

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

3 September 2018

Present: Councillor S Graham
Councillors A Austin, B Burdis, K Clark,
Janet Hunter, D McMeekan, A McMullen, A Newman,
P Oliver, J O'Shea and M Rankin

Parent Governor Representative - Mrs M Ord

Also in attendance
Elected Mayor – Norma Redfearn
Joanne Lee – Public Protection Manager
Phil Scott – Head of Environment, Housing & Leisure
David Foster - Housing Property Services and Highways
Investment Manager

OV17/09/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan, N Craven, M Green and M Thirlaway.

Church Representative - Rev M Vine

OV18/09/18 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute Member was reported: - Councillor D McMeekan for Councillor M Green.

OV19/09/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A McMullen declared a registerable personal interest in relation to Draft Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling) 2019-2022 (MinuteOV22/09/2018) as he was a Personal License holder.

OV20/09/18 Minutes

Resolved that minutes of the meetings held on 17 July 2018 be confirmed.

OV21/09/18 Mayors Annual Address

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

She stated that it had been an extremely busy but also productive year, where many of her commitments had come to fruition. She also acknowledged and thanked the Deputy Mayor, Cabinet colleagues, Council members and officers for their hard work

She reminded that it was her continuing mission to deal with the issues raised by residents to deliver real improvements to positively change the borough.

Listening to Residents

Listening events had continued to take place in town centres providing residents the opportunity to talk to the Mayor, Cabinet Members and Ward Councillors at a time convenient to them.

Feedback from these and other engagement events had been extremely positive and provided an opportunity to discuss issues that were of real importance to residents. She stated that the sessions would continue to be held throughout 2018/19 and would continue to be used to shape Council services in the future.

The Year Ahead - Creating a Brighter Future/Council Plan

The aim for the year ahead was to continue to drive forward and develop plans for making North Tyneside an even greater place to live, work and visit.

With the focus on three key themes - people, place and economy with priorities for delivering positive opportunities for everyone in the borough.

The priorities had been formed by listening to residents, businesses and visitors. Then developing and allocating the Council's resources to the things that matter most to them.

The plan also ensured that the Council works better for residents by improving how it does things, by offering residents opportunities to volunteer, be more independent and do more for their local communities.

Looking Back

The Mayor stated that she was proud of the positive progress made since her first term as Mayor 2013 to 2017.

Since 2012/13, there had been a 20% increase in the number of children who had reached a good level of development in their early years. More children (especially those on free school meals) were achieving the expected level of development by the time they reach five years old, however, she did recognise that there was still much to do.

With regards to the inequalities between the most deprived and most affluent areas this was closing and work was continuing to address the inequalities. More people were now in work compared to 2013. The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training had reduced, as had the number of 18 to 24-year olds on Job Seekers' Allowance, with the number of people claiming unemployment benefits also dropping.

Residents in North Tyneside were more physically active than the average for the North East, and the number of people who smoked had reduced. Feedback from the residents' survey indicated over 80% of local people were satisfied with where they live and there had been an increase in residents thinking their local area had improved, in the last year.

More and better quality homes had been delivered across North Tyneside, where more new affordable homes had been built in the previous three years than in the entire decade before. In the last year, 892 new homes had been provided, 347 of which were affordable. The residents' survey indicated that over a quarter of residents were very satisfied with the choice of housing now available to them.

The Mayor stated that that the borough was attracting more businesses and creating more job opportunities at every skills level. There were over 5,000 businesses based in North Tyneside which was an increase from 3,890 in the past five years. The businesses provided 81,900 jobs, which was over 10,000 more jobs than in 2012.

Statistics had shown that opportunities for young people had never been better, with 88% of young people achieving qualifications at Key Stage 5 (A-Levels) and 90% of them, more than the national average, going onto higher education or employment.

The Mayor gave a commitment that the borough would be clean, green, healthy, attractive and sustainable. It would be a cycle-friendly borough with effective public transport and good roads, pavements and physical infrastructure. The coastline and town centres would be regenerated through projects in Wallsend, Whitley Bay, North Shields, Forest Hall and Killingworth. There would be a good choice of affordable homes and accommodation for older residents, with its award-winning parks and beaches, festivals and seasonal activities making a thriving place to visit.

