

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

**4 December 2017**

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

Church Representative  
Rev M Vine

Parent Governor Representative  
Mrs M Ord

Also in attendance  
Councillor B Pickard

### **OV26/12/17 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G O'Hanlon

### **OV27/12/17 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members

### **OV28/12/17 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor A McMullen declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Our North Tyneside Performance report (Minute OV30/12/17) as he was employed by British Telecommunications PLC and provided information during the meeting with regards to Broadband.

### **OV29/12/17 Minutes**

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

### **OV30/12/17 Our North Tyneside Performance report**

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

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

#### **Our People**

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

The performance report detailed

For the fifth year in a row, there had been an increase of over 20% in the number of children who had reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, compared to 2012/13.

There had also seen a reduction in the gap, linked to deprivation, for children achieving the expected level at Foundation Stage. The gap had been reduced by all children improving but those on Free School Meals improving at a faster rate

There has been a reduction in the number of young people who were not in education, employment or training over the lifetime of this plan. In addition there had been a reduction in the number of 18-24 year olds who were claiming Job Seekers Allowance. This was part of a wider reduction in the number of people claiming unemployment benefits, which had reduced from 4.8% in 2012/13 to 2.7% in 2016/17

There had been progress in addressing those key issues that were known to be significant factors in the health gap. Residents were more physically active than the regional average and expected to increase with the introduction of programmes such as Active North Tyneside. There had also been a reduction in the number of people who smoke.

## **Our Places**

The Our North Tyneside Plan set 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 performance report detailed that

More residents had indicated through the Residents' Survey, that they were satisfied with where they live. This increased from 73% at the start of the plan to 81% this year.

The issues residents had highlighted to be the most important for them included the quality of local education, local environmental standards and low levels of crime and there had been an eight percentage improvement in local residents thinking that their area had improved in the last twelve months

It was stated that house building was a key signifier of the desirability of North Tyneside as a place to live and had increased with 892 net additional homes provided this year.

The increased number of affordable homes delivered had seen 347 homes delivered, bringing the total number of affordable homes delivered in the last 3 years to a level that exceeded the total number in the previous decade.

Residents of the housing developments were increasingly satisfied with the quality and choice of housing in the borough; both measures of housing choice and quality

in the Residents Survey had increased this year. Over a quarter of residents were very satisfied with the choice of housing now available

North Tyneside had over 5,000 businesses, the growth in the number of businesses had occurred in every year of the plan, increasing from 3,890 in 2012.

## **Our Economy**

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 performance report detailed that

There continued to be an increase in the number of jobs, with 81,900 jobs in the Borough, which was an increase of more than ten thousand since 2012. This was achieved through a mixture of supporting businesses to start, survive and through success in attracting new businesses to invest in the Borough

To ensure that young people in North Tyneside had the right high level skills and qualifications to progress and succeed in the job market.

The Committee heard that 88% of young people progress to Key Stage 5 (A level) and of those, 90% progress further after Key Stage 5 with the national rate being 88%.

A member questioned the reason for Measure 58 - take up of superfast broadband, stating that the measure should only record the provision of the superfast broadband network in North Tyneside, as the responsibility of the take up rate should lie with the market providers.

A member raised that the media had represented house building as an area where there was public dissatisfaction and asked if this was an area that was measured. In response it was stated that although concerns maybe raised with the number of development sites, many were brownfield sites where local residents had expressed the developments had made an improvement to the local area. It was also stated that house building in the borough had seen North Tyneside increase its borough of choice status.

The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that Cabinet was intending to review the Our North Tyneside Plan and its performance measures. The Committee was invited to aid this process by helping the formulation of the new measures for the revised Council Plan.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair accepted the invite to be involved and arrangements would be made for this to happen in early 2018.

In relation to the number of developments improving Whitley Bay it was asked what plans were in place to promote Whitley Bay as a place to visit especially around the north east region.

It was stated that although there had been a lot of development focus in Whitley Bay there were many areas of interest in North Tyneside and all areas would be promoted.

**Agreed** that (1) the Our North Tyneside Performance report be noted and; (2) scrutiny arrange to establish a sub-group to help the formulation of new measures for the revised 2018/20 Our North Tyneside Plan.

