

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

4 September 2017

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, A Austin, S Cox, N Craven,
P Earley, Janet Hunter, A McMullen, T Mulvenna,
M Rankin and J Wallace

Church Representative
Rev M Vine

Also in attendance
Norma Redfearn – Elected Mayor

OV16/09/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Johnson, P Oliver and M Thirlaway.

Mr G O'Hanlon – Church Representative
Mr M Ord – Parent Governor Representative

OV17/09/17 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members

OV18/09/17 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported

OV19/09/17 Minutes

Resolved that minute of the meeting held on 3 July 2017 be confirmed;

OV20/09/17 Mayors Annual Address

The Elected Mayor, Norma Redfearn, attended the meeting to share the achievements attained in the past year of the Council and her priorities for the year ahead.

She expressed that she would continue to be a Listening Mayor and the Council would continue to put its residents and communities first, whilst delivering services that meet local needs.

Listening to Residents

The Mayor held a programme of listening events in the borough's town centres during 2016/17. The events were held on Saturday mornings to enable residents an opportunity to meet with the Mayor and her Cabinet to raise concerns or offer suggestions. The events received positive feedback and the mayor stated that they would continue into 2017/18.

The Mayor stated that the feedback from the events along with those received from the Big Community Conversations and more in-depth work with tenants and residents had aided the development of the Council's priorities. This demonstrated that the residents were at the heart of the decision making process.

Creating a Brighter Future/Council Plan

The Mayor explained that the aim was to continue to deliver consistent services to all residents, although there were differences across the borough in relation to citizens' skill, qualifications, health and employment.

With this in mind there would be a further development to a range of digital online services where residents would be aided to access advice and services they require.

The Council's Creating a Brighter Future Programme (CBF) would continue to build on successes, achievements and priorities by targeting resources and enabling people to participate in a successful borough.

The priorities for the CBF for the year ahead were:

Ready for School

To ensure children in North Tyneside receive the best start in life by attending a successful school, there would be continued work in partnership with schools, providing support and challenge to raise standards in education to ensure all children and young people achieve their full potential.

North Tyneside Primary and First Schools were ranked at the top of all Local Authorities in the Country with 99% of pupils attending schools rated either good or outstanding.

A Level results this year achieved between 97% and 100% pass rate, with GCSE results being above the national average.

Continued investment had seen the new buildings at:

- Whitehouse Primary School
- Longbenton High School
- John Spence Community High School

Backworth Primary school was currently being rebuilt and work to start a full refurbishment to Cullercoats Primary School would start in early 2018.

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Work had also commenced to extend early years provision at Cullercoats Primary and King Edward Primary schools.

Following Ofsted inspection, the Authority services to safeguarding children was judged as 'Good' with 'Outstanding' features. This placed North Tyneside in the top 10 of all local authorities nationally.

The Mayor reminded the Committee that the Council launched its apprenticeship programme in 2014 and in that time 108 young people had been recruited in a range of areas. The 18 month programme had provided each apprentice with a nationally recognised qualification and real work skills experience. There were to be a further 24 planned apprenticeships delivered through the partnering work with the authority, its partner Kier North Tyneside and Justice Prince.

The Get Up and Go apprentice event attracted 800 young people and the Authority was looking to recruit a further 25 new apprentices this year.

Cared for, Safeguarding and Healthy

The promotion of wellbeing and safety of the most vulnerable residents was one of the Mayors priorities and she stated that over the past year support had been delivered to carers and parents to enable children, young people and adults to live independent and safe lives.

It was stated that with the increased amount/range of information and advice offered to residents about their care and support needs it was reported that over 75% of adults were assisted or had their issues resolved at the first point of contact.

The new online My Care North Tyneside had provided those in need with the necessary information.

The Safe Places scheme was launched across North Tyneside and included 173 businesses providing a safe place for those feeling vulnerable when out and about in the borough.

Neighbourhoods Safe

A number of initiatives had been put in place to address occasions of anti-social behaviour and disorder and included such as the Community Action Teams.

The £1m Fairfield Green major flood reduction project had been completed that would reduce the risk of flooding to over 100 homes in the West Monkseaton area.

Works were to start to the Wellfield project and the Briar Vale project would start subject to ownership and planning issues being resolved.

