

Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee

Monday, 12 June 2023

Present: Councillor J Montague (Chair)
Councillors D Cox, L Bartoli, L Bones, D Drummond,
M Hall, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, A Newman, J Shaw,
M Thirlaway, M Wilson, B Burdis and P McIntyre

Also in attendance

F Burton – School Governor Representative

S Fallon – Church Representative

Rev M Vine – Church Representative

Apologies: Councillors P Oliver, W Samuel and J Wallace

OV1/23 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute members was made:

Councillor B Burdis for Councillor W Samuel
Councillor P McIntyre for Councillor J Wallace

OV2/23 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Liam Bones declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 4 Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance report, he has a family member who is employed by is employed by North Tyneside Council.

Councillor Martin Murphy declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 4 Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance report, he has a family member who is employed by is employed by North Tyneside Council.

Councillor Tommy Mulvenna declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 4 Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance report, he has a family member who is employed by is employed by North Tyneside Council.

Councillor Matthew Thirlaway declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 4 Our

North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance report, he has a family member who is employed by is employed by North Tyneside Council.

Councillor Lewis Bartoli declared a disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 5 – Emergency Care in North Tyneside – Task and Finish Group, his wife is Chief Operating Officer of Northumbria Healthcare Trust. Cllr Bartoli indicated that he would leave the meeting for this item.

OV3/23 Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance Report

The Senior Manager – Policy, Performance and Research and Assistant Chief Executive presented an update on progress with delivering the Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025.

The Committee was provided information that highlighted the work undertaken in each of the plans priorities;

A Thriving North Tyneside

Regeneration of the highstreet

Improvements were ongoing in North Shields, including a new integrated transport hub, town square, new Riverside Embankment Walkway to connect the town centre and Fish Quay, with planned new homes at the former Unicorn House site.

A member raised that the report stated that the improvements to Northumberland Square was complete. It was believed that some outstanding works in relation to railings were still required and it was asked when the works would be completed. It was stated that this would be looked into and a response would be circulated to the committee.

Master Planning activity would commence in summer 2023 for Whitley Bay Town Centre.

Engagement on the Wallsend draft Masterplan had been carried out, with funding secured from the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) to fund projects in and around Wallsend High Street.

A member requested in relation to the Wallsend draft Masterplan that an update be provided of the future vision for the Segedunum World Heritage Site.

In the North West, £75k of feasibility funding had been secured from NTCA for Northumberland Line Economic Corridor priorities included funding to re-design, scope and map a visitor/heritage trail using the existing wagonways and heritage assets. Concept plans had been developed for Killingworth Lake and eligible funding streams were being identified to progress proposals.

Adult education and apprenticeships

Figures for 2020/21 showed the number of intermediate (level 1) apprenticeships decreased in 2020/21 in part due to national changes. However advanced (level 2) and higher (level 3) apprenticeship starts increased during 2020/21.

libraries and leisure centres offer

Visits to Sport and Leisure Facilities in 2021/22 were two thirds the usual number pre-pandemic. Visits to Customer First Centres had reduced by 55% and Branch Libraries by 59%. Work was progressing to develop Community Hubs.

Visitor destination of choice

All three beaches retained their Blue Flag international status, as well as attracted Seaside Awards. Eight managed parks were awarded Green Flag Awards, however the number of day visits and overnight stays to North Tyneside remained low in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Derelict properties

Long-term vacant dwellings were at the lowest level in 7 years at just over 1,000 dwellings.

A Secure North Tyneside

Working in partnership to prevent anti-social behaviour (ASB)

The trend of ASB reported to Northumbria Police was decreasing and the rate per population was at the lowest level in four years.

A member asked for further information to be circulated to the operation of Project Vita that was launched in Wallsend and Howdon as a joint initiative between North Tyneside Council and Northumbria Police.

Additional £2m on road and pavement repairs

Only 3% of principal roads and 3% of non-principal roads managed by the Authority should be considered for maintenance, which was significantly better than the national benchmark (4% principal roads and 6% non-principal roads).

A member commented that although the plan stated improvement in roads and pavements, residents had continued concerns.

