

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Monday, 4 October 2021

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)
Councillors L Arkley, D Cox, J Cruddas, M Green,
J Kirwin, A Newman, P Oliver, E Parker-Leonard,
J Wallace and M Wilson

In attendance:
Mr S Fallon – Church representative

Apologies: Councillors B Burdis, M Thirlaway, W Samuel and
Rev M Vine – Church representative

OV17/21 Parent Governor Representative - Mrs M Ord

The Chair informed the Committee that the Parent Governor representative Mrs Michelle Ord's term of office had ended on the 30 September 2021.

The Chair thanked Michelle for her participation throughout her time on Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee and Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee.

OV18/21 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute Member was reported: - Councillor T Mulvenna for Councillor M Thirlaway.

OV19/21 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor J Cruddas – Item 7 – 2022-2026 Financial Planning and Budget Process incorporating the Associated Engagement Strategy - registerable personal interest as she is employed by Justice Prince and is a Director of Justice Prince Community Interest Company.

OV20/21 Minutes

Resolved that the minute of the meeting held on the 7 July 2021 be confirmed.

OV21/21 Annual Report of the Elected Mayors

The Elected Mayor thanked the committee for the opportunity to present her Annual Report, share her priorities for the year ahead and to reflect on the achievements that had been made over the previous year.

Covid-19 Pandemic

She stated that there was no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic was something different to anything that had been experienced or known before, which resulted in a lot of uncertainty both nationally and locally. The possible risk of a pandemic became a reality that had to be managed.

Responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic made it an extremely busy time, where many things needed to be done differently and at great speed.

Everyone had been working hard, and she thanked the Cabinet, Council Members, the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team and all members of staff for their hard work, dedication, support and commitment.

She stated that no matter their role, the staff rose to the challenge to ensure services to residents and communities continued.

The Good Neighbour Scheme in conjunction with North Tyneside VODA had been a tremendous resource throughout the pandemic and she thanked all the volunteers for the support they provided.

As this point, she asked for the Committee to be shown a video which included some of those and demonstrated the range of support given.

The Mayor, stated the pandemic legacy had not been solely focused on disruption or loss and the video demonstrated that council teams, communities, volunteers, businesses, residents and partners were all united in their response to the pandemic demonstrating resilience and determination to care for and protect each other and the local economy.

It was also stated that some of the rapid changes to the way in which services were delivered had been hugely positive and welcomed by many.

Council Plan

The Our North Tyneside Council Plan had been refreshed and now had a focus on the vision to build a better North Tyneside with the context of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Mayor, stated that the Council would continue to listen to and work with residents, businesses, the community and voluntary sector and all stakeholders to ensure that things were delivered in partnership and in line with the differing needs of the borough.

The Council Plans five themes were:

- thriving
- family-friendly
- caring
- secure
- green

The ambition was for North Tyneside to be a place where local businesses and high streets thrive, where all areas benefit from regeneration, where children and young people continue to receive an outstanding education and families flourish, a place where great care is offered to those who need it; and where deprivation is tackled, and inequalities are reduced.

The Council plan had a focus on:

- bringing more good quality jobs to North Tyneside by helping local businesses to grow and making it attractive for new businesses to set up or relocate in the borough.
- Investing in adult education and to support apprenticeships to make sure people have the right skills for the jobs on offer.
- Keeping libraries and leisure centres open.
- Promoting the borough's award-winning parks, beaches, festivals and activities – which would in turn attract more visitors to the area.
- Reducing the number of derelict properties across the borough to make it more attractive for all.
- Continuing to support local schools, making sure that all children had access to a high-quality education with opportunities to catch up where needed after the pandemic.
- Continuing to provide outstanding children's services, events and facilities so North Tyneside is a great place for family life.
- Continuing to ensure all children are ready for school, giving children the best start in life.
- Continuing to provide great care to all who need it, with extra support available all the way through to the end of the pandemic.
- Working with the care provision sector to improve the health and well-being working conditions for care heroes.
- Continuing to care for, protect and support residents if they become vulnerable or homeless.
- Continuing to support local community groups and the essential work they do.
- Continuing work to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination and ensure the social rights of the people of North Tyneside are key to council decision making.
- To make North Tyneside a safe place, Council wardens would continue to work with Northumbria Police to tackle antisocial behaviour.
- Continued investment in roads and pavements, despite central Government funding cuts.
- Maintaining the Council Tax support scheme that cuts bills for thousands of households across North Tyneside.
- Tackle health and socio-economic inequalities across the borough including food poverty.
- Provide 5000 affordable homes.
- Continue increasing the amount of waste that can be recycled and introduce food waste collections and deposit return schemes, to make North Tyneside greener.
- Using Council environmental hit squads to crack down on littering.
- Secure funding that would support households to install low-carbon heating.
- Increase opportunities for safe walking and cycling.
- Publish an action plan of the steps that would be taken and the national investment that would be sought to make North Tyneside carbon net-zero by 2030.

