

Thriving Sub-Committee

Tuesday, 20 June 2023

Present: Councillor M Wilson (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, D Drummond, V Jamieson,
J Kirwin, I McAlpine, P McIntyre, B Pickard, A Spowart
and J Walker

In attendance: Councillor L Marshall

Apologies: Councillors A Newman

1 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members appointed.

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

3 North Tyneside Creates – A Cultural Plan for North Tyneside 2023-2030

At its meeting on 22 May 2023, Cabinet had approved North Tyneside Creates – A Cultural Plan for North Tyneside 2023-2030 and authorised the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development to work with partners to develop the North Tyneside Cultural Partnership, to drive forward the delivery and monitoring of the Plan.

Steve Bishop, the Council's Head of Culture, had accepted an invitation to attend the meeting to present details of the plan and discuss the development of the North Tyneside Cultural Partnership. The Chair of the Partnership, Katy Fuller, and Vice-Chair, Stella Hall, had also been invited to the meeting but were unable to attend.

The sub-committee received a copy of the report presented to Cabinet on 22 May 2023 and a copy of North Tyneside Creates – A Cultural Plan for North Tyneside 2023–2030. Steve Bishop described the policy context within which the plan had been developed. He also set out details of the work undertaken to inform the plan, including a joint cultural needs assessment, asset mapping and consultation and engagement. He highlighted the 10 challenges facing the cultural sector which were identified in the plan and commented on how the Partnership would go about addressing them.

Members of the sub-committee discussed the proposed approach to investing and transforming the cultural offer in North Tyneside when the following issues were raised:

- a) The risk of self interest groups having an undue influence on the work of the cultural partnership.
- b) The disproportionate spread of cultural activities concentrated in the coastal and riverside areas of the borough and the need to deliver a cultural offer in the north west of the borough and to enhance access to events, possibly through greater use of technology.
- c) The importance of involving, and providing for the needs, of young people.
- d) The risk of cultural assets being rationalised leading to restricted access to cultural activities.
- e) It was noted that the plan did not contain specific targets or timescales. This was partly attributable to the volatile nature of funding which made it difficult to forecast increases in cultural activities. The partnership would however be setting a range of objectives in formulating an implementation plan. There were other mechanisms to assess the impact of the plan including benefits realisation tools to be used as part of the town centre masterplans.
- f) The potential to encourage and support more music festivals in the borough.
- g) The important correlation between the Cultural Plan and the Local Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy “Equally Well A healthier, fairer future for North Tyneside” which recognised the importance of the wider determinants of health including cultural activity.
- h) The need to consider innovative and radical options to address inequalities in accessing cultural activities.

During the discussion the sub-committee identified the following potential subjects for further scrutiny:

- a) the implementation plan to be formulated and agreed by the Cultural

- Partnership;
- b) the Cabinet's policy priorities for its Ambition for the North West which would help guide the development of Village Plans and a Transport Plan; and
 - c) benchmarking data with other local authorities on the amount of spend on cultural activities and the split between capital and revenue funding.

4 Work Programme 2023-24

The sub-committee considered a proposed approach to its work planning 2023-24.

Allison Mitchell, the Head of Governance, stated that the Authority's scrutiny arrangements had recently been evaluated and restructured, following an external scrutiny improvement review undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). In their review the CfGS had made several 'good practice' suggestions around Scrutiny work planning, including a clearer focus on democratic accountability of the executive, involvement of all committee members in work planning, sufficient flexibility, senior officer support and the a recognition that 'less is more'.

Taking these ideas forward the sub-committee was presented with its terms of reference, details of the link Cabinet member and senior officer identified to provide ongoing and regular officer support and a list of suggestions on policy topics which the sub-committee may wish to consider when planning its programme of work for 2023/24.

Members of the sub-committee were invited to suggest further topics for inclusion in the work programme. The following subjects were proposed:

- Job creation
- Business support
- The status of the Local Plan 2017 in the light of Government announcements regarding its housebuilding targets
- North Shields 800 year celebrations
- Skills gaps in the care sector and the Care Academy
- How the local economy is performing and identifying those areas requiring intervention

- Inward investment, particularly on the River Tyne
- The Authority's relationship with the Combined Authority
- future vision for Segedunum Museum

It was **agreed** that (1) the information presented regarding scrutiny work planning, including good practice guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny be noted;

(2) the identification of a link Cabinet members and senior officer to actively support the work of the sub-committee be noted;

(3) the list of suggested topics for 2023/24 be noted; and

(4) this information be used to decide an outline work programme for the year and work programming be included as a standard agenda item at each future meeting.