### **OV31/12/17 Report of the ICT Strategy Sub-group**

The Committee received and considered a report produced by the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee's ICT Strategy Sub-group, whose remit was to review the Council's ICT Strategy in the context of changing organisational and customer need and underpinned by the Target Operating Model and delivery of the Creating a Brighter Future Programme.

The report detailed that an objective of the digital strategy was to enable staff and elected members to work more flexibly, it was asked if this included home working.

In response it was stated that it was condensing its building assets and utilising its quadrant building to accommodate staff. Through this change there was a move to hot-desking which was stated was working well. In addition to this change some staff were able to carry out some duties via home working.

The report highlighted that there had been under investment in the ICT infrastructure, however, an additional £1m per year capital funding was being provided to fund its replacement. It was highlighted that the spending power of the funding had been effected since the decision of the country to leave the European Union.

**Agreed** that the ICT Strategy Sub-group report and recommendations listed be referred to Cabinet for consideration:-

**R1:** The Digital Strategy is subject to an annual review to ensure it is refreshed on a regular basis, and that consideration is given to including a timeline setting out when objectives will be achieved, particularly shorter term objectives covering the next 12-18 months.

**R2:** There is clear democratic accountability in relation to the management of the contract with ENGIE and the wider ICT Strategy, and that the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee has a specific on-going role in reviewing the performance of the contract and the delivery of projects within the ICT Strategy.

**R3:** Communication to staff and Members in relation to the ICT Strategy and the ICT projects that are underway is enhanced to raise awareness of the various strands and the linkages between them.

**R4:** SLT and the Council's partners are pro-active in encouraging all staff to embrace the opportunities offered by ICT innovations and to fully utilise ICT to improve efficiency, underpinned by comprehensive training for all staff on new systems.

**R5:** That a cross-section of residents with mixed technical ability are involved in consultation and testing around the re-design of Council services, to ensure the accessibility of re-designed services.

**R6:** In relation to future developments around data and analytics, to ensure that Scrutiny members are involved in the development of ideas about how residents' data is used and analysed, and have oversight of how these developments are implemented.

**R7:** To consider the training needs of Councillors in relation to the introduction of Office 365 and Sharepoint, particularly in relation to Data Protection requirements around the storing and accessing of documents.

**R8:** Given the data transfer issues that have arisen from the recent Kier in-sourcing decision, that exit plans are developed for all current partnership arrangements, and at the outset of any future arrangements, to fully consider the ICT implications.

**R9:** While recognising the difficult financial situation, to consider whether any additional Capital funding could be allocated to speed up improvements and the roll-out of ICT equipment, particularly where investment would allow savings to be realised.

### **OV31/12/17 Report of the Cultural Development Plan Sub Group**

The Committee received and considered a report produced by the Culture & Leisure Sub Committee's Cultural Development Plan Sub Group.

The main objective was to examine 'how can the council deliver an effective cultural offer in a shrinking financial environment?'

The sub-group decided to focus upon the impact of culture that related to the summer programme and how it attracted visitors to the Borough with comparison with two neighbouring authorities.

The Sub-group made 3 recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

A member questioned recommendation 3 asking who would be targeted to undertake surveys. In response it was stated that the council had access to a catalogue of events and that all participants would be approached for feedback.

A member suggested that officers should approach the owners of the new hotel in Whitley Bay and enquire if they were willing to share the research they undertook before building in the borough.

A member enquired if the sub-committee would consider carrying out further work to the benefits to events at other times of the year and possible linking with other authorities in the region.

In response it was stated that there was always scope for the Culture & Leisure Sub Committee's to look at further reviews if needed.

**Agreed** that the Cultural Development Plan Sub-group report and recommendations listed be referred to Cabinet for consideration:-

**R1:** In order to sustain events delivery and support tourism into North Tyneside the circa £100k currently provided through the Service Improvement Fund should be consolidated as part of the core events budget;

**R2:** In North Tyneside a survey of the arts and tourism sectors should be undertaken in order to gain more detailed information on ways in which added value can be increased and support can be more targeted.

**R3:** The Sub Group to analyse the outcomes of the industry surveys alongside a range of market intelligence gathered throughout the year including events and visitor surveys. The findings will generate future recommendations for action.