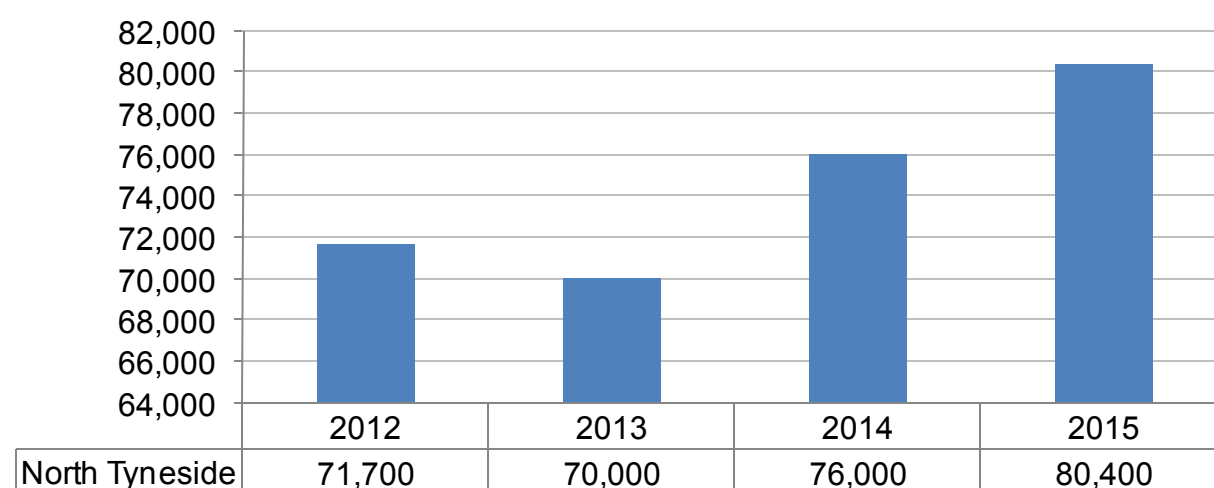
North Tyneside is showing a higher rate than the Tyne & Wear average of 91.4%

The latest survival rates for North Tyneside are

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

All of these rates were all higher than the averages for Tyne and Wear.

### Jobs in North Tyneside



### Measure 13

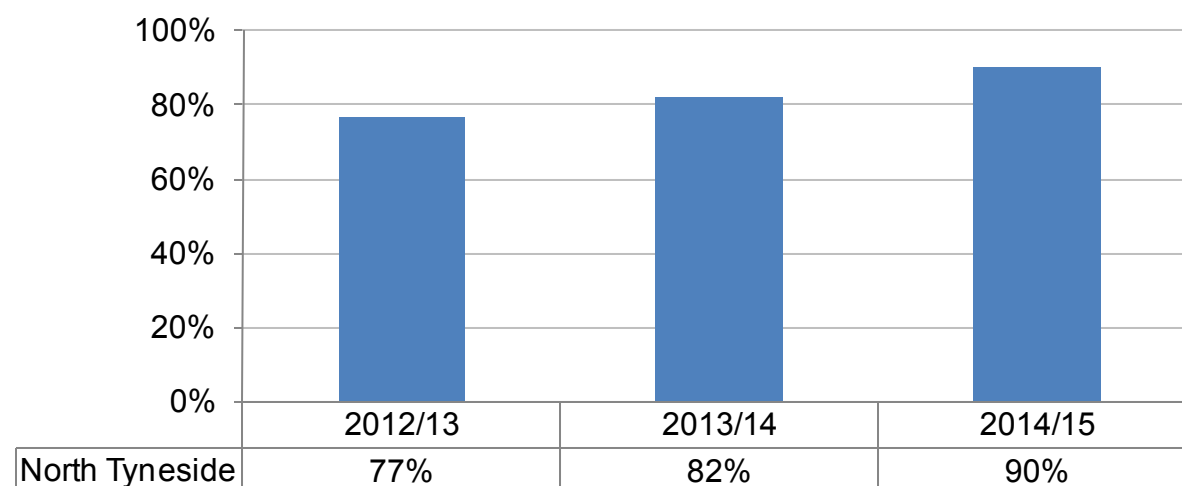
North Tyneside is focused on being a great place to work. This involves working to attract, retain and grow businesses in the borough.

Over the past few years the borough has been successful in supporting the creation of new jobs, including global brands such as P&G, Accenture, HP, IBM and Siemens.

The latest data (for 2016) suggests the pay of those working in North Tyneside is similar to the North East average and has increased by a similar amount since 2012. Pay in North Tyneside remains below the UK average but the gap may have decreased slightly since 2012. This data uses the standard measure of median gross weekly pay for full-time workers.

**AIM:** Have the right skills and conditions to support investment and create and sustain new good quality jobs and apprenticeships for working age people

**Positive destination, post KS5**



**Measure 14**

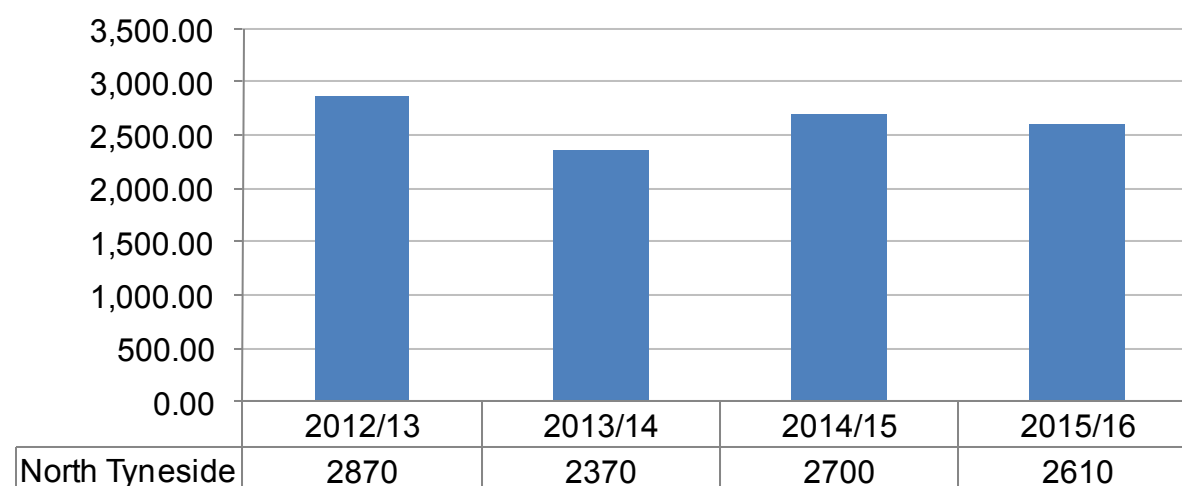
Ensuring that young people in North Tyneside have the right high level skills and qualifications to progress and succeed in the job market are important for their happiness and the regions' prosperity.

88% of young people progress to Key Stage 5 (A level). Of those, 90% progress into a positive destination after Key Stage 5.

Young people are proceeding to a positive destination at an increasing rate and have continued the trend from the past few years.

The figure continues to be higher than national rate for this measure, which is 88%.

**Number of apprenticeships**



**Measure 15**

Apprenticeships remain a key focus for the economic participation of young people in North Tyneside and across the country.

The number of residents of North Tyneside starting an apprenticeship programme remains lower than 2012-13 levels but the greater part of this reduction is a consequence of a smaller cohort of young people.

This year's 'Get up and Go' event featured around 35 employers and providers who were actively seeking to employ and support apprentices within their business. This included partners, such as Kier North Tyneside who have 16 Apprentices working across trade and business support

This included opportunities within businesses such as Accenture, Capita, Owen Pugh, Northumbria Healthcare and North Tyneside Council. There will also be organisations offering various volunteering opportunities.



# **Meeting: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee**

**Date: 3 April 2017**

**Title: Office Accommodation Review – Update**

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**Author:** Mark Longstaff

Tel: 0191 643 8089

**Service:** Head of Commissioning & Investment

**Wards affected:** All

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee received a report at the meeting held on 6 March 2017 which provided an updated position on the office accommodation review.

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the current position associated with the ongoing discussions with the Wallsend Town Forum site which includes Wallsend Customer First Centre.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee are asked to note the additional information provided in this report by colleagues from the Business & Economic Development Team linked to Wallsend Customer First Centre as part of the wider Office Accommodation Project.

## **3. Details**

- 3.1 The Council and New River Retail (NRR) have established an excellent working relationship during the regeneration of the Wallsend Town Centre. The refurbishment and investment in Wallsend Forum and the creation of the CFC has seen a rise in footfall of over 20% to the town centre.
- 3.2 The current lease for the Wallsend CFC currently restricts usage of the vacant second floor to that associated with the Council and a particular use class. NRR subsequently sold on their lease to an investment company. The terms of the lease require their consent for any changes, with a premium payment to be made should the Council wish to vary the terms of the lease to permit sub letting. Permission could be withheld to sub let, although NRR have said they would work with the Council to encourage the investment company to release this clause.

- 3.3 This is all predicated on the Northumbria Care Trust receiving the green light for funding to develop a new health care facility on the Wallsend Forum Car Park (Site 2D). This will relocate three separate doctors' surgeries from around Wallsend in to one location. A bid was submitted in Autumn 2016. They had hoped to submit a planning application by now, ready for build start in Spring 2017. However, the Clinical Commissioning Group have requested changes to the funding profile to be made. These were actioned in December 2016, but the CCG have yet to make a decision on the award of funding.
- 3.4 Officers and NRR are due to meet the CCG management team on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 to explore any issues relating to the advancement of the funding and the project. An additional addendum updated report will be provided to members of Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee following the meeting.

# Meeting: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

**Date:** 3 April 2017

**Title:** Process for implementation of new parking waiting restrictions

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**Authors:** Nicholas Bryan, Highway Network Manager (Capita) Tel: 0191 643 4808

Andrew Flynn, Integrated Transport Manager Tel: 0191 643 6083

**Service:** Environment, Housing and Leisure

**Wards affected:** All

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## 1. Purpose of Report

The Committee has requested a report which details the current procedure for introducing new waiting restrictions (such as double yellow lines) on the highway across the borough.

To explain the process, the report provides an example of a recently introduced scheme to illustrate the practicalities in doing so.

## 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the report.

## 3. Details

### 3.1 Background

Requests for waiting restrictions are received in a number of ways, e.g. via Members' Enquiries; requests from the Police; requests from other Council services; and directly from the public. Requests received are logged for assessment in line with the procedure set out below (unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. an acute road safety concern).

## **3.2 Timescales for implementing requests for waiting restrictions**

### **3.2.1 Timescales prior to April 2016**

- Financial Year 1 – Requests for waiting restrictions logged.
- End of Financial Year 1 – Requests assessed; oversight by Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport.
- Financial Year 2 – Schemes designed, engagement carried out and restrictions implemented.

