

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 22 January 2018 at 10.00 am in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies
2	Minutes (Pages 3 - 10) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on PART A - Ad Hoc Policy Issue
3	Proposal to implement a Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge (Pages 11 - 28) Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources and Governance PART B -
4	Annual Report - Corporate Complaints and Complements Procedure 2016/17 (Pages 29 - 54) Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
5	Volunteering in Gateshead - A New Approach (Pages 55 - 58) Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
6	Annual Work Programme (Pages 59 - 62) Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

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Date: Friday, 12 January 2018

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 27 November 2017

PRESENT: Councillor John Eagle (Chair)

Councillor(s): S Ronchetti, J Wallace, L Caffrey, M Charlton, T Graham, J Green, S Green, M Hall, M Henry, B Oliphant, M Ord and N Weatherley

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s): M Brain

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): P Foy, K Wood and J Kielty

CR16 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017 be approved as a correct record.

CR17 DCLG CONSULTATION ON DISQUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS

The Committee were presented with a report seeking views about what the disqualification criteria for Councillors and Mayors should be. In particular should they extend further than statute currently permits to include new criteria.

Currently under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 9 of schedule 5B to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and Section 21 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, Councillors and Mayors can be disqualified if:-

- They are employed by the authority
- They are subject to bankruptcy restrictions or interim bankruptcy restrictions, or a debt relief order or interim debt relief restrictions order under the Insolvency Act 1986.
- Within five years before the day of election or since election have been convicted in the UK , Channel islands or Isle of Man any offence and have had passed on them a sentence of imprisonment (whether or not suspended) for a period of not less than three months.
- They are disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (this relates to offences of electoral fraud i.e a candidate bribing someone to vote for them)
- They are employed under the direction of various local authority committees, boards or the Greater London Authority
- They are a teacher in a school maintained by the local authority

The Government is seeking views about extending the reasons for disqualification to

cover two main areas – sexual offences and anti-social behaviour.

The Committee looked at each of the questions posed as part of the consultation and made the following comments in respect of each question as listed.

Question 1 –

Do you agree that an individual who is subject to the notification requirements set out in the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 should be prohibited from standing for election or holding office?

It was the unanimous view of those present at the Committee that this should be the case.

Question 2 –

Do you agree that an individual who is subject to a Sexual Risk order should not be prohibited from standing for election?

It was queried whether a sexual risk order was made public in the same way as a person being registered on the Sex Offenders Register. It was confirmed this was not the case, but an SRO would be disclosed in an enhanced DBS check.

It was noted that whilst the matter would be dealt with at the Magistrates Court, the person does have a right of appeal.

Concern was also expressed that potentially someone could get through the selection process and be nominated to stand as a candidate. If elected currently elected members are not subject to DBS clearing. The Committee were advised that it would be up to the individual to declare anything which would bar them standing in an election or from becoming a councillor, and it was a serious offence to fail to disclose such information.

The consensus of those present at the Committee was that an individual should be prohibited if subject to a Sexual Risk Order.

Question 3 and Question 4

Do you agree that an individual who has been issued with a Civil injunction or a criminal behaviour order should be prohibited from standing for election or holding office as a member of a local authority, Mayor of a combined authority or member of the London assembly or London Mayor?

Do you agree that being subject to a civil injunction or criminal behaviour order should be the only antisocial behaviour reasons why an individual should be prohibited from standing for election?

The Committee noted that there might be a wide range of circumstances under which a person might be subject to such civil sanctions, including involvement in political demonstrations, and therefore a wider spectrum of degrees of risk to the

community should someone be elected if they had such an order place against them, given that someone would be excluded from standing in an election if they had a prison sentence of 3 months or more.

The Committee felt that using a blanket yes or no response to the above questions would not be the best way of managing risk, given that the behaviour is so broad. The Committee felt that using the offences rather than the detail around an individual is not the best way of managing the risk. It was felt that these risks were not of a level that would be associated with sexual offences where an individual could pose harm to individual members of their community.

Question 5 –

Do you consider that the proposal set out in this consultation paper will have an effect on local authorities discharging their public sector Equality Act duty?

The Committee did not feel that this would be the case as long as we look at people as individuals.

Question 6 –

Do you have any further views about the proposals set out in this consultation paper?

It was noted that the rules which apply to councillors are technically stronger than those which apply to MPs, and felt that the rules should apply equally to MPs.

RESOLVED -That the comments received should form the basis of the response to the DCLG consultation on disqualification of Mayors and Councillors.

CR18 THE COUNCIL PLAN - SIX MONTHLY ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY 2017/18

The Committee received a report which provided the six month assessment of performance and delivery for the period April to September 2017.

Of the 10 indicators measured by this committee, 6 can be monitored at the six monthly stage. Four are should improvement at this point whilst two are worse than at the same point last year.