Road resurfacing schemes had been completed on over 100 streets within the borough, this was in addition to the A1058 Beach Road and Coast Road widening schemes.

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Schemes were progressing with the improvements to the Coast Road, Billy Mill Junction and the replacement of the Norham Road Bridge that would complement the Highways England works to improve the A19 Silverlink exchange.

The Mayor launched the 'Love Your Street' campaign to support residents to work together to improve their environment and had brought forward a programme to improve footways in town centres and areas of high footfall.

A borough wide footpath survey was to be conducted to the condition as well as new cycle ways.

Parks and Beaches

The borough had again achieved Blue Flag awards and all beaches had received Seaside Awards. It was also reported that the authority had also retained its six green Flags for parks, where nearly 32,000 people attended park events.

As part of the 'Love Your Street' campaign a new litter and dog fouling enforcement team was to be created to tackle hotspots around the borough.

The introduction of a new permit scheme ensured that only residents could access the Household Recycling Centre and stop possible abuse by landlords, developers and trades people.

Local Plan

The Planning Inspection of the North Tyneside Local Plan was undertaken by Central Governments Planning Inspector had been approved and would support growth, bring new jobs and homes whilst retaining public spaces.

Visitors

Information was provided on the programme of events and activities that had taken place in the borough:

- 100,000 visitors attended the Mouth of the Tyne Festival providing a £1m boost to the Tynemouth economy
- North Tyneside had 6 Million visitors throughout the year that generated an additional £270m into the economy and supported 3,500+ jobs

The Mayor also mentioned the installation of sculptures at Segedunum and the Fisherman Memorial and stated that further improvements to be made to the St Marys Lighthouse and Visitor Centre were planned.

Affordable Housing

The Committee was informed that the ambition to deliver 3000 new affordable homes was running to target. This included the delivery of 6 new Council homes and 52 new homes in partnership with registered providers. 13 new homes for rent were also delivered in the Camperdown ward by the North Tyneside Trading Company.

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There were plans this year to deliver 33 new Council homes in Dudley, Seaton Burn and Wallsend in addition to around 80 new homes from registered providers.

In the past year improvements to 12 homes for people with a disability to enable them to live independently had also been completed.

The 2016/17 Investment Programme had a budget of £20.7m to continue to maintain homes to the decent standard and for the year ahead there was £21.6m budgeted planned improvement works to the housing stock, with a further £12m in repairs.

Healthy

The last 12 months had seen 1.5m visits made to Leisure Centres and swimming pools. There had also been 50,000 visits to the Active North Tyneside Programme that encouraged the inactive to become active and live healthier lives.

The workforce had been trained to 'Have Healthy Conversations' with customers to sign post and ensure Making Every Contact Counts and promoting health and wellbeing.

Public health services continued to provide, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services, NHS Health Checks for people aged 40-74years and stop smoking services at pharmacies and GP practices.

There was also a range of health awareness programmes promoted throughout the year that included mental health, suicide awareness.

Regeneration

The Mayor drew the Committees attention to the regeneration that had taken place and was continuing along the coast and town centres that included:

- The comprehensive restoration of the Grade II Spanish City Dome
- The nearly completed works to replace and upgrade the Northern Promenade from Watts Slope to Rendezvous
- The Central Promenade scheme which was a £3.5m project was nearing completion in early 2018
- Secured funding (£164,300) from the Heritage Lottery fund to undergo survey to inform the design of the St Mary's Lighthouse and Visitor Centre
- The launch of the land train from the Whitley Bay Playhouse to St Mary's Lighthouse
- Wallsend Town centre regeneration scheme was completed
- The Swan Centre of Innovation was now 95% occupied
- Swans Quay structural surveys was complete to inform the upgrade of the quays, with security of the site strengthened with additional fencing and CCTV installation
- North of Tyne Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) approval to improve communities from North Shields Fish quay to Berwick upon Tweed
- Businesses had been selected following expressions of interest to trade from business pods along the coast and would be in operation for the 2018 season