### **3.2.2 Change in process**

A review of the process was carried out in 2015/16. This highlighted that the growing number of requests for waiting restrictions was consistently exceeding the level which was deliverable within a year. Furthermore, the timescales for delivery were often extensive as attempts were made to resolve objections received.

The procedure for recording, assessing and implementing requests for restrictions was amended in April 2016. The reasons for these were to:

- i. reduce the number of schemes routinely being carried over to the following financial year; and
- ii. allow Members to be provided with more accurate timescales for the delivery of schemes.

Members were notified of the new process in Members Update 39, issued by Capita (attached as Appendix 2). The new process and timescales are set out below.

### **3.2.3 Timescales since April 2016**

- Financial Year 1 – Requests for waiting restrictions logged.
- Financial Year 2 – Requests assessed; oversight by Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport. Work commences on scheme designs and consultations.
- Financial Year 3 – Engagement concluded and schemes implemented.

The process therefore changed to a three-year system. The new system takes into account the full assessment and engagement process and enables Members to be provided with a realistic timescale for delivery.

## **3.3 Procedure for handling requests for waiting restrictions**

At the beginning of the process, an initial assessment of requests takes place. Locations are considered and the following matters are taken into consideration:

- i. road safety record;
- ii. proximity to areas of competing demand, e.g. schools, Metro stations, employment sites, retail destinations;
- iii. access for service vehicles, e.g. buses, emergency services, refuse collection vehicles.

Schemes identified to be progressed are added to the scheme delivery list.

Once an identified scheme is brought forward, the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 is applied.

This process generally takes 24-36 months (unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. an acute road safety concern).

### 3.4 Example of delivering a scheme

To explain the process, the Committee requested that an example be provided to illustrate the practicalities of introducing a scheme. The example provided relates to a proposal to introduce waiting restrictions in a turning area in a street in Whitley Bay.

This resulted from a request from a local resident who expressed concerns about vehicles parking at this location restricting turning movements and access for residents and emergency vehicles. It should be noted that double yellow lines existed at this location previously but were no longer visible following resurfacing work to the carriageway. It was suggested by the resident that these markings should be reinstated however on investigation, officers were unable to find any record of the appropriate supporting Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). It was therefore decided, following site inspections, that a new proposal for the introduction of waiting restrictions should be progressed.

The initial request was received in September 2014. It was dealt with under the previous process (outlined in section 3.2.1) until this was replaced with the current process (outlined in section 3.2.3).

The example was one of a programme of 62 parking management schemes involving waiting restrictions which were intended for delivery during the 2015/16 financial year. Table 1 below outlines the timeline of the key stages in the implementation of this example scheme and includes references to the delivery of the programme as a whole where appropriate.

**Table 1 Timeline for Scheme Implementation**  
(references to the wider programme are shown in **bold**)

Date	Action
Sept 2014	Request for waiting restrictions received via Members' Enquiries system
<b>Mar 2015</b>	<b>Requests assessed</b>
<b>Apr 2015</b>	<b>Scheme added to the programme for of 62 schemes intended for delivery in 2015/16</b>
<b>May 2015</b>	<b>2015/16 programme progressed</b>
Dec 2015	Proposal for the introduction of waiting restrictions drawn up by officers
Dec 2015	Ward Members consulted upon proposal
Jan 2016	Residents consulted upon proposal
<b>Apr 2016</b>	<b>Update sent to Members (Members Update 39, issued by Capita) detailing progress of all schemes and advising of delays in the implementation of some. Outstanding schemes now due to be delivered by the end of March 2017.</b>
July/Aug 2016	Proposal advertised for statutory 21-day period
Aug 2016	Objection to the proposal received from a local resident

Sept 2016	Meeting with ward Members to discuss a possible amendment to the proposal; agreed to progress proposal as advertised.
Sept-Oct 2016	Officers correspond with objector in an attempt to resolve the objection; objection not resolved.
Jan-Feb 2017	Delegated decision report on the TRO for Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport completed and circulated for sign-off.
Feb 2017	Report considered by Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport and decision taken to set objection aside and proceed with restriction. Five-day 'call-in period' follows.
Mar 2017	Waiting restrictions installed.

In this example the process, from the initial request to completion, took 30 months.

#### **4 Appendices**

Appendix 1 Process for implementation of waiting restrictions  
Appendix 2 Capita Members Update Issue 39, issued by Capita

#### **5 Background Information**

The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the offices of the author.

North Tyneside Parking Strategy

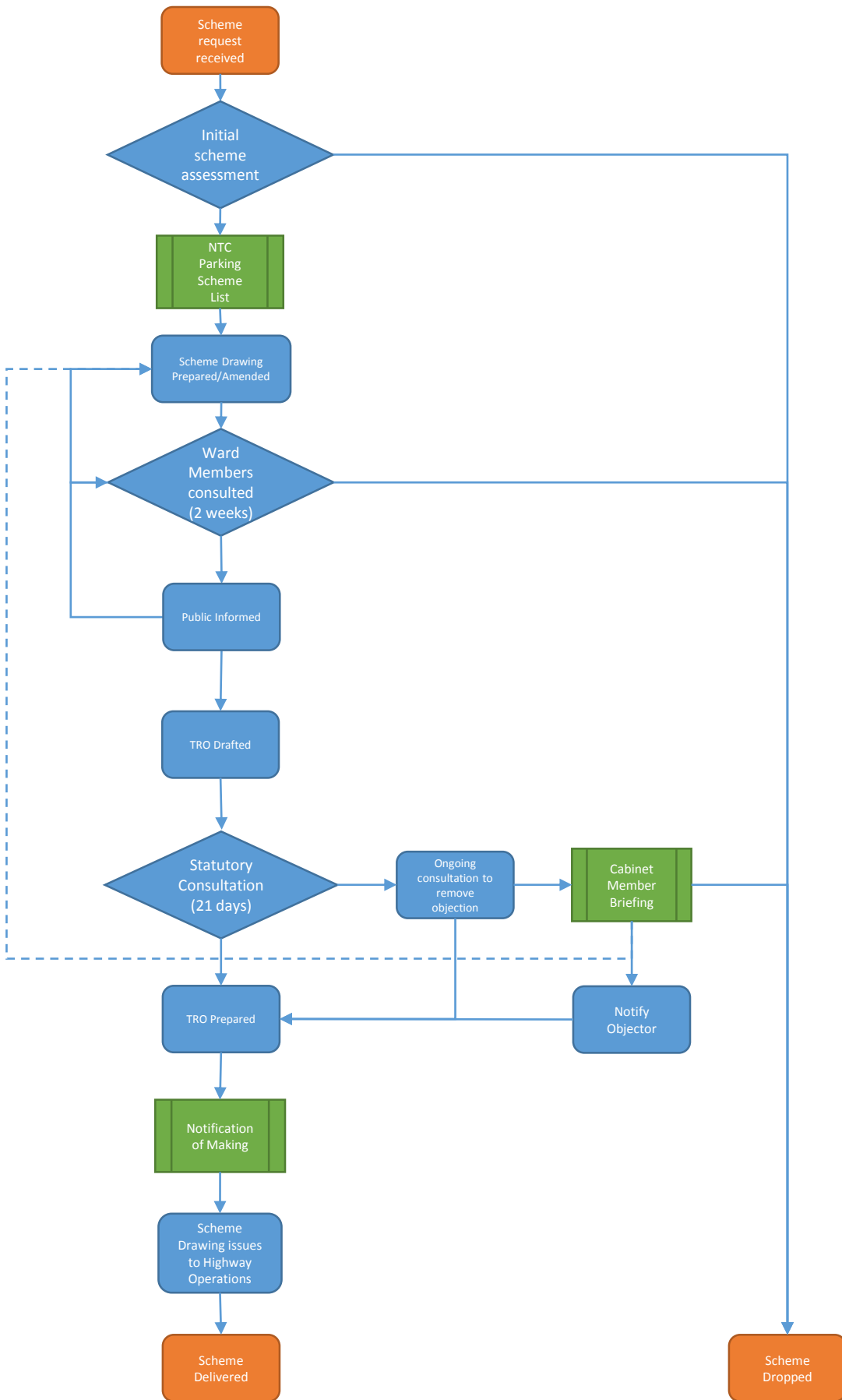
[http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse.shtml?p\\_subjectCategory=360](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse.shtml?p_subjectCategory=360)

## **Appendix 1 – Procedure once an identified scheme is brought forward**

(see also process map attached)

1. Plan of scheme and outline of proposal emailed to appropriate Ward Members. Members given 2 weeks to respond with comments. If no comments are received it is assumed that Members have no objections to the proposal.
2. Proposal/plan amended as necessary following comments from Members.
3. Residents/businesses whose properties are immediately adjacent to the proposed restrictions are consulted. In the case of proposals involving waiting restrictions only, residents are simply informed of the proposal and the Authority's intention to begin the statutory advertising period in the near future.
4. Results of engagement/feedback from residents shared with Members/Cabinet Member as necessary and proposals progressed/amended/discontinued as appropriate.
5. Depending on the nature of any identified amendments to the proposal, further consultation with residents and then Members may be necessary.
6. Appropriate Traffic Regulation Order(s) (TRO) prepared by officers and instruction given to Democratic Services colleagues to arrange for statutory notice to be advertised.
7. Statutory advertising period – 21 days ("Notice of Intention", inviting objections, is posted in the local press, on the Authority's website and in the affected area, e.g. on lighting columns). If no objections are received, proceed to step 12.
8. Officers respond to objectors and attempt to resolve their objection (this may involve a significant amount of correspondence with objectors) and invite them to withdraw their objection by a specific date. If no reply is received, the objection remains.
9. Details of any objections which have not been withdrawn are set out in a report for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members.
10. In line with the decision, the scheme is either progressed as advertised, amended or discontinued.
11. If amendments to the proposal are required, further consultation with residents/Members/Cabinet Member may take place.
12. If proposal progressed, instruction sent to Democratic Services to make the relevant TRO(s).
13. "Notice of Making" to be advertised in the local press, on the Authority's website and in the affected area, e.g. on lighting columns. (Members of the public may make representation to the High Court to question the validity of the Order within 6 weeks of the date of its making.)
14. A detailed works drawing is prepared and the works are programmed for implementation.

# NTC Parking Restrictions Request Process Map







North Tyneside Council

Working in partnership with

**CAPITA**

# Members Update

Issue 39 / April 2016

## Introduction from Ian Richardson, Partnership Director



The North Tyneside Partnership had passed an important health and safety inspection.

We have achieved ISO 18001 Health and Safety Management certification following an inspection by a British Standards Institution inspector earlier this month.

In their comments, the inspector said: "The Capita Business Management System was seen to be effectively deployed and managed.

"The process for assessing and controlling risk and the maintenance of staff training and competence was robust and completion rates were tracked and monitored."

We are also seeking ISO 9001 Quality Management and ISO 14001 Environmental Management. Achieving these internationally-recognised qualifications will help create greater business opportunities for us in the future.