Council Tax and Business Rate Collection is improved, this is due to improved processes and billing and collection procedures.

Processing of benefit claims has is slightly worse than at this stage last year, however, this is due to the impact of preparations for the rollout of Universal Credit full service in Gateshead. It has also been affected by the introduction of a new fraud and error scheme from April, together with the changing benefit caseload and regular reform of welfare eligibility measures.

Sickness absence has slightly increased, however, there has been a roll out of a refreshed training of sickness absence procedures. This is mandatory training for 800 managers and 70% of managers have attended so far. Employees have also been invited to take part in a Health Needs Assessment, 1400 employees have responded. The responses are currently being analysed and details will be included in a future report to this Committee.

Deborah Hill is also bringing a full report to the next Committee on all of the work being undertaken around Health of the Workforce/Sickness Absence.

There have been improvements made to Digital Services. The new version of the website is expected by April 2018. There has been a 14% increase in page views on the website and 52% of people access the website via their mobile phones.

There will be a new improved way to report fly tipping and there is to be the introduction of an appointment booking service for Registrars.

Volunteers month took place in June and the committee have had an update at its October meeting on the work of the Voluntary Sector in Gateshead.

Equality Impact Assessments are completed for each budget proposal presented for consideration by Cabinet. Following implementation of agreed proposals, those that are identified as potentially having a significant impact on a particular protected characteristic are closely monitored by the Council and the mitigating actions taken to reduce or remove any adverse impact of budget decisions.

Currently the Council continues to monitor 16 proposals, however, it is proposed subject to Committee agreement that 5 proposals are no longer monitored given that there has been no disproportionate impact on those with protected characteristics.

The proposals which it is suggested that are no longer monitored are:

- Community Centre Review
- Library Network
- Highways Repair & Maintenance
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment
- Review of Support for People to Live Independently

The Council also prepared its Statement of Accounts by 31 July which is two months ahead of the deadline. This is going to change for all Councils so it was a good dry run for Gateshead.

RESOLVED -

(i)	that the Committee agreed that the activities undertaken during April 2017 to September 2017
(ii)	that the Committee agreed that the Council should cease monitoring the impact of the five budget proposals listed above.
(iii)	that the performance report be referred to Cabinet on 24 January 2017 with the recommendations from this Committee.

CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT - DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received an update on the progress made against the Council's Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan and the year on year performance of the property portfolio.

The Council's vision is to make maximum use of its land and buildings by following six key property objectives. They are:

- A strategic approach to management of our assets and involving our partners;
- Justification of holding assets based on business needs;
- Continuous improvement of the sustainability of our assets;
- Using our property assets to encourage community development;
- Using our property assets for economic development and regeneration purposes; and
- To provide properties which are fit for purpose

In terms of the national position, there is still no national benchmarking scheme, although we are looking to arrange a benchmarking framework to be set up.

Some of the key achievements include the ongoing review on the utilisation of the Civic Centre accommodation has highlighted the opportunity for the Council to develop the Civic Centre as a public sector hub whereby vacant office accommodation can be offered to other public sector/partner organisations. This has been supported by the One Public Estate. This has allowed for space to be freed up in the civic centre for the CCG and the Citizens Advice Bureau to have some space, it is also anticipated that the 0-19 service provide will move in to the civic centre and The Gateshead Housing Company moved their main office in a few years back.

During 16/17 the school estate across Gateshead saw further capital investment with a range of works implemented across a number of schools.

The Council continued its commitment to upgrading its public buildings and external environment to comply with the Equality Act 2010. 80% of buildings now meet the Equality Act standards and at remaining buildings the Council are still able to offer services even though works have not been carried out.

Gateshead Energy Centre is now complete and now supplies electricity to four major sites. The battery storage unit at Park Road is complete.

In 16/17 Emmaville and Winlaton Centre have been supported to complete Asset Transfers.

Fewer buildings in the portfolio are requiring urgent works and the Council are undertaking works in a timely manner. We have seen a reduction in gas and electricity costs, however, the water bill does appear high, it is believed that this is due to estimated bills.

The Council had previously committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 35% and as of March 2017 this target has been achieved.

There has been an increase in rental income in 2016/17, this is due to the Council's acquisition of Phase II St Mary's Green, Whickham and ongoing rent reviews across the portfolio.

Priorities for 2017/18 include,

- Continuation of playing an active role in the One Public Estate Partnership,
- Progressing the development of the Civic Centre as a public sector hub.
- Progress the development of the corporate web-based asset management database (Gp2).
- Identify development opportunities for both housing and commercial schemes to assist in driving forward the Council's housing and economic growth agenda

It was queried whether the enormous roof space on this building could be utilised to collect water for a grey water system. It was felt that this would have the potential to cut our bills. It was noted that this is something which would be looked at in the case of new builds, however, there hasn't previously been grant funding available to support the capital investment costs. Officers will look at this proposal and put something forward in terms of viability.

