

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday, 13 February 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillor John Eagle (Chair)  
Councillor(s): P Foy, D Bradford, T Graham, M Henry and B Oliphant

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): J Wallace, R Beadle, L Caffrey, M Charlton, M Ord, A Thompson and N Weatherley

**CR29 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2016 be approved as a correct record.

**CR30 WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The Committee received a report seeking its views on the effectiveness of the two case studies undertaken in 2015/16, including the subsequent monitoring of actions arising from the Committee's findings.

The case studies were used to examine the implementation of Universal Credit and the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The report summarised the key issues and findings for each case study.

The Committee was also asked to note that a draft work programme for 2017/18 is being prepared and that this will be set by the Committee at its meeting in April.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) That the Committee was satisfied that potential review topics identified by Committee members for 2017/18 will be considered for inclusion in the work programme.
  - ii) The Committee was satisfied with the review monitoring process carried out so far.
  - iii) The Committee was satisfied with the effectiveness of the case studies undertaken so far.

**CR31 GATESHEAD COMMUNITIES TOGETHER STRATEGY: SHAPING A REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report outlining a set of principles to inform a review of

the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy (the strategy).

The strategy was agreed by the Cabinet in May 2012 and sets out how partners work together to address: community engagement and participation; community capacity building; information and communication; involvement of children and young people, and; positive community relationships.

The report indicated that a review of the strategy, with a view to establishing principles to support the development of active citizenship, is timely.

There were concerns raised about the changing role of the Council within communities, as a direct consequence of continued reductions in resource. It was commented that groups may take on the delivery of some services or the holding of some assets but their objectives and subsequent approaches may not align with those of the Council.

The point was made that early and detailed assessments need to be undertaken prior to groups taking on the responsibility of Council assets, to ensure asset transfers are sustainable in the long-term.

The Committee was supportive of the strategy but stressed that it must recognise and make clear the pressures which are acting on both the Council and organisations within the voluntary and community sector. It was commented that the strategy needs to be realistic and demonstrate that more support and resource is required within communities.

RESOLVED: i) That the Committee endorsed the principles as outlined in the report and the approach being taken to implement a review of the strategy.

## **CR32 PERFORMANCE MONITORING: AGREEMENT WITH NEWCASTLE CVS**

The Committee received a report on the performance of Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) in respect of the agreement it entered into with the Council in June 2016. The agreement was for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.

It was reported that the Council is now looking at options for the provision of support and representation for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Gateshead for 2017/18 and beyond. Discussions will take place with Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Gateshead CCG with a view to a jointly commissioned approach.

The Committee also received a presentation from Sally Young, Chief Executive NCVS, which detailed the findings of a study of Gateshead's voluntary and community sector.

It was queried how NCVS communicates with the Council. It was noted that to date the NCVS has worked with the Council strategically and has been represented on various boards including Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust

Board. NCVS also participated in the recent Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken by the Local Government Association.

It was requested that details be provided of the VCS groups and services which receive funding from the Newcastle Gateshead CCG.

The work of NCVS was welcomed along with the findings of its study of the Gateshead VCS.

Details were sought on the balance and nature of the support being provided by NCVS to the large VCS organisations and smaller groups. It was reported that 95% of the workload concerns smaller organisations and involves longer-term support with advice on funding, policies and organisational structures.

The cost to the Council of the current agreement was queried. It was reported that the cost is £160k p.a. and is equal to the cost of GVOG, the previous provider of support and representation to Gateshead's VCS.

- RESOLVED:    i)    That the Committee was satisfied with the performance and activities delivered by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service since the commencement of the Agreement with the Council.

### **CR33           CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16**

The Committee considered a report that provided an analysis of complaints and compliments recorded by the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company in the year ended 31 March 2016.

The value of feedback in the improvement and development of services was acknowledged.

The number of complaints (387), compliments (723) and independent reviews undertaken during the year 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016 were reported.

The computerised recording system made it easier to track and respond to complaints. However, the system now requires an upgrade that reflects the new structure of the Council and provides improved statistical interrogation and analysis.

It was queried whether there are means of establishing if complaints have been received regarding the need to pay for replacement household waste bins, when lost or stolen and if so, how many. It was reported that a high level of feedback is received in relation to this in the Council's Have Your Say inbox but that emails of this nature would not be recorded as a step 2 complaint.

It was clarified that issues and trends such as feedback regarding charges would be responded to, recorded and monitored by Services but would not be recorded as step 2 complaints.

The Committee was pleased to receive details of the compliments that have been received and agreed that they demonstrate the significant value of the Council's services to residents.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the Annual report be endorsed.
  - ii) That the Committee was satisfied that the Corporate Complaints and Compliments procedure is operating satisfactorily.

**Chair.....**