Finally, I want to let you know that I will be moving away from the Partnership when current contractual negotiations between Capita and the council come to an end. I've greatly enjoyed my role as North Tyneside Partnership Director.

Jonathan Ellis, who performs a similar role in Salford, will be joining the Partnership to support its growth aspirations as well as ensuring the wider Capita business is helping the council to achieve its aims and objectives.

Many thanks,

**Ian Richardson**  
Partnership Director

## Reducing the risk of flooding

Residents are being invited to find out more about a £1.5million scheme to reduce the risk of flooding in the Monkseaton, Murton and Wellfield areas.

The main cause of flooding issues is the poor management of surface water within the fields situated between Shiremoor, Monkseaton and Wellfield.

The project involves capturing and storing surface water runoff and releasing it in a more controlled manner into improved drainage channels. It will feature a variety of works such as the installation of dry storage basins, a flood plain and new connections into ditches and pipes.

All the fields are privately owned so discussions have been taking place with the landowners to gain their consent for the works. Talks have been positive and it is hoped land agreements will be finalised soon.

Once the works are completed, a maintenance regime will be introduced to ensure that the areas are inspected on a frequent basis. This will help prevent the build-up of any debris that could reduce the effectiveness of the completed works.

A drop-in event will be held on Wednesday, May 11, 3pm to 7pm, at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Church Close, West Monkseaton.

For further information, contact the Surface Water Management Team, Tel: 643 6113 or email [surfacewatermanagement@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:surfacewatermanagement@northtyneside.gov.uk)

## He's alright, Jack



Trainee Engineering Technician Jack Thomas is celebrating after achieving success at a prestigious awards ceremony.

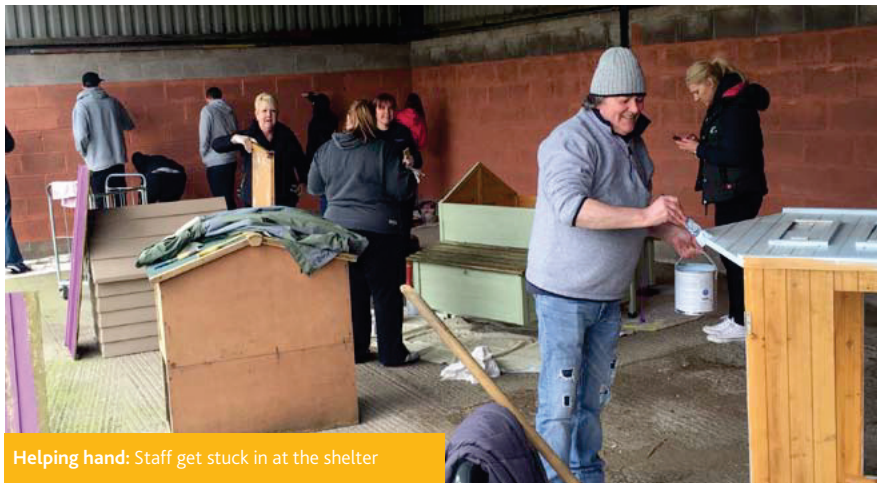
The G4C Awards, held at the Hilton NewcastleGateshead earlier this month, celebrated the best and most inspirational young construction professionals across the North East.

Jack was commended under the Apprentice of the Year category.

He said: "I joined Capita in 2013 and Capita have supported me all the way through my apprenticeship, helping me develop my skills and career progression to my current role.

"I'm thrilled to have been recognised at the G4C Awards especially under the category of Apprentice of the Year and I hope to inspire other apprentices to join and thrive in the industry."

# It's a **dog's** life



Helping hand: Staff get stuck in at the shelter

## More than 30 staff have signed up for volunteering activities at our charity of the year, Newcastle Dog and Cat Shelter, over the coming months.

The first group of employees attended earlier this week and carried out a variety of tasks ranging from painting buildings and kennels to

landscaping work.

Meanwhile, employees donated almost 20 bags of pet food for our charity of the year, Newcastle Dog and Cat Shelter. A collection point was set-up at Quadrant and this has now moved to the highways office in Killingworth.

In addition a target has been set to raise £1,000 for the charity over the course of the year.

## Bridge improvements to get underway

### Work to repair Wallsend Road Bridge is expected to start next month.

The bridge, which is between High Flatworth/East Howdon Bypass Roundabout and Norham Road/Waterville Road Roundabout, was built in 1966 and its concrete is suffering from fatigue.

The scheme will involve blasting off the old concrete and replacing it with new. It is being managed on behalf of the council by Capita and is due for completion in early 2017.

Earlier this year, a crossover point was created that will allow traffic to be diverted onto either carriageway in a contraflow system.

Repairs will begin on the southern side of the bridge, which means traffic will be initially diverted onto the eastbound carriageway. When work moves to the northern side of the bridge, traffic will be diverted onto the westbound carriageway.

A 30mph speed limit will be in place throughout the works for the safety of road users and the workforce.

For queries regarding the works, the public should Tel: (0191) 643 6500 or email [roads@northtynesday.gov.uk](mailto:roads@northtynesday.gov.uk)

## Parking update

### The assessment of requests for new waiting and permit parking restrictions has been deferred pending the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the permit parking policy.

It has become apparent that the implementation and operating costs of permit parking schemes is making this type of measure increasingly unsustainable.

Demand for permit parking restrictions is growing and the review, which will consider feedback from residents and businesses, aims to ensure that these schemes operate in a more effective and economically viable manner in the future.

It is envisaged that the committee will produce a report containing their recommendations for consideration by the Lead Cabinet Member in the next few months.

Because the result of this review will significantly impact on the future of new and existing schemes, it has been agreed that the assessment of requests for new restrictions will be deferred until it has been completed. Officers would then aim to deliver any new schemes starting from next financial year.

Around 318 requests for restrictions relating to 274 different locations were logged between April 1 2015 and March 31 2016 and these will be assessed following the policy review using any new criteria which may be identified.

The resulting new schemes will be added to the monthly update reports in due course. All requests for waiting and permit parking restrictions received from 1st April 2016 onwards are being logged separately and will be assessed next financial year.

In relation to last year's schemes, 62 were selected for progression from around 200 requests relating to 170 different locations in the borough.

Five schemes have been delivered, works on site for eight and works for a further two schemes have now been ordered. Consultation on four schemes is ongoing and formal objections to another 12 are being considered.

Legal orders associated with 19 schemes are currently being drafted while eight are either being deferred or no longer progressed following consultation. Officers are in the process of designing the remaining four schemes.

While the original intention was that these schemes would be delivered last year, progress has been slower than expected due to the number of objections received.

Consequently, it has been agreed that going forward the process for scheme assessment and delivery will change. Requests will be logged in financial year one, while assessments, scheme designs and consultation will be in year two.

Consultations will be concluded and schemes delivered on the ground in year three.

This change should give officers sufficient time to conduct assessments and deal with formal objections in particular more effectively, thereby allowing them to provide Members with more realistic delivery timescales.

However, as before, any requests with serious road safety implications will be given priority and progressed as soon as possible.

For further information, please contact Nick Saunders in the Traffic & Parking team,

Tel: (0191) 643 6598

Email: [nick.saunders@northtynesday.gov.uk](mailto:nick.saunders@northtynesday.gov.uk)

### Your key Partnership contacts



**Ian Richardson**  
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**Richard Carmichael**  
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Ian and Richard are responsible for running the Partnership alongside the retained client team, looking after our staff's well-being and ensuring the Partnership prospers and grows.



**Duncan Bennett**  
Communications Manager  
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Duncan is responsible for the Partnership's internal and external communications, which includes communicating effectively to members.



**Sarah Browne**  
Customer Service Manager  
07809 321 916  
[sarah.browne@capita.co.uk](mailto:sarah.browne@capita.co.uk)

Sarah is responsible for ensuring a quality service is provided to members and is the key contact for members wishing to raise issues with Capita.

# Meeting: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Date: 3 April 2017

## Title: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

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Author: Joanne Holmes Tel: 0191 643 5315

Service: Law and Governance

Wards affected: All

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### 1. Purpose of Report

To introduce the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 and progress the next steps in the approval process for the annual report.

### 2. Recommendations

To agree the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 as attached and refer to Annual Council on 18 May 2017.

### 3. Details

- 3.1 At the end of each municipal year a report is produced which summarises the activities and performance of the overview, scrutiny and policy development functions and also looks at the proposed work programme arrangements for the following year.
- 3.2 Attached at Appendix A is the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17. The report highlights the increasing role that scrutiny has in policy development and outlines what scrutiny has achieved through the various pieces of work undertaken by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees. The report has again been based on a streamlined approach, in order to make it more user-friendly and focused on the impact of scrutiny. The report also highlights the process in place for the development of the 2017/18 work programme, including the stakeholders that have been consulted in order to develop a work programme that will deliver the greatest contribution to policy development across the Council.
- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 was considered and approved for submission to Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at a meeting of scrutiny chairs and deputies on 21 February 2017. Members are recommended to approve the report as attached and refer for submission to Council at its Annual meeting on 18 May 2017.

### 4. Background Information

The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the offices of the author.

N/A

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17



**Date:** May 2017

**Author:** Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee



# Introduction

It has been another busy year for overview and scrutiny in North Tyneside, with the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees considering a variety of topics and issues.

This report highlights some of the work undertaken, the impact that scrutiny has had, and briefly outlines the process for the development of the 2016/17 work programme.

## The role of Overview and Scrutiny

The role of overview and scrutiny is to provide a 'critical friend' challenge to the Cabinet (and other decision makers), whilst also assisting in the development of key policies and plans.

Over recent years there has been an increased emphasis on promoting and developing the policy development role of overview and scrutiny. Throughout 2016/17 this has continued; and a range of policy reviews have been undertaken, linked to the priorities within the Our North Tyneside Plan and the principles that drive the Creating a Brighter Future Programme.

## We have been a 'critical friend'

Whilst the main focus of scrutiny work during 2016/17 has been the development of policy, the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees have still fulfilled the important role of being a critical friend to Cabinet, providing challenge, particularly on budget and performance issues.

The Finance Sub-committee has continued to examine the Council's budget monitoring position on a bi-monthly basis, including the forecast outturn positions for 2016/17 for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Investment Plan. Members have also undertaken review of the red risks associated with the Business and Technical Partnerships, the Council's fees and charges policy, the monitoring of business rate income, and the impact of government policies on the Council's financial position, including the academisation of schools.

A Budget and Council Plan Study Group was again established to consider the Cabinet's budget proposals in detail, and Members put forward a number of recommendations which were considered by Cabinet as part of the budget-setting process.

Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee has received bi-annual performance reports on the delivery of the Our North Tyneside Plan, allowing progress on delivery of the aims and objectives to be monitored and, where necessary, challenged. Some of the sub-committees have also monitored performance by receiving updates on the delivery of the various projects included in the Creating a Brighter Future programme. Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee has paid particular focus to central governments education policy developments this year and its potential impact on the borough.