The Mayor, emphasised that North Tyneside would only thrive in the future if it was sustainable, with a key priority being the need for all to work together with residents and businesses, while lobbying the Government, to work towards North Tyneside becoming carbon net zero.

The Mayor, reminded the Committee of the work that had already taken place and was looking forward to building on successes in the coming months and years.

The Council had made significant inroads by replacing all streetlights with LEDs. By using of more electric vehicles and offering vast improvements to the energy efficiency of council homes and buildings. In addition to providing more sustainable transport routes, tree planting and much more.

She also stated that work had taken place to help to minimise the use of single-use plastics.

The Mayor re-emphasised the Council understood a priority for residents was the condition of the boroughs roads and pavements and stated that to address their concerns the Council had agreed to allocate £10m for regeneration plans over five years, £2m per year for five years to tackle the backlog caused by Government cuts.

The Council's regeneration plans included the high streets of North Shields and Wallsend and Master Plans for Wallsend and Whitley Bay Town Centres were being brought forward. She stated that further investment and improvements to the North West area of the borough would be undertaken to ensure that regeneration delivers ambition, opportunity and benefits for all residents.

New businesses and jobs had been brought to the riverside and the Centre for Innovation and £1m had been identified in the Masterplan for Segedunum.

The Mayor give assurance that no area in the borough would be left out and hoped the whole council and partners would continue to work together to deliver the plans priorities.

The Chair stated that the video and presentation provided a powerful demonstration of the work and effort throughout the pandemic by the Council, businesses and the communities to keep services running and support to residents.

A member stated they were aware that the Council operated schedule for the resurfacing of roads in the borough and asked for consideration to be taken to have a corresponding schedule for priority pavements repairs.

It was also raised that a number of public litter bins were being filled with domestic/business waste. It was suggested consideration that a scheme be introduced so that fixed penalty fines could be given if people are found using litter bins for disposing their normal household/business waste.

A Member raised in relation to care heroes and sought assurance that any additional funding being provided to care homes for the provision of full-time sick pay to care workers was being forwarded to the right people and not retained by the business as there was some anecdotal evidence that this was occurring in some areas.

It was also raised that community groups and neighbourhoods should also be recognised for the tremendous work and support they provided during the pandemic.

The Chair thanked the Elected Mayor for her presentation and all those who helped and supported each other throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Agreed that the Annual Report of the Elected Mayor be noted.

OV22/21 Gambling Act 2005 Draft Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling)

The Committee received a report in relation to the final proposals of the Gambling Act 2005 Draft statement of Licensing Policy following the 6-week consultation period.

Appended to the report was a summary of the responses received and the draft policy with amendments following the consultation.

The final proposals were to be presented to Cabinet on 18 October 2021 and then to Council on the 25 November 2021.

The Committee had no further comments to add for consideration.

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

OV23/21 2022-2026 Financial Planning and Budget Process incorporating the Associated Engagement Strategy

The Committee received a report that outlined the process that was to be adopted for the Authority's Financial Planning and budget process for 2022/23 and its proposed framework for four years to 2025/26.

The report set out information in relation to the 2022-26 Financial Planning and Budget process, including key decisions milestones that included:

- A review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP).
- Development of the detailed General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Budgets for 2022/23.
- An update of the Investment Plan and the Treasury Management Strategy, and
- The Budget Engagement Strategy to be adopted as part of the 2022-2026 Financial Planning and Budget process.

A Member asked for information in relation to Prudential borrowing to support capital investment and treasury management. The Head of Resources provided information to the Committee and stated a further briefing note would be shared in respect to Treasury Management.

The Chair informed the Committee of how budget Scrutiny would be undertaken and that all Members would be invited to take part in a one full day scrutiny to take place on 15 December.

Agreed that the 2022-2026 Financial Planning and Budget Process incorporating the Associated Engagement Strategy be noted.