The economy would grow by supporting new businesses ensuring the right skills and conditions were in place to attract new investment, with high-quality job and apprenticeship opportunities being available to all. On-going investment would make our business parks and town centres locations of choice for businesses of all sizes and in all industries.

The Creating a Brighter Future Programme aims was to ensure that children, young people and residents of all ages were:

- ready for school;
- ready for work and life;
- cared for, safeguarded and healthy; and
- that North Tyneside is: a great place to live, work and visit.

Ready for School

The Mayor stated that a healthy and happy early childhood, where children were ready to start and make the most of school, continued to be a priority.

Last year the health visiting and school nursing services were brought into the locality teams, with continued success. The nursing services were recently inspected by the Care Quality Commission and received a wealth of praise and commendation for its work.

Worked had continued with childcare providers to ensure the implementation of the national childcare offer, allowing the opening of a new service, for families requiring additional support at the Riverside Centre North Shields. The Ready to Go scheme was supporting parents with education programmes and skills development.

100% of early year providers, after school clubs, playgroups and child minders were graded good or outstanding.

The public health team had worked with the Wallsend Children's Community on a proposal to improve oral health in preschool children.

The Ready to Go scheme would be expanding in the year ahead, working with schools and other childcare providers in the borough to support as many parents and families as possible.

Students in North Tyneside's continued to do well, with many earning excellent results that would help them in the future, going toward further education, apprenticeship or other job opportunities.

The Mayor commended the head teachers, school staff, students and their parents or carers.

There would also be continued support to the work of the Young Mayor, Member of Youth Parliament and the Youth Council.

Ready for Working Life

The Mayor stated that narrowing the gap in educational attainment and ensuring all residents had the opportunity to learn and gain the skills necessary for fulfilling employment, was at the heart of any prosperous community.

The education and learning offer in North Tyneside was strong, with learners of all ages achieving above that of the national average and much of this was linked to the quality of education in schools, where 89% of schools had been judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Working with the network of head teachers, there had been a reduction in the number of children and young people excluded from education. Support had been given to families to ensure their children remained in school and progressed with their education.

The adult learning service had been inspected and received excellent feedback and commendation for its positive contribution.

Work continued with a range of partners to provide new employment and training opportunities. This year the Council's service was again verified as an apprenticeships provider, with a study programme. Working Roots enabled young people who were looked after by the Council, to experience work in a Council setting and gain a Level 2 qualification.

The Get Up and Go apprenticeship event continued to attract a number of young people who brought friends and family along with them.

The indoor sport and leisure centres were providing 4 young people with skills and experience for future employment through apprenticeships.

Cared for Safeguarded and Healthy

The adult social care services continued to work with some of the most vulnerable people in the borough, supporting over 4,500 people with individually created care plans to meet their social care needs and also responded to over 20,000 requests for advice, information and short term support.

There was also focused support for people with dementia and their families.

The Council's care call service expanded, launching a brand new offer in partnership with the North East Ambulance Service and North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group. The First Responder service was helping people who had gotten into difficulties in their own home and was helping reach people quickly and avoid many unnecessary admissions to hospital.

A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was launched last year, with partner agencies including the NHS, Police and Council safeguarding professionals, to provide a coordinated response to concerns about children's welfare.

Despite the Council's and partners best efforts it is necessary for some children to become looked after. The aim was to work hard to help and protect children and young people to remain safe with their families, where it is safe to do so. Success had been seen in this area, with an overall fall in numbers of children brought into care.

Supporting families at the earliest stage had continued, with over 600 families, receiving support through early help assessments.

The approach of collaborating with other North East Councils in relation to adoption services had proved successful and would continue.

The Council's approach to reducing teenage pregnancy had continued to improve and North Tyneside had the lowest rates for under 16 and 18 conceptions in the region.

In relation to leisure, over 1.5 million people visited leisure centres and swimming pools, with than 47,000 attendances to Active North Tyneside programmes helping the inactive to become active.

The Swim Local Programme had been delivered, supported by Sport England to improve our swimming facilities and increase participation in swimming. The Free Swim Fridays for over 60s had led to a 20% increase in swimming from this age group.