## **But we have mainly focused on policy development**

Some examples of the policy development work undertaken during 2016/17 are:

### *Parking Permits - Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee*

The Permit Parking Sub-group was established by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee during 2015/16 and it reported to Cabinet in July 2016. The Study group put forward 18 recommendations aimed at simplifying the permit system and making it financially self-sustainable. These included recommendations to introduce new technology to improve the administration of the permit system, a reduction in the categories of permits available, and changes to permit charges. The Cabinet considered the report and agreed to accept the recommendations, subject to further work by Council officers to develop a revised parking and permit policy for the Council.

### *Bereavement Services – Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee*

The Bereavement Services Sub-group was established by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee following concerns that had been raised in relation to the level of information and guidance available to the bereaved at an emotional and stressful time.

The sub-group met on 2 occasions and also carried out a visit to Preston Cemetery and Crematorium to see first hand the facilities available including the customer front door services and back office accommodation/working environment.

The sub-group made a total of 12 recommendations for Cabinet's consideration of which 11 were accepted, with a risk assessment review to be undertaken for the remaining recommendation before a decision being made to either accept/reject.

### *Future Construction Options – Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee*

As part of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee programme 2015/16, Members agreed to establish a sub-group to carry out a study to the

possible options available for the Future Construction Options for North Tyneside when the current 10 year partnership with Kier North Tyneside Limited (KNT) is due to end.

Members held a series of evidence gathering meetings with Council Officers, Kier North Tyneside Senior Management, Tenant Representatives and Union Officials between October 2015 and May 2016.

The findings of the study resulted in the selection of 3 options the sub-group believed should undergo full appraisal on their viability of possible future options for the Council.

Cabinet received a report on 13 July 2015 detailing the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee in relation to the work undertaken by its sub-group on the Performance Priorities for the second half of the Kier North Tyneside Joint Venture with Cabinet accepting the 10 recommendations made within the report.

Those recommendations were incorporated into service planning with the Joint Venture for 2016/17 onward and are shaping activity in the second half of the contract term.

Since July 2015 the Sub-Group was focused on understanding the Long Term Construction requirements of North Tyneside Council and what delivery options should be considered post 2019. This culminated in Cabinet receiving a report on 11 July 2016 detailing recommendations.

Its report to Cabinet considered the future construction needs of the Authority, the likely changes in the market and the options open to the Authority as to the way forward. Alongside this, the Sub-Group outlined the issues that will be important in evaluating the construction options and took the time to consider a wide range of choices that will face Cabinet.

Those issues were seen to be

- Strong customer involvement
- Careful consideration of the impact on the workforce
- Visibility of the supply chain and its employment practices; and
- Value for money.

Following Cabinet approval, a working group was to be created of Cabinet Members and Officers to work through the options available to the authority, paying particular attention to the work of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

That working group would then be required to consider in more detail the contractual position and process through to 2017 and then on to 2019. The legal, financial, HR and service delivery considerations would further explored, along with an understanding of the sensitivity and commercial aspects of the future delivery options.

As the work develops, further challenge and support from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee would be sought.

### *Carers Support and Respite Provision - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-committee*

A sub-group was established to undertake an in-depth review of support and respite provision in North Tyneside for adult carers and parent carers of disabled children. This work linked to the 'Our people will be cared for and kept safe if they become vulnerable' objective of the Our North Tyneside Plan. The main aim was to ensure that the appropriate services and structures were in place to support carers, and that they had access to good quality respite care. During the review members of the sub-group held a series of evidence gathering meetings with expert witnesses, service users and service providers, and covered a wide range of issues including; access to information, advice and training, building based respite provision, direct payments and identification of carers. The sub-group put forward a total of 19 recommendations to the Local Authority and North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, all of the recommendations were accepted and action plans have now been implemented.

### *Waste Collections Post 2017 – Environment Sub-committee*

A sub-group of the Environment Sub Committee has carried out an in-depth study into the options available to the authority for the collection and disposal of household waste and recycling at the conclusion of the Weekly Collection Support Scheme in 2017. The sub-group has looked at a number of options which would assist the authority to reduce the amount of household waste which was sent to landfill and to encourage residents to increase rates of recycling which would tie in with government targets. Members have examined the waste collection arrangements in a number of neighbouring authorities and identified where savings could be made. The sub-group also examined ways in which residents could be helped to increase recycling levels including awareness campaigns. In addition the sub-group also addressed the issue of excess packaging which was a contributing factor in the increase in waste generated by households by suggesting that the government and retailers be lobbied to reduce the amounts of unnecessary packaging.

The sub-group's report containing 6 recommendations was presented to Cabinet in September 2016. Although the main recommendation in relation to consulting residents on the introduction of an alternative weekly collection service was not accepted it was noted that should there be any changes to the service in the future then residents would be consulted on the options. Cabinet also agreed to extend the waste awareness and recycling campaigns for a further two years and to introduce planning guidance for developers on the provision of onsite waste and recycling storage facilities in new developments.

### *ADHD – Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee*

The sub-committee undertook a review of the support provided for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and their families. To gain an understanding of the services available in the borough the sub group met with parents, teachers,



Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and health professionals as well as officers from the Authority.

The sub group scrutinised current services available for those diagnosed with ADHD, across both social care and health, and made ten recommendations to Cabinet in November 2016 from establishing working groups to share good practice and deliver training to providing support sessions for children and their parents. Areas of policy development included in the recommendations were changes to the referral process, the implementation of a universal SEN support form and suggestions for non-punitive behaviour policies at schools.

#### *Cultural Development Plan – Culture and Leisure Sub-committee*

The Culture and Leisure Sub-committee has undertaken a review of the Cultural Development Plan with a focus on how the Council is able to deliver an effective cultural offer in a shrinking financial environment. The review is ongoing and the sub-committee will be looking to provide a view to Cabinet on the priorities the Cabinet Member should consider in agreeing the future growth areas for the next five years. The review will also consider ways to improve facilities by maximizing external funding opportunities.

#### *Older Person's Mental Health – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-committee*

The Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-committee has been undertaking a review of Older Person's Mental Health, the main focus of the review is to examine the support and services available for people with dementia, their families and carers, with a focus on those who are living at home. To date the sub-group have met with officers from Adult Social Care and North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group who helped to scope the review. The sub-group has also met with service users and service providers.

The sub-group has had the opportunity to put forward its views in relation to future support services for people with dementia and their carers to the Self Care and Prevention Board. The sub-group will be carrying out further work in relation to contributing to the development of the Older Persons Mental Health Strategy and reviewing the work around dementia friendly communities.

#### *Elective Home Education – Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee*

The Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee set up a sub-group to look at Elective Home Education, to review the policies in place and the support provided to families who choose to home educate. The sub-group met with relevant officers to discuss the authorities legal position and responsibilities in relation to elective home education and also consulted with some parents currently electively home educating

to gain some first hand experiences. The sub group has completed its work and it is anticipated that it's conclusions will be reported to Cabinet early in the next municipal year.

#### *Ongoing Business Support – Economic Prosperity Sub-committee*

The Economic Prosperity Sub-committee has been undertaking a review of ongoing business support with a focus on the range of support available to start-up businesses, the sustainability of new businesses in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years and whether providing extended and enhanced support would reduce the risk of businesses failing. The group has met with relevant officers and consulted with a range of external representatives, including the business factory and the North Shields Chamber of Trade to seek views on the experiences of local businesses on the support available and where any gaps may exist.

#### *Apprenticeships - Economic Prosperity Sub-committee*

During the autumn, members examined the impact of apprenticeships in North Tyneside, the Council's response to supporting apprenticeships and what more the Council could do to promote good practice. The sub-committee visited Chirton Engineering Ltd to learn about its apprenticeships and to speak directly with apprentices about their experiences. Members then discussed their findings with representatives from TyneMet College and the North Tyneside Learning Trust, the Young Cabinet Member for Ready for Work and Life and Council Officers. The scrutiny exercise identified a number of areas where the Council and its partners could develop and refine its approach and the sub-committee asked that officers take these into account in delivering future activity. This linked to the 'Our economy will have the right conditions to support investment and create new jobs, especially apprenticeships' objective of the Our North Tyneside Plan.

### **Monitoring reports**

Whilst helping to develop new policies and assisting in the review of others, scrutiny has also invested time in monitoring the development and delivery of existing plans and policies to ensure that the best quality services are delivered to residents and visitors of North Tyneside.

Some examples of the plans and policies that have been monitored throughout the year include:

Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees have continued to receive monitoring reports on service delivery and performance across the Council. Scrutiny Members have also had the opportunity to comment on various policies and strategies prior to submission to Cabinet for approval.

Housing sub committee has this year continued to review performance reports relating to housing repairs and housing investment work delivered through Kier North

Tyneside. Members have particularly focused on customer satisfaction, void times and repair quality.

*Flooding* - Environment Sub-committee has considered reports from the Surface Water and Drainage Partnership on a quarterly basis, along with the Killingworth and Longbenton Surface Water Management Plan. Members examined the Plan to look at various solutions to alleviate flooding in the area.

In addition to the above the Environment Sub-committee has also continued to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in respect of the two recent street lighting reports and the action plan for the implementation of the Newcastle and North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan. Members have also monitored the implementation of the cycling strategy and the public rights of way reports.

*Better Care Fund* – The Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-committee has received regular reports showing progress against the national specified metrics and targets relating to the Better Care Fund (BCF). Members have also received detailed information relating to projects funded through the BCF, including Telecare and CARE Point.

*Children, Young People and Learning Plan 2014-18* - following the outcome of a previous scrutiny study into child poverty, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee has received updates on the delivery of the Children, Young People and Learning Plan, to monitor the delivery of key services aimed at improving the lives of children and young people.

The Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee received the *North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's Annual* report in November 2016 and also received quarterly updates on work undertaken by the Authority and its partners to prevent and protect young people from sexual exploitation.

At the request of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee receives an annual report on the attainment of free school meals (FSM) / pupil premium (PP) pupils to monitor the effectiveness of the support and challenge to ensure these pupils attainment is comparable to those pupils not in receipt of FSMs or PP.

The Chairs and Deputy Chairs have continued to meet on a quarterly basis throughout the year to share information on ideas and topics for review, to identify issues where services could be improved for residents, and to avoid any potential areas of duplication.

# We have achieved

## *Recommendations*

During 2016-17, seven in-depth reviews were completed and reported to cabinet. Altogether, 73 recommendations were put forward to Cabinet and 5 were submitted to the NHS North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Of the 73 recommendations put forward to Cabinet, Cabinet accepted and set out action to implement 66 of them, one partially. The CCG accepted all 5 of the recommendations submitted to them in relation to carers' support and respite provision. These figures demonstrate the positive and influential impact that scrutiny is having on the development of policy.

Members will continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations that have been agreed and the subsequent outcomes on the delivery of services.

## *Engagement*

A key role of overview and scrutiny is to promote issues of concern to the public and, where appropriate, consult with residents and service users to gather their insight into an issue under scrutiny investigation.