- Officers had been instructed to investigate ways to improve Forest Hall shopping area and the redevelopment of North Shields
- Using the North Tyneside Trading Company to develop 12 new bungalows on the Marden estate, with work to start in early 2018
- Planning permission had been sought for a project for 29 new homes at the former offices in Northumberland Square, North Shields to start early 2018
- Secured permission to build 12 new executive homes on the site of the former Avenue pub in Whitley Bay with work starting early 2018
- Planning permission sought to demolish the former Whiskey Bends Public House
- Supported Forward Assist (a charity which supports Ex-service veterans) to move to North Tyneside to the John Willie Sams Centre
- Managed the renewal of all the Council's and Northumbria Police's public space CCTV camera in the borough and a new updated CCTV control room that would be in place in early 2018
- The investment made into LED lighting for over 7000 street lights to reduce energy use

A Great Place to Work

The Mayor reported that the Business Support Team had won a 2017 Enterprising Britain Award for Promoting Entrepreneurial Spirit in the annual competition by the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for business support projects.

The team had also been chosen to represent the UK at the European Enterprise Promotion Awards (EEPA) in Tallinn, Estonia in November 2017.

A 'Business of the Month award' was launched in August 2017 and was attended by over 50 local businesses.

The Business Factory had supported 100+ new SME's (Small, Medium Enterprises) with one to one specialist consultant support. The Business Factory workshops were attended by 1100 residents and business in the last year.

The Business Factory website had been redesigned to enable online booking of all seminars/workshops.

The Aspire programme was launched by the Business Team in 2017 to increase growth to business in North Tyneside.

Following the setting up of an action group consisting of the Business Team, Whitley Bay Chamber of Trade, Members and the Deputy Mayor the membership of the Chamber had increased from 20 to 270 paying members in 9 months and Whitley Bay has seen 27 new start up businesses.

North Shields had twinned with Welsh town Merthyr Tydfil as part of the Carnegie UK Twin Town Project and would work and offer support to each other.

There had been continued growth in respect to the business parks in the borough with Cobalt being 90% occupied with 14,000 staff and Quorum being 65% occupied with 5000 staff.

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The Indigo Park development would accommodate new manufacturing and distribution space and would be capable to generating 1,500+ jobs.

It was stated that more than 1600 jobs had been created through inward investment and start up activities in 2016/17.

The North Tyneside Tyne Tunnel Estate refurbishment (£5m) had seen the final unit being occupied by a specialist engineering company and work was ongoing to develop new units on the site for late 2017.

Budget

The Mayor highlighted the budgetary challenges ahead that she and the Cabinet face when looking to deliver the priorities due to the continued reduction in public spending.

To deliver the priorities, work was ongoing in the redesigning of services and the delivery using the Target Office Model (TOM). This was a method of offering self service delivery of services and agile ways of working to reduce cost to office accommodation.

She informed that work had started on budget proposals for 2018/20 where there was over £18m of savings required this year and potentially a further £41m over the following 2 years.

Services relating to Health, Social Care and Education delivery were would see budgetary pressures. The Mayor reassured that Committee that it was her aim to continue to manage resources carefully whilst working with partners to bring in new investment, jobs, to continue the regeneration plans, keeping the environment standards and deliver the services important to the citizens of the borough.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for the insight of her plans and opened the meeting to questions from members of the Committee.

A member raised that many residents had seen an increased number of highways schemes over recent times however there were still concerns from residents especially the elderly (Forest Hall) that reduced footpath maintenance would increase trips and falls.

The Mayor stated that she had requested a borough wide survey of footpaths but would make officers aware of the concerns raised.

A church representative stated that it was understood the necessity and accepted that the redesigning of how people accessed services online would help the authority to deliver its services more efficiently. However he stated that some residents who can't access or are without IT equipment (especially some elderly residents) prefer to contact by telephone. He stated that it was difficult to find a North Tyneside Council telephone number in the telephone book and asked the telephone number be promoted to residents.

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The Mayor stated she would ask officers to look in to this and highlighted that the telephone number and methods of communicating with the council would be detailed in the North Tyneside Council magazine.

A Member stated that there was a great concern to the level of potentially lost funding following Brexit and asked the Mayor what was planned to fill the funding gap.

The Mayor stated that this was an area that was being investigated very carefully through the North East Combined Authority.

Agreed that the Elected Mayor Annual Address be noted.

DRAFT