Council Tax Support Scheme

The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 introduced an administrative change making it easier for new Universal Credit (UC) claimants to claim Council Tax Support. The government had provided a grant to all Council Tax Support Claimants of an additional £25, the Authority had made further funding available to all working age claimants in the 2023/24 budget to provide £125 on top of the £25.

Tackling health and socio-economic inequalities

A range of activity was ongoing as part of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, Household Support Fund and Poverty Intervention Fund.

- 1,043 primary and 292 secondary age children participated in the Christmas holiday programme.
- £15 food vouchers were distributed during the school holidays.
- The school uniform project was expanded to pilot a uniform recycling scheme.
- £45 per child was given to families to support with the cost of warm winter clothing and shoes.
- Poverty Proofing the School Day audits have been carried out with 30 schools so far.
- Provision of a network of community-based food pantries, clubs and supermarkets. 6 Bread and Butter Thing Hubs have been operating across the borough.

Affordable Homes Programme

2,073 new homes had been built and the programme was on track to meet the 5,000 affordable homes target. A new 2-phased programme to meet the 5,000 affordable homes target had been approved by Cabinet in February 2022.

A Family Friendly North Tyneside

High quality education

96% of primary schools were rated as good or outstanding by OFSTED, higher than the national performance. 88% of secondary schools were rated as good or outstanding, which was in line with the national performance. 69% of pupils achieved basics in Key Stage 4 for English and Maths during 2021/22, in line with national performance. However, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils widened 2021/22 compared to pre-pandemic 2018/19 at Key Stage 2.

In relation to the Progress 8 gap between disadvantaged pupils and peers a member asked for further information to what schemes were in place.

Outstanding children's social care services, events and facilities

The demand for children's services had remained high during 2021/22 in relation to children subject to a child protection plan and contacts to the service.

Best Start in life

In 2021/22, 62.7% of pupils reached a good level of development at foundation stage, a decrease from 71.9% in 2018/19 pre-pandemic and slightly lower than the regional and national performance.

- 97.6% of children had a development review at 2-2 ½ years. 86% met the expected level of development in relation to communication, physical ability, social skills and problem-solving.
- Just over a third of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are educated in special schools, better than regional performance. However, the authority continued to maintain a disproportionate number of EHCPs compared to national averages and has submitted a High Needs Recovery Plan to the Department for Education to secure additional funding

to improve the position.

A member requested information on the level of SEND Children in mainstream schools in North Tyneside.

A Caring North Tyneside

Improve working conditions of care workers

The authority:-

- Continued to increase fees to external social care providers to take account the increase in the National Living Wage
- Increase in home care fees continued to be aligned to the Real Living Wage increase for home care and extra care.
- Used Local Authority and NHS Discharge Funding to support provision and the market to support recruitment and retention.
- Identified workforce recruitment and retention as a key barrier to market provision in the recently published draft market sustainability plan for care homes for older people and home care.

People will be cared for, protected and supported

There had been an increase in homeless presentations. Priority acceptances were consistent at 5% of all presentations as a result of the preventative and triage work carried out with residents to support them to remain in their current homes or find alternative accommodation.

A member asked for further information to be circulated in relation to homelessness and the criteria used to determine a high priority acceptance.

The rate of emergency admissions due to falls in people aged 65 years and over was significantly higher in North Tyneside than the rate regionally and nationally. Work was continuing with NHS partners to reduce admissions. The Falls First Responder Services within Care Call works with North East Ambulance Service to provide a rapid and responsive service for non-injurious falls.

Support local community groups, carers and young carers

Work continued with VODA on a range of initiatives and support capacity via the

Sector Connector project. Highlights include:-

- On-going development of Living Well North Tyneside – online directory of local services, support and events.
- Development of new Practice Standards in consultation with the North Tyneside Carers Centre
- Redesign and launch of the Chief Officers Group within VCSE sector
- VODA is overseeing the Minority Ethnic Health Development project funded by Public Health

Reduce inequality and eliminate discrimination

The Embedding Equality Programme had made good progress updating policy and procedures including the introduction of a new hate incident reporting procedure following Cabinet's approval of the Authority's Hate Crime Policy Statement. Equality Impact Assessment Training had been delivered to over 200 colleagues.