RESOLVED - (i) That the progress of the Corporate Asset Strategy be noted.
(ii) That the comments of the Committee in relation to the report be noted.

CR20 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee were presented with a report which provided an end of year assessment of performance on occupational health and safety matters for 2016/17 within Gateshead Council.

The Council follows the principals of the HSE Guidance, HSG 65, Managing for Health and Safety. The key principles, Plan, Do, Check, Act underpin the Council's safety management system and operational arrangements as detailed in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and arrangements.

The report highlighted that the Council provide advice and support to teachers and we have thousands of young people on educational visits all over the world. Our fire safety record is very good. We have an asbestos management team providing technical advice and carrying out re-inspections and we have updated the corporate asbestos management plan.

A higher level of training courses have been arranged and delivered across the Council to employees.

There were two specific negative areas which were highlighted to the Committee. The Council received a fee for intervention of £1200 for failing to consistently adhere

to Council procedures in relation to Hand Arm Vibration. 2 other councils have been fined £150,000 and £250,000 respectively for breaches. Although Gateshead had policies and procedures in place it was the lack of consistency which resulted in the fine. The second fee for intervention was in relation to a disturbance of asbestos and in this case the Council received a £3000 fine. Again the Council were able to defend because of the practices and procedures that are in place.

The first ever Local Authority has been fined £1m recently because a member of the public was injured. The stakes are very high.

The Council have introduced Task and Finish groups in order to learn from incidents and to ensure that all services and managers are operating in a consistent way.

It was queried whether when an Asset Transfer was undertaken if a check was carried out in advance of the transfer and whether there was support offered to those taking over the building. It was noted that we do offer the support of the Health and Safety team, however, this would be at a cost. We do work closely with groups who are taking over buildings. A manual is provided and gone through and there are checks carried out.

RESOLVED -that Committee agreed that they are satisfied that the appropriate and effective actions are being taken to maintain and improve the health and safety management system.

CR21 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The work programme report was submitted to Committee to note. It was also requested that an additional item – An Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility be added to the work programme for the January meeting.

RESOLVED - (i) that an additional item – An Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility be added to the work programme.
(ii) that the work programme be noted.

Chair.....

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TITLE OF REPORT: Proposal to implement a Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to invite comments from Corporate Resources OSC about the proposal to adopt a Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge and the process for gathering baseline information.

Background

2. Following on from the 5 Council pledges that have been agreed we need to communicate with our supply chain and engage them in discussion about the role that they will play in helping us to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Gateshead.
3. Officers from across the Council have developed a draft Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge for consideration by Councillors that helps the supply chain to implement our Pledges by providing more detailed statements for suppliers to sign up to. The draft document is attached as appendix 1 for consideration and comment.
4. In addition, the Council often receives requests from organisations to agree to motions, or sign agreements relating to trade, or that impact in other ways on our procurement activity. This draft document takes account of all of the appropriate motions that the Council has previously signed up to, and it is proposed that rather than sign up to future agreements, the Council could amend this document so that everything is in one place and we can better understand the impact of individual requests.

Proposal

5. The Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge has been developed, based on the 5 Council Pledges:
 - Put people and families at the heart of everything we do
 - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
 - Support our communities to support themselves and each other
 - Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
 - Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead Council.
6. This document sets out how our supply chain can help us to deliver the best outcomes for people of Gateshead. It sets out a number of statements that would enable delivery of the 5 pledges and asks suppliers to sign up to the individual statements on behalf of their organisation, and also to indicate where they believe their supply chains currently are by completing a questionnaire.

7. This information will be gathered during pre-tender engagement with our supply chains preferably anonymously in order to inform tender documentation and evaluation content.
8. Many tenders will have specific requirements that go above and beyond what is included in this document as this is the basic standard that may be applied across all markets and types of suppliers.
9. This approach has a number of benefits:
 - The document signals basic standards, values and direction of travel that we would like our supply chain to comply with.
 - This approach covers all procurement activity regardless of markets and supplier sectors.
 - The information can be used to inform tender standards for specific tender processes.
 - Once the council has a base line of information, if there are areas where the Council considers markets to be weak, we can consider whether to provide either direct support or signpost suppliers to organisations that can help them to improve.
 - There may be opportunities to generate income, for example, if suppliers identify areas of weakness where the Council has capacity or expertise, then the Council may consider opportunities to trade with suppliers to help them to upskill e.g. health and safety or resilience planning.
 - We can also work with suppliers based in Gateshead to help to upskill them or educate them to enable them to compete.
10. This is the start of a journey and it will be necessary to review the document in approximately 12 months' time, once we have sufficient baseline information from which to determine our next steps. It is anticipated that we will be surprised that some markets are not as advanced in some areas as we have assumed and in other areas, some markets may more compliant than we have assumed. We then may want to encourage those players within specific markets to become compliant by making more formal arrangements through more stringent policy, or requiring compliance with additional terms and conditions within our contracts, however it is important to gather the baseline information in the first instance.