Various pieces of work this year have involved engagement with service users. The contribution of families of children with ADHD was vital to the work of the ADHD sub group and as part of the review of Elective Home Education the group consulted with parents who had chosen to home educate their children to gain an understanding of their experience and any support the Council can offer. In relation to the Older Person's Mental Health Review, Members consulted with people with dementia and their families and carers. In addition, the Economic Prosperity Sub-committee has consulted with a range of external representatives as part of the review of business support, including the Business Factory and the North Shields Chamber of Trade.

In relation to the work carried out by the Future Constructions Options Sub-group, there was a need to engage with not only Council Officers but with the Senior Management of one of the main Council Partners for service delivery Kier North Tyneside, and gained particular insight and views from Tenant Representatives and Union Officials.

Scrutiny has also continued to work closely with its partners, maintaining positive relationships and sharing key information, particularly in relation to health issues and policing issues. Representatives of the Clinical Commissioning Group, Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust, Healthwatch, and the Care Quality Commission have all been in attendance at various meetings to share information and maintain key links with Members. The Housing sub-committee is designated as the crime and disorder committee and has worked with Northumbria Police to explore issues of

concern to residents, such as noise and nuisance neighbour complaints. It has also held discussions with the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to new initiatives brought in to deal with funding cuts and protect frontline services.

## **In the future**

Preparation for the development of the 2017/18 overview and scrutiny work programme began in February 2017, with discussion with officers at the Scrutiny Support Network to identify forthcoming policy issues. The Chairs and Deputy Chairs have met to discuss policy areas and prioritise topics for scrutiny during 2017-18. An invitation was sent to all Elected Members and senior officers to suggest topics that scrutiny could usefully investigate. A press release has also been published asking the public to put forward any suggestions of service areas or issues that they would like scrutiny to review.

All suggestions received will be allocated to the relevant sub-committee, with the topics being discussed and prioritised at the first meetings of the 2017/18 municipal year. There will also be some reviews begun or assigned for 2016-17 that will carry forward to next year. When prioritising topics, consideration will be given to whether the issue is timely and if it will contribute to the development of policy.

The Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee has agreed the establishment of a sub-group to review the services and performance of one of the main partners Capita.

# Meeting: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

**Date:** 3 April 2017

**Title:** Business Support Sub Group

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Author: Michael Robson, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 0191 643 5359

Service: Law & Governance

Wards affected: All

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## 1. Purpose of Report

To consider the report produced by the Business Support Sub Group.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

The committee is recommended to approve the report and its recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

## 3. Details

- 3.1 In September 2016 the Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee approved the appointment of the Business Support Sub Group to:
- a) examine the range of support available to start up businesses;
  - b) examine the sustainability of new businesses in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years;
  - c) consider whether providing extended and enhanced support for businesses in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 3.2 Having completed its investigation, the sub group prepared a report and a series of recommendations. These were considered by the Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2017 when it agreed to refer the report to the committee for consideration.
- 3.3 The chair of the sub-group, Councillor Peter Earley will present its findings, conclusions and recommendations. The sub group's report is attached as an appendix.

# Overview and Scrutiny Report

## Business Support



March 2017

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee is a scrutiny committee whose role is to review and challenge services and decision makers in relation to economic development, inward investment, transport networks and tourism. It has no decision making powers but it can make recommendations to the Elected Mayor, her Cabinet and other decision makers on how services might be improved.
- 1.2 In setting its work programme for 2016/17 the sub-committee heard from one its members who, based on his own experiences of setting up a new business, believed that whilst there was considerable and effective support for start up businesses, many encountered difficulties in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years and faltered. The sub-committee therefore agreed to investigate how many enterprises are not sustainable beyond this period, the impact this has on employment and the economy and whether additional support could be provided to businesses over a longer period of time.
- 1.3 Following preliminary enquiries the sub-committee established a time limited sub group to undertake the study and in particular to:
  - a) examine the range of support available to start up businesses;
  - b) examine the sustainability of new businesses in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years;
  - c) consider whether providing extended and enhanced support for businesses in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 1.4 In undertaking the exercise the sub-committee were seeking to contribute to the Council's Our North Tyneside Plan which states that "our economy will grow by building on our strengths, including our existing world-class companies, and small and growing businesses."

## 2. National and Regional Context

- 2.1 Nationally the Government has recognised that the rate of start up businesses in the UK is comparable with other countries such as the US<sup>1</sup> and that the success of start up businesses is not dependent on the quantity or quality of support provided but the drive and skills of the individuals involved. The Government has therefore concluded that investment in support for start ups does not produce sufficient returns and it has decided to prioritise support for businesses who have the potential for high growth, typically after 2 years of operation. The rate of businesses to achieve this position is less in the UK than other countries.
- 2.2 The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), a voluntary partnership between local authorities and businesses, published its Strategic Economic Plan

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<sup>1</sup> But there are fewer business start ups in the North East compared with England.



(SEP) in March 2014, the region's road map to economic success. The plan acknowledges that the area continues to have a significant deficit of private sector employment compared to most other parts of the UK. Whilst business births and deaths are in line with the rest of the country when measured against the existing stock of businesses, too few private enterprises are created to build the low base of private firms towards levels found in other regions, and too few of these grow to become significant providers of employment. There are almost 57,000 businesses in the region of which 89% have fewer than 20 employees. In addition, the area has a low number of businesses per head.

- 2.3 The LEP's goal is to create more and better jobs, so that by 2024, 60,000 new private sector jobs will have been created, 60% of which (36,000) will be higher skilled & higher paid jobs, and to create a world class business support and finance ecosystem that enables more businesses to grow.
- 2.4 Research has shown that 1% of businesses create a third of new jobs. In the North East, 420 businesses, employing 15,500 people, accounted for 33% of Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>2</sup> during 2014. The estimated impact of increasing the number of growing businesses by 25% would be 2,786 additional jobs and £130m additional GVA.
- 2.5 The LEP therefore places greater emphasis on intensively supporting the relatively small proportion of businesses that contribute a disproportionate amount of growth rather than addressing the gap in business formation and density rates. Start up support are not over-looked and self-employment and new businesses in new sectors are both key characteristics of a vibrant and inclusive economy, but with scarce resources available the LEP believes it is important that interventions are concentrated on those most likely to create more and better jobs.

### **3. The North East Growth Hub**

- 3.1 In October 2015 the Government announced the closure of the Business Growth Service which incorporated a range of services aimed at businesses with the potential to improve and grow. It included the GrowthAccelerator programme and the Manufacturing Advisory Service. The North East LEP has commented that the removal of Business Growth Service and the Manufacturing Advisory Service has resulted in a 'donut effect' in the North East business support ecosystem as other programmes were designed around it.
- 3.2 In its place, the Government has challenged LEPs across the country to co-ordinate business support at the local level through Growth Hubs, a single place where businesses can go to get help. The vision is that Growth Hubs will improve the coordination of support provided by local public and private sector partners, creating a more streamlined and coherent offer for businesses, based around local needs.
- 3.3 In the North East, the LEP is responsible for delivery of The North East Growth Hub. This is a website to help micro, small and medium enterprises access the business

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<sup>2</sup> GVA is a measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area.

funding and support they need to grow. The Government is committed to providing £500,000 per year towards the development of the Growth Hub for the next two years, beyond which it envisaged that the hub will become commercially self financing. Future development of the hub will involve greater use of social media, a message forum, tracking usage to target advertising and marketing.

- 3.4 The group heard that the proposed devolution deal with the North East Combined Authority would have been a key component in delivering a flexible and co-ordinated programme for business growth in the region. As the deal was not to be progressed the region was back to delivering a pipeline of different projects.
- 3.5 In the absence of the devolution deal it was suggested that the Council could become part of a hub and spoke model, if someone within the Council could be a reference point for referencing SMEs to the Growth Hub and recording and inputting data about the Council's interaction with SMEs to build a more comprehensive picture. The LEP could also share with the Council its list of scale up businesses who they may wish to support.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**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.**

## **4 The North East and North Tyneside Business Support Ecosystem**

- 4.1 The sub group discovered that the North East business support ecosystem is made up of a wide range of organisations delivering different programmes. Members met with representatives from a sample of business support providers to better understand the range of support available, to judge its effectiveness and to identify whether there are any gaps in provision.
- 4.2 The sub group met with representatives of two providers operating across the region, TEDCO and NBSL:
  - a) TEDCO is an enterprise agency that delivers a number of business support programmes to both pre and post start businesses in the region including the New Enterprise Allowance, Virgin Start-up Loans and Start & Grow, a programme which provides support to individuals looking to develop businesses over a period of up to 3 years. TEDCO also provides an element of the North Tyneside Business Factory's offer.
  - b) NBSL is an enterprise agency based in Northumberland, It delivers funding and support programmes to help people to start their own business and it supports existing businesses to grow and develop. It delivers the North East Business Support Fund across the Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Durham areas. The Fund provides up to 35% grant funding for business improvement projects valued between £3,000 and £8,000. Therefore the minimum grant is £1,000 and the maximum £2,800.

- 4.3 North Tyneside appears to be well served in terms of business support. The North Tyneside Business Factory has a successful track record in terms of GVA. This is reflected in the fact that it has won national awards, has a positive reputation and is a recognised brand across the region.
- 4.4 Having previously focussed on start ups, the Business Factory now delivers an extended programme of not only start up support but also high growth start up support, specialist consultancies for any small or medium sized enterprise and support for social enterprises. This programme is jointly funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the Council. The Council contributes £300,000 to the overall cost of the £600,000 programme. Generally there is a perception that there is a lack of business support advisors for more established businesses but the new programme delivered from the Business Factory has addressed this need in North Tyneside.
- 4.5 North Tyneside has been complemented for being proactive in commissioning the Business Factory and seeking to increase the number of start up businesses which in turn creates employment and is likely to lead to an increase in the number of businesses surviving. However, this approach appears to be inconsistent with the priority given by the Government and the LEP to targeting diminishing public resources at those businesses who have the potential for high growth and therefore the greatest likelihood of creating new jobs.
- 4.6 The sub group heard that the vast majority of businesses in North Tyneside are sole traders or micro businesses. This sector therefore accounts for a significant proportion of the borough's economy and economy. The sub group supports the continued investment in supporting start ups on the grounds that increased numbers of businesses, however small, increases employment and the greater number of start ups the greater the likelihood of businesses becoming high growth.

### **Recommendation 2**

**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.**

- 4.7 The sub group also received, and it wishes to highlight, positive comments that the Council benefits from having a visible, pro-active and responsive economic development function.
- 4.8 It is clear that much of the business support ecosystem is heavily dependent on European funding. Inevitably there is a great deal of uncertainty about the future of European funded programmes following the outcome of the referendum in June 2016. Whilst the UK will remain members of the European Union for up to 2 years after Article 50 is triggered, it has been suggested that funding programmes could be in place up until 2020 as the UK has already contributed to these. If the Government are to replace European funded programmes it will be important to ensure there are no breaks in funding so that the delivery infrastructure can be maintained.