The Customer First Centres and Libraries had launched a new Reading Well Mental Health book collection providing residents with information to maintain and improve their health.

Great place to Live

The Council was on track to meet the target of delivering 3,000 new, affordable homes in North Tyneside by 2024. In 2017/18, 280 new affordable homes were

delivered across the borough. This included 6 new Council homes as well as homes delivered by partners. Plans were in place to deliver a further 250 affordable homes this year, including 52 new Council homes across a range of schemes and new homes via the North Tyneside Trading Company at:-

- Former Avenue Pub site in Whitley Bay
- Northumberland Square in North Shields

In order to tackle some of the derelict properties a Private Sector Empty Property Plan had been developed and an application had been made to Homes England for grant funding to support the plan.

Following on from the Council's adoption of the Local Plan, the Transport Strategy was approved that aligned transport ambition within the context of that Local Plan. This would ensure the Our North Tyneside ambition to have an effective transport and infrastructure was in place.

Regeneration

Regeneration plans had continued at the coast. In July the Spanish City Dome had opened following a comprehensive restoration of the Grade II listed building, which saw 16,000 people visited the Dome in the first weekend..

The completion of the first phase of the Northern Promenade and the Central Lower Promenade regeneration works also increased interest visitors to Whitley Bay.

The Mayor made reference to a letter in a recent local publication where the author suggested that regeneration was only being undertaken in areas that had voted for her administration. The Mayor dismissed this view and stated that there were plans in place for regeneration projects throughout the borough and informed the Committee that the Council was awaiting on news of a Coastal Funding bid that had been put submitted in February 2018 that would help to deliver projects for the area referred to in the letter.

The investment the Council and its partners had encouraged nearly 50 new business start-ups in Whitley Bay over the last 24 months.

During the year the new residential development on the site of the former High Point Hotel had been completed resulting in 14 new town houses. In addition, work had commenced on new housing on the site of the former Avenue Public House, which was to be completed in 2019.

A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £2.1m grant had been submitted and would fund the restoration of the St Mary's lighthouse, causeway and a new extension to enhance the visitor experience, with a decision due by October 2018 and a potential start on site in spring 2019.

The Swans Centre for Innovation continued to thrive with 100% occupancy. There was secured additional funding from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to convert the remaining floors of the building for similar managed office space, with occupants lined up for some of the space. The building currently hosted both

national and international businesses in the offshore energy and subsea sector as well as a number of smaller local businesses.

Bids for funding to enhance the quay at Swans and demolish some vacant buildings on site were progressing.

Officers were working with the local Cullercoats Harbour Users Group so that a bid to the North of Tyne Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) could be submitted to enhance fishing related activity.

Following the consultation events held in the spring new improvements to Forest Hall Centre would commence in the autumn.

The reopening of Norham Road Bridge saw the completion of the final phase of A1058 Coast Road Improvement Scheme.

Visitors

Latest tourism data indicated that North Tyneside attracts approximately six million visitors per year, generating more than £284 million for the local economy and supporting over 3,600 jobs.

Blue Flag awards have been retained for Tynemouth Longsands, King Edwards Bay and Whitley Bay Beaches and park events saw almost 39,000 visits.

A Great Place to Work

Business in North Tyneside saw an increase of 30% in the number of businesses from 3,890 in 2012 to over 5,000.

The Business Factory had helped to start up 210 new businesses and social enterprises in the last year. The Business Factory workshops were being attended by over 1,000 residents and businesses per year.

The Aspire programme was launched last year to help scale up North Tyneside businesses with growth potential.

The Town Centre Task Group, led by the Deputy Mayor, was supporting a range of initiatives in partnership with the town centre chambers of trade to increase footfall and support local businesses. The Wallsend Chamber of Trade was launched in November 2017 with over 50 members taking part in the meetings with membership continuing to grow.

In 2018/19 a number of large companies were opening new premises the borough, including Tommee Tippee, Pryme Engineering, Crown Packaging and VBites. North Tyneside's major business parks Cobalt and Quorum experienced unparalleled growth. The Council continued to encourage inward investment by marketing North Tyneside as business ready.