Recommendations

11. Councillors are requested to:
 - (i) comment on the content of the Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge
 - (ii) consider the approach to gathering baseline information
 - (ii) agree to the content and the approach set out in this report to be considered by Cabinet

CONTACT: Andrea Tickner

extension: 5995

PLAN REF:

GATESHEAD COUNCIL'S CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE January 2018

Introduction

Gateshead Council works proactively to ensure that Gateshead is a place where everyone thrives. In order to achieve this, a radical rethink is needed about the way we work as a Council, and what we should expect from our suppliers, service providers, contractors and sub-contractors (referred to as “supply chain”).

Gateshead is a vibrant place and residents have a strong sense of community and local pride. Gateshead people are compassionate, warm and generous. They are willing to share and there is a great sense of belonging as people really care for each other. We want to work in partnership with our “supply chain”, to pursue wider social and economic benefits for local people, in a constructive and collaborative way in order to realise our ambition of a thriving Gateshead whilst not restricting free trade.

We operate within a legal framework that requires us to award certain contracts in line with the overarching fundamental principles of the EU Treaty of Rome (1957), including the principles of free movement of trade, non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, procedural fairness, and proportionality, and we expect our “supply chain” to adopt these same principles.

We expect high standards of integrity and professionalism in all business dealings and practices from everyone we deal with. We therefore have developed a number of pledges set out in this document and ask that our supply chain incorporates them in all business activities and cascade them throughout their supply chains, working towards a fair, inclusive, sustainable and progressive economy.

In accordance with the public procurement rules, we take account of issues that are relevant to the subject matter of the contract and are consistent with the requirement within the Local Government Act 1999 to achieve “best value”. In the context of procurement, best value for money refers to choosing the option that offers “the optimum combination of whole life costs and social benefits to meet our requirements.” We believe, however that by working together on wider corporate social responsibility initiatives we can achieve more.

Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge

The Gateshead's Council Plan sets out the Council's position on a range of issues based on a core set of values which can be translated into our procurement approach:

INTEGRITY	INCLUSIVE	INSPIRATIONAL
We will always work with <i>integrity</i> – and we expect our “supply chain” to demonstrate fairness and respect every day and in every way.	We will be <i>inclusive</i> – and we expect our “supply chain” to work together and engage people to get better results and ensure equality of opportunity.	We will be <i>inspirational</i> – and we encourage our “supply chain” to think creatively, be dynamic, motivating and empower everyone to do the things that make a real difference for the people of Gateshead.

We have taken this a step further by making a number of pledges which will become central to all contracts that we procure. Some contracts may also contain additional requirements that will be relevant and proportionate to the specific contract.

The Council pledges to:

- **Put people and families at the heart of everything we do**
- **Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance**
- **Support our communities to support themselves and each other**
- **Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough**
- **Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead Council**

Our Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge sets out how our supply chain can help us to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Gateshead.

Procedure

We will initially gather information to baseline how able our supply chain is to sign up to our pledges. Our expectation is that many organisations will be able to sign up to a large number of our pledges, however it is our intention to work with our supply chain to support them to be able to sign up to pledges that they currently cannot meet. Once we have an accurate baseline we will consider what additional support might be required.

Ultimately we aim to develop a more formal approach to implementing our Corporate Social Responsibility Pledges across all of our procurement activity in order to support commissioners to build a picture of supply chains, encourage good business practice, determine minimum standards for specific contracts and help us to identify what additional support you may need.

Our Corporate Social Responsibility Pledges are included for your information and we have developed a questionnaire in order for you to confirm the pledges that your organisation and your supply chain can sign up to now, and which ones you are still working towards.

Completion of this pledge is voluntary and will not be considered in any tender evaluation, however your views are important to us and the results of the returned pledge will be used to develop our procurement approach in the future.