### **Recommendation 3**

**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.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**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.**

## **5. Factors for Growth**

- 5.1 In discussing the state of business support with policy makers, providers and the business community the sub group identified a range of barriers to business growth and characteristics of growing businesses. These are set out below. The sub group gave consideration as to how the Council and its partners might enhance the support they provide to businesses to enable them to overcome these barriers and achieve those characteristics for high growth.

## **6. Access to Finance**

- 6.1 There have been significant changes in the nature of finance available to start up and growing businesses. Generally there has been less money available for investment from traditional sources such as banks and from families. There has also been a shift away from publicly funded business grants towards a greater emphasis on loan finance. Some say this has been a good thing because it reduces the culture of grant dependency.
- 6.2 There are a range of loan funds available such as Virgin Start Up Loans which offer low interest loans of up to £25,000 to businesses less than two years old. The region has been successful in securing the £145m North East Fund (also known as JEREMIE2) which over the next five years, will provide pump loan, equity and mezzanine funding into new and existing fast-growing businesses across a wide range of sectors. It is envisaged that the North East Fund will help finance viable firms unable or partially unable to secure loan funding from the banks and other sources.
- 6.3 The sub group heard that access to finance is a critical factor in the growth and sustainability of businesses. Whilst the North East Fund and other loan offers are welcome there remains demand among small businesses for small capital grants. It is clear that new and different models of funding are required.

- 6.4 The sub group gave consideration as to whether the Council, could contribute to the range of financing options available, by offering finance through mechanisms such as a revolving fund. A revolving fund would involve the Council establishing an account from which it would provide discounted loans whilst the account would be continuously replenished by income or repayments.
- 6.5 If the Council were to proceed with such a scheme careful consideration would have to be given to:
- a) whether the scheme should be targeted at priority sectors or geographical areas to maximise its impact;
  - b) the likely administrative costs, which experience has shown can prove to be significant;
  - c) securing the initial capital financial investment. The sub group noted that when the Council previously provided financial services as part of the City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget programmes the initial capital sum was provided by the Tyne and Wear Development Company (TWEDCO); and
  - d) ensuring that the scheme complies with the relevant laws and regulations regarding state aid.
- 6.6 The sub group also gave consideration to examples of crowd funding schemes. Crowdfunding is a way of raising finance by asking a large number of people each for a small amount of money. Newcastle City Council has partnered with Funding Circle, a peer-to-peer lender, to provide a new funding option for businesses in the city. This is part a drive by the City Council to promote crowd funding as a new and innovative option for funding business growth. Loans are available from £5,000 - £1million and are highly flexible. Typically each loan is funded by hundreds of people willing to invest. There were no operational costs for the City Council. Whilst it had given a commitment to invest in some projects, experience had shown that sufficient funding had been forthcoming without the need for the Council's contribution.

### **Recommendation 5**

**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.**

## **7. Property**

- 7.1 Growing businesses need access to suitable and affordable property. SMEs often struggle because they have a lack of knowledge in relation to property matters. The Business Factory now offers a consultancy service in relation to property and this is welcomed.
- 7.2 The Council, through its partner Capita, manages a range of commercial properties across the borough, including retail, office and industrial properties. Due to the size and nature these units they are attractive to small local businesses. The Council provides incentives for new tenants and this approach appears to be successful in that start up businesses tend to succeed.

- 7.3 A recent rationalisation of Council property has resulted in some assets being sold to generate £1.4m of investment to refurbish other units. If further capital investment could be secured then the Council could improve the condition of its property, make it more attractive to businesses and generate increased income. It is understood that at present however the Council has no plans to acquire more property.
- 7.4 In the context of the Council's ongoing office accommodation review the sub group explored options for investing in the refurbishment of surplus property to provide more small incubator units aimed at start up and growing businesses. The sub group were mindful of the benefits of sub dividing properties to create smaller units, attractive to start up businesses and eligible for small business rate relief i.e. with a rateable value of less than £12,000.
- 7.5 The sub group was however mindful that any investment would have to be based on good evidence that demand existed. Anecdotal evidence received by the sub group suggested that there is sufficient office, retail and small industrial properties available. The greatest immediate need appears to be for larger industrial units available for immediate occupation.

#### **Recommendation 6**

**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.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**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.**

### **8. Business Rates**

- 8.1 Most businesses are liable to pay business rates to the Council. Business rates are charged on most non-domestic properties, like shops, offices and factories.
- 8.2 Small business rate relief is available if a business only uses one property or if the property's rateable value is less than £12,000. Business representatives commented to the sub group that the small business rate relief system provides a disincentive to SMEs to expand. This is because the small business rate relief is not available to businesses who operate from more than one property.
- 8.3 Prior to April 2013 local businesses paid business rates to the Council who then paid the money into one single national pool. The money was then distributed back to local authorities by the Government in the form of grants. Since April 2013, local government as a whole has kept 50% of the business rates collected as a 'local' share. The remaining 50% central share continues to be paid to the Government and

is used to pay grants to councils. Individual local authorities keep 50% of any growth in rates collected in their area above those projected.

- 8.4 In October 2015, the Government announced that, by 2020, local government will retain 100% of the business rates they raise locally. The Government wants to make sure that local authorities have an incentive to grow their income from business rates and that they can keep all the growth they generate.
- 8.5 The proposed changes to the business rates system provide the Council with a very clear incentive to promote and support the growth of businesses in North Tyneside which in turn will generate additional income to spend on local services.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**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.**

- 8.6 The collection of business rates provides the Council with a valuable database of all businesses in North Tyneside. As a matter course the Council communicates at least once a year with all businesses when it sends out the business rate bills.
- 8.7 Whilst North Tyneside appears to be well served in terms of business support and it benefits from a range of support offered by the Business Factory, the sub group were concerned that not all small businesses in the borough may be aware of its availability. As the Council corresponds with all businesses in relation to business rates the sub group concluded that this provides the Council with an opportunity to promote the Business Factory and other business support services by including promotional material with business rate bills. As bills are now sent electronically such material could be sent at little cost.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**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.**

### **9. Procurement**

- 9.1 The Council spends a significant sum on goods and services purchased from the private sector and social enterprises. This expenditure can help support the sustainability of local businesses and have a positive effect on the local economy and local employment. However, there is a perception among the local business community that access to local authority contracts is complex and too onerous. The sub group heard accounts of the difficulties in registering on the North East Purchasing Organisation's (NEPO) website and on the quantity and complexity of work required by businesses to tender or quote for Council contracts. Business representatives suggested that the Council might commit itself to procuring a proportion of its works and services from local small businesses.

- 9.2 In response to these comments, the sub group heard that the Council has invested a significant amount of time, helping local firms understand opportunities, how to bid for work and to simplify and standardise documentation. The Council has particularly focussed its efforts on social care and construction because these are the areas where a lot of its spend goes. The Council's partners Engie, Capita and Kier are all very clear on the importance of the local supply chain. Kier North Tyneside and Capita have spent a great deal of time working with their supply chains to increase local spend, including a great deal of time spent working on understanding the travel to work area as a meaningful measure of local. The Elected Mayor has made it clear that she wants the Council to work hard on local supply and making sure businesses were paid on time. Kier in particular, have changed their national terms of business to pay within 30 days and performance is measured against this on a routine basis. Given the high proportion of construction work which is subcontracted and subcontracted locally, that is an important gain for local business and a direct consequence of their feedback.
- 9.3 The Council's procurement service is delivered through its partnership with Engie. There is no obligation within the contract with Engie that requires them to procure any proportion of goods and services from local companies. Any such requirement may breach competition rules. However the importance of trading with local businesses has been recognised through key performance indicators but this has proven to be problematic as Engie has no control over the extent to which local companies will tender for the works or their capability to supply the goods and services required.
- 9.3 The process through which companies submit quotations or tenders for Council contracts is dependent on the value of the contract and determined by the rules laid down in the Council's Contract Standing Orders. Officers indicated to the sub group that the thresholds and the wording contained in Standing Orders could be reviewed with a view to simplifying the process for SMEs.
- 9.4 Businesses can register on the NEPO website to receive details of contracts they may be interested in but some had complained they had been bombarded with irrelevant notifications. This is because the system is based on national classifications and beyond NEPO's control. NEPO provides support to businesses through a business club and training focussed on how to navigate around the system, how to address social value and how to tender effectively.
- 9.5 In February 2016 the Council adopted a social value policy. The policy provides for the consideration of economic, social and environmental benefits for the people and communities of North Tyneside through the procurement and delivery of services. The policy has now been in place for one year. Whilst officers within the Council now have a better understanding of social value and how to incorporate it into procurement exercises, social value questions are being refined and support and advice is being developed to assist businesses in how to respond to such questions.
- 9.6 The Council's procurement strategy is currently under review and will be presented to Cabinet for approval in the near future. Whilst recognising the work already undertaken by the Council and its partners in improving access to the procurement processes, increasing local spend and ensuring businesses are paid on time, the



sub group suggests that current review could take account of the information obtained by the sub-group to allow further consideration to how the Council can maximise its trade with, and receive feedback from, local businesses.

### **Recommendation 10**

**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.**

## **10. Leadership, Management and Entrepreneurial Skills**

10.1 Many businesses have the potential to grow, but this is not exploited because the owners or managers lack the vision, ambition or leadership skills needed. The Group heard directly from the business community that many SMEs do not expand because there is a fear and reluctance among owners of losing control of their business through expansion. It was also reported that business leaders in the UK tend to be risk averse. There is therefore a need to raise ambition and confidence among businesses leaders. Young people in particular need to be inspired and supported to become the next generation of entrepreneurs.

10.2 In North Tyneside the Business Factory's current programme only allows work with young people aged 16 and over. In this respect it works in sixth forms to raise awareness of self employment as a career option.

10.3 The sub group are aware that there are a range of activities delivered in schools to develop entrepreneurial skills and to promote self employment and business ownership as a career option but as this area fell outside the scope of the study the sub group chose not to examine it in detail.

## **11 Wider Council Support for Businesses**

11.1 The Council engages with local businesses in many and varied ways, often working closely with new small businesses to help them grow. For example the Council has supported the development of cafes as part of the coastal regeneration plans and a lot of work is undertaken to help establish and grow businesses within the social care sector. The Council also has contact with many SMEs through its regulatory functions such as planning, licensing and environmental health. The sub group believes that there is the potential to equip officers working in these areas with a greater knowledge regarding the business support services that are available. This would enable a wider group of officers to contribute to signposting businesses in need of support to the appropriate service.

### **Recommendation 11**

**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.**

## **12 Business to Business Support**

- 12.1 The sub group heard that there is capacity and a willingness within the business sector to provide peer support. The North Tyneside Business Forum seeks to create a supportive network between local business groups, Chambers of Trade, the Council, the education sector and community and third sector organisations. The Chair of the Forum suggested to the sub group that there are opportunities for the Council to work with the business community to create a structure within which business to business support could be developed such as drop in surgeries which, if well publicised, would be effective. This model is in line with TEDCO's vision for the future system of business support where the role of the public sector would be as 'informed networkers' introducing clients to business to business networks.