Access audits had been undertaken with Accessible at cemeteries and visitor attractions. A successful pilot had been undertaken to introduce live video British Sign Language Interpretation into leisure centres and main libraries and customer services. Two new changing places toilet facilities were in development at Whitley Bay and North Shields and a successful bid for two further facilities had been undertaken.

A Green North Tyneside

Increase recycling

During 2021/22, household reuse, recycling and composting remained consistent at 38% and landfill fell to just above 4%. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the level of waste during 2020/21 and 2021/22, as residents spent more time at home.

A member requested further information to how disposal of waste was determined to go to landfill. An officer stated that members would be provided a summary of the Contract for disposal of waste to landfill.

Another member requested information to how the authority plans to increase composting options.

Crack down on littering

Environmental Hit Squad introduced in 2019 had increased capacity to manage demand. The authority had increased the number of environmental enforcement mobile CCTV vehicles operating from one to three focussing on environmental crime issues. The number of fixed penalty notices issued remained consistent.

Further information was requested to the plans to improve the effectiveness of the Environmental Hit Squads.

A member raised that a more joined up approach was required to ensure Clean Waggonways, Cleaner cycle paths and tackle flytipping and stated that this could be linked to using the Authority's system for reporting overfilled bins.

Support low income households to install low-carbon heating

Funding of £8m had been secured from the Green Homes Grant Local Delivery Scheme to install low carbon heating, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy systems in homes with low-household incomes. 800 measures had been installed in over 700 homes so far.

Increase safe walking and cycling opportunities

78.6% of adults in North Tyneside walk or cycle at least once a week, this was an upward trend and slightly higher than regionally and nationally. 7.3% of adults in North Tyneside cycle at least once a week, which was a significant decrease, in line with region and slightly lower than national performance.

A member raised the measure that records adults who walk or cycle at least once per week and questioned how it was determined. In response an officer stated the information would be provided.

Publish an action plan to make North Tyneside carbon net-zero by 2030

The Authority had an approved Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan including over 150 actions to decarbonise the Authority's operations and the borough as a whole. A range of carbon reduction and offsetting projects were being delivered including installation of low carbon heating systems, energy efficiency equipment and renewable energy systems in council buildings and residents homes, the

electrification of the council's vehicle fleet, converting street lights to LED, investment in sustainable transport and the creation of a North-East Community Forest.

It was **Agreed** that (1) the Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance report be noted; and (2) the further information requested be circulated to all members of the Committee.

OV4/23 Emergency Care in North Tyneside – Task and Finish Group

The Committee received a report that outlined the establishing of a Task and Finish group to look at Emergency Care in North Tyneside.

It was informed that following the consideration of a Council Motion at its meeting on 16 March 2023. The Elected Mayor asked the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee if scrutiny would undertake this work.

The report detailed what the task and finish group would consider along with method, reporting and timescales for completion.

The Committee considered and agreed that an Emergency Care in North Tyneside Task and Finish Group be established. The Chair indicated that he would like to be part of the task and finish group. Members raised that Health Watch could be an important body to be invited to participate.

It was **Agreed** to establish an Emergency Care in North Tyneside Task and Finish group.

OV5/23 Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee received a report that detailed a proposed approach to the work planning of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee for 2023-24.

It was emphasised that it was for the Committee to determine its own work programme, however a number of standard topics in relation to finance had been identified and had been included.

The Committee was informed that each scrutiny committee had its own link with lead Cabinet portfolio and Authority Directorate. The linked Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Team officers had been identified for all scrutiny committees and the Overview, Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committees were the Deputy Mayor, and Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources along with the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Resources.

A member raised that the work programme should be guided by the committee and that no Cabinet Members were in attendance.

A member raised if the Cabinet Members had been invited to the meeting. The Assistant Chief Executive informed that the Cabinet Members had been invited and sent apologies as they were required to attend another meeting. It was stated that there was an intention from the Cabinet Members to attend future meetings when appropriate and they were available.

The link Cabinet Members and Directors would be invited to attend each meeting to provide information on policy direction, answer questions and offer support to the committee.

Appended to the report was an initial suggested work programme which was expected to evolve through the year to incorporate emerging topics.

Members were requested to inform the Chair and Head of Governance via email of any suggestions for placing on the Work Programme and those for the Sub-committees.

It was **Agreed** that the Work programme 2023-24 be noted.