Gateshead Corporate Social Responsibility Pledges

January 2018

Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do

The Council and its supply chain will eliminate child labour* by:

- *Providing for any children found to be performing child labour to attend and remain in quality education until no longer a child.*
- *Ensure that no children and young persons** are employed at night, or in hazardous conditions, as defined by the International Labour Organisation.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that wages meet at least national legal standards and good practice by:

- *Providing wages and benefits at rates that meet at least national legal standards; are fair and reasonable; and include paid holidays, sickness benefit, pension scheme, accident compensation, and death in service benefit as appropriate.*
- *Providing employees with an easy-to-read contract of employment clearly explaining wage levels and employee rights.*
- *Ensuring that where employees are unable to read, their contract is explained to them by a union representative, or another appropriate third party.*
- *Providing wages in cash and not in kind (e.g. goods, vouchers), with no deductions made unless permitted under national law or agreed by the employee, without duress.*
- *Ensuring that travel time and travel and other necessary costs are paid for by the employer.*
- *Ensuring that employees eligible are paid statutory sick pay.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that working conditions are safe by:

- *Operating appropriate health and safety policies and procedures overseen by a senior manager responsible for compliance and monitoring.*
- *Ensuring that employees have the necessary, regular health and safety training that is recorded and monitored.*
- *Providing employees with appropriate health and safety equipment.*
- *Ensuring that new employees or reassigned employees receive the necessary level of health and safety training and safety equipment.*
- *Taking adequate steps to prevent accidents and injury to health.*
- *Providing comfortable and hygienic working and welfare facilities with clean toilets and water suitable for drinking and washing.*
- *Ensuring that where worker housing is provided it meets the same standards for health and safety as the workplace.*

*'Child' refers to any persons less than 15 years of age, unless local legislation on the minimum age stipulates a higher age for work or mandatory schooling, in which case the higher age shall apply ** Young Person refers to any persons under 18 years of age

The Council and its supply chain will promote good health and wellbeing by:

- *Proactively encouraging employees to lead healthy lives.*
- *Investing in measures for tackling ill health where appropriate.*
- *Considering accessibility in the workplace for the benefit of both employees and visitors.*
- *Creating a workplace that promotes mental wellbeing and accommodates those living with mental illness. Ways of demonstrating this include; the application of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for work related stress, signing up to the "Mindful Employer initiative", or "Time to change employer pledge" (<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk>).*
- *Demonstrating a commitment to a healthy workplace by working towards appropriate recognised healthy workplace standards e.g. the World Health Organisation's Healthy Workplace Framework and Model, the national UK Workplace Wellbeing Charter or, for local suppliers, the North East Better Health at Work Award.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that working hours are not excessive by:

- *Complying with national laws or industry standards on employee working hours, whichever affords greater protection.*
- *Not expecting employees to work more than 48 hours per week on a regular basis and, on average, receive one day off in every seven.*
- *Not requiring employees to work excessive hours of more than 60 hours per week (including overtime).*
- *Not demanding overtime on a regular basis, and, where required, it should be reimbursed at an appropriate rate.*
- *Observing positive work life balance including flexible working practices where possible.*

The Council and its supply chain will implement clear dispute procedures by:

- *Providing clear and accessible processes for resolving disputes with, and between employees and management.*
- *Providing clear, easily understood disciplinary, grievance and appeal procedures that are lawful and recorded.*

Tackling inequality so people have a fair chance

The Council and its supply chain will help local people to find work by:

- *Creating long-term, sustainable employment opportunities for the people of Gateshead..*
- *Supporting appropriate employment opportunities for disadvantaged people for example those not in education, employment or training (NEET), long term unemployed, people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health problems, ex-offenders, over 50's, lone parents and ex-armed forces personnel through targeted recruitment practices, where appropriate.*
- *Providing work placements to enhance the employability skills and capabilities of local people.*
- *Creating apprenticeship/volunteering opportunities to support young people into work.*

The council and its supply chain will to support Looked After children and Care Leavers and endeavour to improve their life chances and promote stability for their future by:

- *Offering work experience for Looked After children and Care Leavers.*
- *Developing opportunities for training and apprenticeships for Looked After children and Care Leavers.*
- *Offering mentoring opportunities or sponsorships for Looked After children and Care Leavers.*
- *Investing in Looked After Children and Care Leavers wherever possible (eg in kind support, donations and funding opportunities).*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that no discrimination is practiced by:

- *Implementing practices that eliminate discrimination in hiring, compensation, training, promotion, termination or retirement either directly or indirectly, and complying with the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Regulations Act 1999 (Blacklists) Regulations 2010.*
- *Ensuring that all processes are conducted in a fair, open, honest and transparent way.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that no inhumane treatment is allowed by:

- *Prohibiting physical abuse or coercion, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment, and verbal abuse, racism or other forms of intimidation.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that employment is freely chosen by:

- *Affording employees the freedom to choose to work and not use forced, bonded or non-voluntary prison labour.*
- *Ensuring that employees are free to leave their employment after giving reasonable notice.*

The Council and its supply chain will help producers and workers in developing countries receive a fair price for their products by:

- *Offering fair trade products for use in meetings, conferences, other hospitality purposes, and catering that is sold to employees and the public.*
- *Ensure that fair trade is considered during the procurement of goods and services.*
- *Encourage suppliers to offer fair trade alternatives where they exist.*

Supporting our communities to support themselves and each other

The Council and its supply chain will support communities by:

- *Offering opportunities for employees to participate in volunteering, to enhance and develop their skills for the benefit of themselves, their organisation and the local community.*
- *Supporting voluntary and community sector capacity and capability building activities, where possible (eg mentoring support).*
- *Investing in the local community wherever possible (eg in kind support, donations and funding programmes, employee volunteering, mentoring, placement opportunities).*
- *Providing opportunities for young people to lead change and make a positive contribution to their communities through youth social action (campaigning, volunteering and fundraising).*

The Council and its supply chain will work effectively within communities by:

- *Being respectful of the local indigenous population and their values, traditions and cultures.*
- *Ensuring that communities are informed and consulted on all aspects of business that affects them in a timely and accessible manner.*

The Council and its supply chain will promote sustainable communities by:

- *Supporting social and economic regeneration initiatives, where applicable, within the communities in which we operate.*
- *Supporting sporting, cultural and heritage projects, where applicable, within the communities in which we operate.*
- *Assisting community organisations to be more sustainable and working with communities to improve local resilience.*
- *Promoting peace, security, and business and community resilience.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure freedom of association and rights to collective bargaining are respected by:

- *Valuing the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.*
- *Affording employees freedom of association with the right to join an independent trade union or other workers' association, and to carry out reasonable representative functions in the workplace.*
- *Where Trade Unions are recognised, allowing them to appoint shop stewards and workplace health and safety representatives and facilitating their rights to carry out legally permitted activity.*
- *Facilitating alternative means of democratic representation where laws restrict freedom of association and collective bargaining.*
- *Recognising that the right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be respected in a free and democratic society.*

Investing in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough

The Council and its supply chain will provide regular employment where appropriate by:

- *Ensuring that to every extent possible, work is performed on the basis of a recognised employment relationship that is compliant with national law and practice.*
- *Ensuring that obligations to employees under labour or social security laws and regulations arising from the regular employment relationship are not avoided through the use of labour-only contracting, sub-contracting, or home-working arrangements, or through apprenticeship schemes where there is no real intent to impart skills or provide regular employment, nor shall any such obligations be avoided through the excessive use of fixed-term contracts of employment.*
- *Minimising the use of zero hours contracts in place of permanent contracts.*

The Council and its supply chain will ensure that employees have appropriate skills and competencies to undertake their role by:

- *Providing training in work time and at no cost to the employee, to enable them to undertake their role competently.*
- *Raising employees' skills through training and access to professional development as befits their role.*
- *Providing career progression pathways as appropriate.*
- *Working within specific industries or sectors to address skills shortages where they are identified through the provision of apprenticeship, adult training or career progression schemes.*
- *Auditing skills and competencies across the workforce on a regular basis.*

The Council and its supply chain will support local businesses including social enterprises and third sector organisations by:

- *Reviewing procedures and practices to identify opportunities to improve the local economy and contribute to local economic growth.*
- *Removing barriers to participation to ensure that trading opportunities are as accessible as possible to all businesses.*
- *Identifying and supporting local supply chain and sub-contracting partners, including making opportunities accessible to third sector organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals wherever possible.*
- *Ensuring payments to contractors and sub-contractors are processed in a timely manner.*
- *Ensuring that contracts with contractors and subcontractors are no less favourable than the primary contract terms and conditions that have been let to you.*
- *Recognising that a flourishing, sustainable economy requires interaction, engagement and collaboration between a diverse range of private, public, third-sector and social enterprise organisations.*
- *Engaging in local business networking opportunities (e.g. Gateshead Business Network) and other business engagement opportunities where appropriate.*
- *Participating in capacity building activities for local businesses (e.g. mentoring and peer to peer support programmes) where appropriate.*

Working together to fight for a better future for Gateshead Council

The Council and its supply chain will reduce its environmental impact on future generations by:

- *Ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account for the short, medium and long term.*
- *Training and actively encouraging employees to work in an environmentally responsible manner.*
- *Considering whole life costs when procuring and managing business activities.*
- *Encouraging the use of responsibly sourced construction products in accordance with BES6001 where applicable.*

The Council and its supply chain will protect natural resources wherever possible by:

- *Increasing the use of sustainable materials.*
- *Taking steps to control and reduce water usage and waste water.*
- *Preventing harmful discharges into the water system.*
- *Ensuring that all timber and paper products are sourced from sustainable forests with a clear chain of custody.*
- *Monitoring issues of material scarcity, with particular regard to negative impacts from the over-extraction of materials from endangered environments.*

The Council and its supply chain will manage waste responsibly by:

- *Reducing waste by promoting re-use, remanufacture and recycling.*
- *Disposing of non-recyclable waste in a responsible manner.*
- *Utilising emerging technologies that can further reduce waste.*
- *Minimising the use of packaging.*

The Council and its supply chain will reduce the carbon footprint by:

- *Measuring the carbon footprint and developing plans to reduce it.*
- *Reducing transportation road miles where practical.*
- *Monitoring energy consumption and taking steps to reduce it where practical.*
- *Recognising the benefits of sourcing locally and creating local supply chains.*

Gateshead Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge Questionnaire/Survey

Please let us know how you can help us to deliver our pledges:

Pledge One: Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do	Applies to my organisation		Applies to my supply chain	
	Fully	Working towards	Fully	Working towards
We will eliminate child labour* by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing for any children found to be performing child labour to attend and remain in quality education until no longer a child.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensure that no children and young persons** are employed at night, or in hazardous conditions, as defined by the International Labour Organisation.</i> 				
We will ensure that wages meet at least national legal standards and good practice by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing wages and benefits at rates that meet at least national legal standards; are fair and reasonable; and include paid holidays, sickness benefit, pension scheme, accident compensation, and death in service benefit as appropriate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing employees with an easy-to-read contract of employment clearly explaining wage levels and employee rights.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that where employees are unable to read, their contract is explained to them by a union representative, or another appropriate third party.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing wages in cash and not in kind (e.g. goods, vouchers), with no deductions made unless permitted under national law or agreed by the employee, without duress.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that travel time and travel and other necessary costs are paid for by the employer.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that employees eligible are paid statutory sick pay</i> 				
We will ensure that working conditions are safe by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Operating appropriate health and safety policies and procedures overseen by a senior manager responsible for compliance and monitoring.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that employees have the necessary, regular health and safety training that is recorded and monitored.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing employees with appropriate health and safety equipment.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that new employees or reassigned employees receive the necessary level of health and safety training and safety equipment.</i> 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Taking adequate steps to prevent accidents and injury to health.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing comfortable and hygienic working and welfare facilities with clean toilets and water suitable for drinking and washing.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensuring that where worker housing is provided it meets the same standards for health and safety as the workplace.</i> 				
We will promote good health and wellbeing by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proactively encouraging employees to lead healthy lives.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Investing in measures for tackling ill health where appropriate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Considering accessibility in the workplace for the benefit of both employees and visitors.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creating a workplace that promotes mental wellbeing and accommodates those living with mental illness. Ways of demonstrating this include; the application of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for work related stress, signing up to the "Mindful Employer initiative", or "Time to change employer pledge" (https://www.time-to-change.org.uk).</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demonstrating a commitment to a healthy workplace by working towards appropriate recognised healthy workplace standards e.g. the World Health Organisation's Healthy Workplace Framework and Model, the national UK Workplace Wellbeing Charter or, for local suppliers, the North East Better Health at Work Award.</i> 				
We will ensure that working hours are not excessive by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complying with national laws or industry standards on employee working hours, whichever affords greater protection.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not expecting employees to work more than 48 hours per week on a regular basis and, on average, receive one day off in every seven.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not requiring employees to work excessive hours of more than 60 hours per week (including overtime).</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not demanding overtime on a regular basis, and, where required, it should be reimbursed at an appropriate rate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Observing positive work life balance including flexible working practices where possible.</i> 				
We will implement clear dispute procedures by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing clear and accessible processes for resolving disputes with, and between employees and management.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing clear, easily understood disciplinary, grievance and appeal procedures that are lawful and recorded.</i> 				