### **Recommendation 12**

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

## **13. Internationalisation/Exports**

- 13.1 High growth businesses tend to be successful in securing access to new and international markets. The low business density rate in the North East region limits opportunities for local trading therefore if local businesses are to grow they should look to export. The sub group notes that the primary sources of support for businesses in accessing international markets are from the Department for International Trade and the North East Chamber of Commerce and that there is not a significant role for the Council.

## **14. Innovation**

- 14.1 The North East region is near the bottom of the English league for expenditure by businesses in research and development. Innovation is an important factor in stimulating economic growth and creating new wealth and high value jobs.
- 14.2 There are good examples of innovation in the region, such as NETPark, an internationally recognised incubator and innovation hub for science and technology companies in Sedgefield. The North East LEP promotes smart specialisation, which targets research, development and innovation in key areas of strength. The LEP's smart specialisation areas include: passenger vehicle manufacture; subsea and offshore technology; life sciences and healthcare; and creative, digital, software and technology-based services.

14.3 The innovation element of the Business Factory programme is to be developed when other programmes emerge to avoid duplication.

14.4 The sub group noted that North Tyneside does not have an identifiable innovation hub. Whilst there is an informal cluster of offshore technology companies in the Wallsend area and a concentration of information technology companies on the Cobalt Business Park, the sub group acknowledges that the Council has no clear strategy at present to establish an innovation hub aimed at attracting high growth companies to the borough.

## **15. Digital Technology**

15.1 High growth businesses tend to be effective in adopting digital technologies. However there is a pronounced gap in the provision of support to enable businesses to better use technology to drive business growth. The LEP has established relationships with corporate partners such as Google and Microsoft and is seeking to develop these partnerships to enable businesses to grow through better adoption of technology.

## **16 Sales**

16.1 There is little support for businesses on the development of sales skills. Activities are delivered at scale across the North East ecosystem about generating enquiries rather than sales, but there is little support to develop the skills to convert the enquiries into actual sales. When businesses are growing this is an issue as the main sales person tends to be the founder and one of their key challenges is to develop sales capacity across the organisation. To grow businesses need to grow the power of their sales engine. The LEP intend to carry out further research to validate the need for more support. In the meantime the Business Factory offers specialist consultancy support to businesses in North Tyneside in relation to marketing, branding, public relations and social media.

## **17 Human Resources**

17.1 The business community cite the complex and onerous framework of employment regulations as a significant barrier to growth. The Group heard of one company who had incurred £3,000 of additional costs to ensure it was compliant with pensions regulations. The specialist consultancy service offered by the Business Factory does not currently include human resources advice.

## 18 Background Information

18.1 The following background documentary papers have been used in the compilation of this report and copies of these documents are available from the Democratic Support Officer:

- Notes and briefing papers relating to meetings of the sub group
- Business Support Sub Group Scoping Document and Work Programme
- Report and Minutes of the Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee - 13 September 2016
- Our North Tyneside Plan
- Fit for the Future: A Fresh Approach to Business Support in the North East
- North East Local Enterprise Partnership: Business Support Review
- More and Better Jobs: A Strategic Economic Plan for the North East
- Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention DCLG Consultation Documents

## 19 Acknowledgements

The working group would like to place on record its thanks and appreciation to the following individuals for their assistance providing the evidence on which this report is based:

Sean Collier, Senior Manager (Business and Enterprise)  
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Allison Mitchell, Senior Manager Audit, Procurement and Risk  
Marc Oldham, Senior Auditor  
Julie Gullen, Procurement Manager  
Denise Pearson, Procurement Manager  
Niall Cathie, Strategic Asset Manager  
Ian McMullen, Principal Estates Surveyor  
Paul Hanson, Deputy Chief Executive  
Janice Gillespie, Head of Finance

John King, Northumberland Business Services Ltd (NBSL)  
Colin Bell, Business Growth Director, North East Local Enterprise Partnership  
Tom Smyth, Deputy Area Director, Yorkshire, Humber and North East Cities and Local Growth Unit  
Carole White, Chief Executive TEDCO

Members of the North Shields Chamber of Trade :

Paul Murphy  
John McKell  
Gordon Redpath  
David Hodgson  
David Bavaird  
Kelly Oliver Dougall

**Meeting:** Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

**Date:** 3 April 2017

**Title:** Report of the Elective Home Education Sub Group

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**Author:** Elective Home Education Sub Group Tel: 0191 643 5313

**Service:** Law and Governance

**Wards affected:** All

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### 1. Purpose of Report

To consider a report produced by the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee's Elective Home Education (EHE) Sub Group.

### 2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and approve the EHE Sub Group report and its recommendations and refer it to Cabinet; and
2. To 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.

### 3. Details

- 3.1 At its meeting in July 2016, Children, Education and Skills sub-committee received a report relating to Elective Home Education. Following consideration of the information, Members expressed concern at the lack of powers held by the local authority to check the quality of education being provided to those children outside of the school setting. At this meeting it was decided that a sub-group be established to carry out a review in this area during the 2016/17 municipal year.
- 3.2 Following consideration of background information in relation to Elective Home Education, the sub-group agreed the following remit at the beginning of the study:
  - 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.

3.3 Following discussions with officers, and some consultation with elective home educating parents, the sub-group made eight recommendations. These recommendations aim 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.

3.4 The report was submitted to the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee on 20 March 2017 for endorsement. At the meeting the sub-committee amended recommendation 1 by adding the words 'and encourages other Leaders, Elected Mayors and Executive Members for Education at other Local Authorities to do the same'. The recommendation now reads as follows:

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.

3.5 The sub-committee considered that other local authorities would agree that children had a right to a good education and would add their voice to North Tyneside's for a change to the law.

3.6 The findings, recommendations and amended recommendation 1 can be read in the full report attached at Appendix 1.

3.7 The amended report has been submitted to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for its approval for submission to Cabinet, in accordance with Part 4.3 Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Rules of Procedure in the Authority's Constitution.

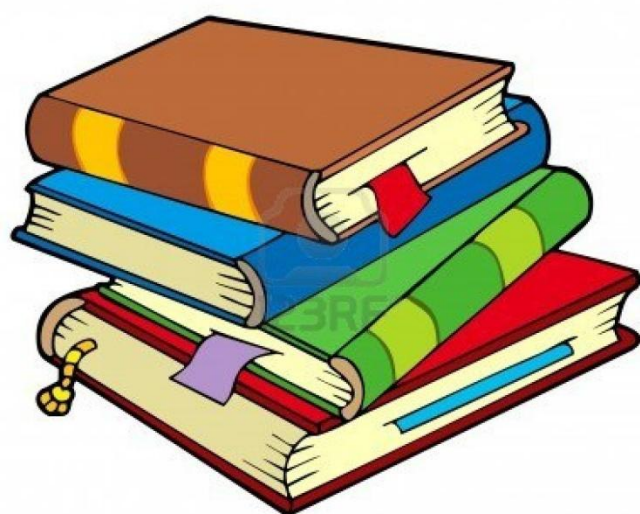
3.8 The sub-committee has also recommended that Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee refers the matter of elective home education to the North East Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and requests them to make a recommendation to the North East Leadership Board that the Chair 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.

#### **4. Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Report of the Elective Home Education Sub Group.

Overview and Scrutiny Report

# Elective Home Education



March 2017



North Tyneside Council

## **2. Reason for the study**

- 2.1 At its meeting in July 2016, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee received a report which set out background information in relation to Elective Home Education.
- 2.2 Members of the sub-committee had expressed some concerns as to the authorities' ability to check the quality of education being received by those outside of the formal school process. As the Attendance and Placement Team was due to review North Tyneside's policy on Elective Home Education, it was agreed that a review be undertaken to look at the current practices and local authority role in relation to home educating.
- 2.3 The topic linked to the Our People theme of the Our North Tyneside Plan, especially 'Be supported to achieve their full potential, especially our children and young people'.

## **3. Remit and method**

- 3.1 Following consideration of background information in relation to Elective Home Education, the sub-group agreed the following remit at the beginning of the study:
- 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.
- 3.2 The following Members volunteered to serve on the group:
- Councillor Matthew Thirlaway (Chair)
  - Councillor M Rankin
  - Councillor L Spillard
  - Mr G O'Hanlon (Church representative)
- 3.3 The group met with officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to gather information on the role that the Council has in relation to Elective Home Education and the powers available to the Council in ensuring an appropriate education is provided. The sub-group also obtained information relating to why parents choose home education and the latest figures.
- 3.4 The sub-group felt that it was important to consult directly with parents that were currently home educating. Through information provided by the service area, the sub-group was able to invite all current known home educators along to a meeting to discuss their experiences and the relationship that they have with the local authority. Unfortunately, only one parent was able to attend the meeting. However, the discussion provided the sub-group with



invaluable insight into home educating and ideas as to how minor changes could be made to current processes, in order for additional support to be available for home educators.

- 3.5 Following the meeting, a further email request was sent to home educators asking for any general comments on their experiences or ideas to improve the dialogue with the local authority. This generated one further representation.

## **4. Findings and evidence**

### **4.1 Definition of Elective Home Education**

4.1.1 Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used to describe parents' decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is a different situation to home tuition provided by a local authority or education provided by a local authority other than at a school. Children whose parents elect to educate them at home are not registered at a school. Some parents may choose to engage private tutors or other adults to assist them in providing a suitable education, but there is no requirement to do so. Learning may take place in a variety of locations, not just the family home.

4.1.2 In England, education is compulsory, but school is not. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –  
(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and  
(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Whilst an 'efficient' and 'suitable' education are not defined in the Education Act 1996, 'efficient' has been broadly described in case law as an education that 'achieves that which it sets out to achieve' and a 'suitable' education is one that 'primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so'.

4.1.3 Parents are not required to register or seek approval from the local authority to educate their children at home. Exercising the right to home educate can begin from a very early age and the child may not have been previously enrolled at school. Parents may also elect to home educate at any other stage up to the end of compulsory school age. When parents choose to electively home educate their children they assume financial responsibility, which includes all learning materials and examination entries. A child can re-enter the schooling system at any point (though not necessarily the school they left depending on the current demand). The most common reasons for doing this are the financial burden placed on families, especially in relation to examination fees, and the desire of the child to be in the school setting.