The Business and Enterprise Team was presented with the Enterprising Britain Award at the Houses of Parliament in October 2017 by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for the best enterprise project. The team then

went on to represent the UK at the European Enterprise Promotion Awards, one of only two projects nationally to be nominated. In August 2018 the Team was shortlisted for an Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) Award with the winners being unveiled in the autumn.

Budget

The continuation of Government cuts meant that there will be continued work to ensure safeguarding services and the Mayor assured she would continue to manage the resources carefully. The Council was required to find £10m savings during 2018/19, with a potential £45m over the following 4 years from 2019/20 to 2022/23.

She gave assurances that work would continue with partners and residents to make sure that the provision of quality services.

Devolution

The Mayor informed the Committee of the position of the North of Tyne Devolution deal, stating that the deal was with Central Government to agree in October/November 2018. She stated that once this was agreed, information would be sent to all interested parties detailing of the process of implementation.

Following her presentation the Mayor offered an opportunity to ask her questions.

A member asked the Mayor, following the extensive work undertaken in coastal areas of the borough, were there further plans to exploit the potential for new retail businesses and night-time entertainment for residents and visitors.

In response the Mayor assured that it was high on the Council's agenda to look at further potential opportunities for the benefit to residents, businesses and visitors alike.

Agreed that the Mayors Annual Address be noted.

At this point Cllr A Austin left the meeting.

Cllr M Rankin joined the meeting at this point

OV22/09/18 Draft Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling) 2019-2022

The Committee received the draft Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling) that detailed the final proposals following its consultation.

The Committee was reminded that a 6 week consultation period was carried out to allow members of the public, members of the trade, MP's, MEP's and Councillors an opportunity to comment on the draft policy statement.

A summary of responses and the draft policy with amendments were attached to the report.

Agreed that Gambling Act 2005 Draft Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling) be noted.

At this point Cllr J O'Shea left the meeting.

OV23/09/18 Construction Project

At the request of the Committee the Head of Environment, Housing & Leisure and the Housing Property Services and Highways Investment Manager attended the meeting to provide an update to the progress of the transition of services from Kier North Tyneside back into the Authority.

The Committee was reminded that the 10 year Kier North Tyneside joint venture started in 2009 with the option to extend for a further 5 years. The Council had undertaken an extensive review of the service looking at the future construction requirement and decided at its September 2017 Cabinet meeting not to extend the contract, which would end on 31 March 2019.

To manage the transition of services back in-house the Council had established the Construction Project team.

The transition was to be separated into a number of workstreams, with details given for each and had associated activity and named officer lead.

Information was given to the progress of some of the workstreams, procurement of systems and engagement of staff and unions.

Also provided was information to the activities undertaken to engage with customers and the feedback received in addition with a number of decisions made to progress the transition.

A member raised that following a decision to procure a new fleet of vehicles, what consideration had been made for the new fleet to consist of an electric/hybrid type.

In response it was stated that the aim was to procure the best emission standard vehicles, with a transitional move to increase the number of vehicles to electric/hybrid type over time.

A member stated it was understood that there was need for maintenance at the Killingworth depot and asked who held the responsibility to undertake this work. In response it was clarified that it was the Authority responsibility and work had commenced.

A concern was raised in respect to the new ICT solution that had been procured as part with the transition. In response it was stated that full testing would be carried out to ensure the new ICT solution would be operational from day one of the transition.

A member questioned the feeling of the workforce that would be brought back in house. It was stated that a number of engagement events had taken place where all employees had been informed of the plans. It also heard that to gauge the feeling an exit survey had been undertaken with feedback of the decision being 98% positive.

A member asked in relation to the work required to ensure the Authority had the necessary supply chain to support the services being brought back in house. Members were informed that work was already underway to ensure this was the case and that the Authority was looking for a local supply chain where possible. It was also stated that a social value aspect would be included into contracts.

It was raised that Kier North Tyneside pay the Authority an annual dividend and what effect this would have after the transition. Members were assured that all income would be invested back into the Authority housing stock.

Agreed that the update to the progress of the transition of services from Kier North Tyneside back to the Authority be noted.