## 4.2 National and Local Picture

- 4.2.1 Responses from Freedom of Information requests from 190 local authorities placed the number of children home educated in the UK at 36,609. However, as there is no legal obligation for parents to inform the local authority they are home educating, it is likely that this figure will be significantly higher. Available data demonstrates that nationally there has been a 65% increase in children recorded as home educated over a period of 6 years.<sup>1</sup> Parents being more astute about the law and social media promoting home educating has been attributed to this rise in children being educated outside of school. Reasons for parents choosing to home educate include lifestyle, dissatisfaction or disagreements with local schools, special needs, bullying and religion.
- 4.2.2 In North Tyneside there are currently (as of February 2017) 41 children (that are known of) being electively home educated. This number fluctuates on a regular basis, particularly at the beginning of the school year. Reasons provided for home educating by families in North Tyneside include: not getting their desired school; unhappy with certain arrangements at current school; lifestyle choice; medical and child refuses to attend school. For some young people the reason is unknown as the family have opted not to engage with the local authority.
- 4.2.3 The sub-group recognised that 41 children was a very small percentage of the overall school population (0.14%) but felt strongly that the education of each child was of the utmost importance and therefore the local authority should do all it can to support parents in their choice to home educate. This is particularly important as research demonstrates that the trend for home education is on the rise. The group was clear that they (and the authority) fully respect the right and the choice of parents to home educate.

## 4.3 Legal position of local authorities

- 4.3.1 Once the local authority is informed by a school (or other agency) that a child is being home educated, contact will be made with the parents/guardians to try and arrange an appointment to visit the family. The visits, made by the authorities Attendance and Placement Officer, are there to monitor the range of the activities/lessons being delivered and to offer some advice. Some parents choose to engage in this process, however, some decline the opportunity to share any information with the local authority.
- 4.3.2 Local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis; parents are under no duty to respond to informal enquiries. However, under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, the local authority can intervene if it appears parents are not providing a suitable education. If this is suspected, perhaps following information provided by family members or friends/neighbours, the authority can issue a school attendance order. The order would specify the school where the child should be registered. If parents did not comply with the order, they would be committing an offence, unless they could prove their child was receiving a

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<sup>1</sup> BBC News, 21 December 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35133119>

suitable education. The sub-group recognised that this situation would very much be a last resort.

- 4.3.3 Members of the sub-group expressed concern at the limited access local authorities have to monitor the education of children being electively home educated. This was both from an educational and safeguarding point of view. Whilst the group fully recognised that there would be families providing a very good level of education within the home, there may be other instances where parents/guardians are not equipped to deliver a suitable education. It was also felt that there needed to be a clearer definition of what constituted a 'suitable' and 'efficient' education, with some minimum standards that should be achieved by a particular age. This would help parents to plan and deliver the education that they devise.
- 4.3.4 The group felt that the local authority should have an automatic right of access to a child being electively home educated. This was on the basis that every child is entitled to a good quality education. The group also discussed the potential safeguarding issues in relation to home education and the difficulties between the local authority being responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and having no guaranteed access to children being educated outside of the school system.
- 4.3.5 The group acknowledged that in the vast majority of instances there are no safeguarding issues related to a families choice to home educate, stating that a child in the school system is just as likely to be the victim of some form of domestic abuse. However, it was acknowledged that it was more likely that signs of abuse and/or neglect would be picked up within the school setting and interventions could be put in place. On this basis, the group felt that it was important for the local authority to have a right to access home educated children.
- 4.3.6 The group felt that the government should be lobbied to make changes to the law to ensure that local authorities are able to carry out its duty in promoting safeguarding and welfare in relation to electively home educated children. It was also agreed that the government should be lobbied to change and strengthen the definition around what an 'efficient' and 'suitable' is and to set down some minimum standards that should be worked towards. The group was clear that this was in no way trying to take away the right of a parent to home educate, rather it was trying to support the right of a child to a good education.

**Recommendation 1: 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.**

#### **4.4 Support for parents and children/young people**

- 4.4.1 Once a parent(s) decides to electively home educate their child(ren) they take full responsibility for devising and delivering a learning plan and providing all the associated resources. Parents at different stages of their home educating

journey will have valuable tips that could be useful to other families. This could include ideas of lesson plans, good places to get resources, events that are happening and places to visit that have educational packs.

4.4.2 Whilst there are some networking structures in place for elective home educating parents (independent of the local authority) to share ideas and in some instances teach collaboratively, it was acknowledged that not all parents engage in these and therefore lack any additional support. The sub-group thought about how the local authority, whilst respecting its role in the delivery of home education, could provide parents with some additional support and help them to help themselves. Whilst the local authority will try to engage with parents to get an impression of how they intend to provide an efficient education within the home and/or community setting, they will not provide any expert advice on the delivery of education. Parents in similar situations would be best placed to share this information.

4.4.3 Members felt that a 'notice board' type area on the relevant part of the Council's website would provide an opportunity to allow parents to share helpful tips and information. This would have to be facilitated by the Attendance and Placement Team, with parents sending them relevant information to be uploaded. Officers felt that this wouldn't be resource intensive to facilitate and that it may help increase the number of families willing to engage with the local authority. As the website can be accessed by all, it would ensure that all elective home educating parents, whether engaged in networks or not, would have access to some additional support and resource. The 'notice board' could be reviewed 6 months from implementation to identify levels of usage and parents could be canvassed on whether they have found the facility useful.

**Recommendation 2: 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.**

#### 4.5 Identifying resources

4.5.1 When parents decide to electively home educate, they assume all financial responsibility for the delivery of a suitable education. This includes books, equipment, examination entries and excursions. This can amount to a significant amount of money and is one of the reasons children are re-introduced to the schooling system. At the meeting that the sub-group invited parents to attend, it was highlighted that some steps could be taken to try and help home educating parents to acquire resources at a reduced cost.

4.5.2 Whilst it is not compulsory for home educating parents to follow the National Curriculum, some choose to do so or at least to some extent. It was raised that text books used in school, which become redundant due to changes in the curriculum, would still be useful to families home educating. It was suggested that schools could offer these unwanted books, along with any other resources such as science equipment, to parents for a small cost. This could save parents on the expense of buying materials and also provide a small amount of additional income for the school. A school could inform the Attendance and Placement Team that they have equipment available, who would then email parents to offer the opportunity on a first come first served

basis. Alternatively, if a dedicated area of the website is implemented (see Recommendation 2), this is the sort of information that could be posted, providing an efficient and accessible means of communicating with parents.

**Recommendation 3: 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.**

#### 4.6 Communication with parents

4.6.1 The sub-group recognised that some families are starting their home educating journey following a disagreement or dissatisfaction with the local authority, perhaps relating to allocation of places or processes within a school. It can therefore sometimes be difficult to establish a relationship with the parents and child(ren) due to a reluctance to engage with the local authority. The limited number of parents that engaged with the review was a possible indicator of this.

4.6.2 However, for the local authority to provide an adequate level of support to families home educating, to help young people access a quality education, effective relationships need to be built around mutual respect. The sub-group noted that the way in which the local authority communicates with parents could be changed, in order to make the interaction more friendly and informal. Reference was made to the letters sent out to parents seeking to arrange an appointment to visit the family and how these could be revised to be free of council jargon. It was also noted that communications needed to be changed dependent on the authorities' interaction with the family; those with a long standing relationship do not need a formal letter seeking an annual visit. It was also highlighted that the use of email should be promoted to a greater extent, as a more efficient means of communication.

4.6.3 During the course of the review, officers in the Attendance and Placement Team were reviewing the 'Elective Home Education Guidance for Parents and Carers' document. The sub-group highlighted the need for this document to also be as user friendly as possible and minimise the use of jargon/legal speak. It was felt important that the guidance needs to clearly set out the rights of families to choose to home educate and how the authority respects this decision. The tone of the guidance needed to balance the rights of the family against the role of the local authority in the delivery of education.

4.6.4 To be able to support home educators effectively, the local authority needs to be aware of what support parents feel they need, so that this can be signposted. The sub-group noted that this may be difficult to achieve due to the reluctance of some electively home educating parents to engage with the authority. It was felt that when consulting with parents on issues related to home education, i.e. reviews of guidance, officers should use different methods (email, social media, focus groups) to try and engage parents in order to establish their needs and concerns.

**Recommendation 4: 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.

**Recommendation 5: 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.**

#### 4.7 Sharing key messages

- 4.7.1 During discussions with an electively home educating parent, it was highlighted that, whilst children within the school system will routinely be offered (and given) inoculations, parents electively home educating will need to find this information for themselves. There was concern that this could lead to some children not having the opportunity of inoculations due to lack of awareness. This is information that the authority has readily available and could share with families where the child(ren) is not educated within the school system.
- 4.7.2 It was acknowledged that some information has been passed onto parents in the past, but this needed to be done in a systematic way to ensure no families were missed and information distributed at relevant times. It was suggested details could be sent out at the beginning of each school year to all families known to the local authority.
- 4.7.3 The group discussed other public health messages that routinely get sent out to all children through schools, especially in relation to diet and exercise. This information could also be sent to families that are home educating, which would include guidance on healthy meals and the benefits of exercise, including the communal aspect of sport. It would also signpost any opportunities to get involved in free swims or free activities. Spreading this information to all parents, not just those with children registered at school, gives everyone the same access to key public health messages designed to tackle issues such as childhood obesity.

**Recommendation 6: 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.**

**Recommendation 7: 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.**

#### 4.8 Reintegration into school system

- 4.8.1 It was suggested that, due to the upward trend in home schooling, there may also be an increase in the number of children re-entering the school system having been educated at home for a period of time. This may be due to changes in family circumstances or a desire of the child to go to school. Whilst there would be no guarantee of a place being available in the school they may have withdrawn from, a child/young person can re-enter the schooling system at any time.

- 4.8.2 The sub-group expressed concern at the difficulties that individuals may face re-integrating into school life. There were concerns of potential bullying and isolation. Reference was made to the 'buddy' systems that often operate in schools where an older pupil would look after/be a point of contact for a younger pupil. It was suggested that a similar arrangement could be looked at for when previously home educated children start school, though the 'buddy' would be from the same year group, to help them settle and familiarise with the new routine. Members felt that schools should be encouraged to make such arrangements, especially as the rise in the number of children being home educated may in turn increase the number of people re-entering the school system.

**Recommendation 8: 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.**

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The sub-group recognises and supports the right of parents to home educate their children and the many different techniques and styles that can be applied to deliver effective education outside of the school setting. However, concern still remains that the lack of a robust definition or standard of what comprises an 'efficient' or 'suitable' education, and the lack of powers local authorities have to monitor this, may mean that some children may not be in receipt of the level of education they are entitled to.
- 5.2 The sub-group therefore feel it important that the Mayor lobby the Minister for Education asking for a change to the law that details more clearly what constitutes an 'efficient' or 'suitable' education and compels parents to engage with the local authority to demonstrate how this education is being delivered.
- 5.3 Whilst the local authority has a limited role in relation to elective home education, the sub-group has indentified some steps that could be taken, at low or no cost, to try and provide some additional support to families. Some of these are also aimed at trying to improve the relationship between families home educating and the local authority.

## **6.0 Background Information**

Elective Home Education – Guidelines for Local Authorities

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/288135/guidelines\\_for\\_las\\_on\\_elective\\_home\\_educationsecondrevisedv2\\_0.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288135/guidelines_for_las_on_elective_home_educationsecondrevisedv2_0.pdf)