Pledge 2: Tackling inequality so people have a fair chance	Applies to my organisation		Applies to my supply chain	
	Fully	Working towards	Fully	Working towards
We will help local people to find work by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Creating long-term, sustainable employment opportunities for the people of Gateshead.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Supporting appropriate employment opportunities for disadvantaged people for example those not in education, employment or training (NEET), long term unemployed, people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health problems, ex-offenders, over 50's, lone parents and ex-armed forces personnel through targeted recruitment practices, where appropriate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing work placements to enhance the employability skills and capabilities of local people.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Creating apprenticeship/volunteering opportunities to support young people into work.</i> 				
We will support Looked After children and Care Leavers and endeavour to improve their life chances and promote stability for their future by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Offering work experience for Looked After children and Care Leavers.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Developing opportunities for training and apprenticeships for Looked After children and Care Leavers.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Offering mentoring opportunities or sponsorships for Looked After children and Care Leavers.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Investing in Looked After Children and Care Leavers wherever possible (eg in kind support, donations and funding opportunities).</i> 				
We will ensure that no discrimination is practiced by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Implementing practices that eliminate discrimination in hiring, compensation, training, promotion, termination or retirement either directly or indirectly, and complying with the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Regulations Act 1999 (Blacklists) Regulations 2010.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that all processes are conducted in a fair, open, honest and transparent way.</i> 				
We will ensure that no inhumane treatment is allowed by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Prohibiting physical abuse or coercion, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment, and verbal abuse, racism or other forms of intimidation.</i> 				
We will ensure that employment is freely chosen by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Affording employees the freedom to choose to work and not use forced, bonded or non-voluntary prison labour.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that employees are free to leave their employment after giving reasonable notice.</i> 				
We will help producers and workers in developing countries receive a fair price for their products by:				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Offering fair trade products for use in meetings, conferences, other hospitality purposes, and catering that is sold to employees and the public.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensure that fair trade is considered during the procurement of goods and services.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Encourage suppliers to offer fair trade alternatives where they exist.</i> 				
Pledge 3: Supporting our communities to support themselves and each other	Applies to my organisation		Applies to my supply chain	
	Fully	Working towards	Fully	Working towards
We will support communities by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Offering opportunities for employees to participate in volunteering, to enhance and develop their skills for the benefit of themselves, their organisation and the local community.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Supporting voluntary and community sector capacity and capability building activities, where possible (eg mentoring support).</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Investing in the local community wherever possible (eg in kind support, donations and funding programmes, employee volunteering, mentoring, placement opportunities).</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing opportunities for young people to lead change and make a positive contribution to their communities through youth social action (campaigning, volunteering and fundraising).</i> 				
We will work effectively within communities by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Being respectful of the local indigenous population and their values, traditions and cultures.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that communities are informed and consulted on all aspects of business that affects them in a timely and accessible manner.</i> 				
We will promote sustainable communities by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Supporting social and economic regeneration initiatives, where applicable, within the communities in which we operate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Supporting sporting, cultural and heritage projects, where applicable, within the communities in which we operate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Assisting community organisations to be more sustainable and working with communities to improve local resilience.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Promoting peace, security, and business and community resilience.</i> 				
We will ensure freedom of association and rights to collective bargaining are respected by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Valuing the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Affording employees freedom of association with the right to join an independent trade union or other workers' association, and to carry out reasonable</i> 				

<i>representative functions in the workplace.</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where Trade Unions are recognised, allowing them to appoint shop stewards and workplace health and safety representatives and facilitating their rights to carry out legally permitted activity.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Facilitating alternative means of democratic representation where laws restrict freedom of association and collective bargaining.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recognising that the right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be respected in a free and democratic society.</i> 				

Pledge 4: Investing in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough	Applies to my organisation		Applies to my supply chain	
	Fully	Working towards	Fully	Working towards
We will provide regular employment where appropriate by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensuring that to every extent possible, work is performed on the basis of a recognised employment relationship that is compliant with national law and practice.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensuring that obligations to employees under labour or social security laws and regulations arising from the regular employment relationship are not avoided through the use of labour-only contracting, sub-contracting, or home-working arrangements, or through apprenticeship schemes where there is no real intent to impart skills or provide regular employment, nor shall any such obligations be avoided through the excessive use of fixed-term contracts of employment.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Minimising the use of zero hours contracts in place of permanent contracts.</i> 				
We will ensure that employees have appropriate skills and competencies to undertake their role by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing training in work time and at no cost to the employee, to enable them to undertake their role competently.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raising employees' skills through training and access to professional development as befits their role.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Providing career progression pathways as appropriate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Working within specific industries or sectors to address skills shortages where they are identified through the provision of apprenticeship, adult training or career progression schemes.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Auditing skills and competencies across the workforce on a regular basis.</i> 				
We will support local businesses including social enterprises and third sector organisations by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reviewing procedures and practices to identify opportunities to improve the local economy and contribute to local economic growth.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Removing barriers to participation to ensure that</i> 				

<i>trading opportunities are as accessible as possible to all businesses.</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Identifying and supporting local supply chain and sub-contracting partners, including making opportunities accessible to third sector organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals wherever possible.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring payments to contractors and sub-contractors are processed in a timely manner.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that contracts with contractors and subcontractors are no less favourable than the primary contract terms and conditions that have been let to you.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Recognising that a flourishing, sustainable economy requires interaction, engagement and collaboration between a diverse range of private, public, third-sector and social enterprise organisations.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Engaging in local business networking opportunities (eg Gateshead Business Network) and other business engagement opportunities where appropriate.</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Participating in capacity building activities for local businesses (eg mentoring and peer to peer support programmes) where appropriate.</i> 				

Pledge 5: Working together to fight for a better future for Gateshead Council	Applies to my organisation		Applies to my supply chain	
	Fully	Working towards	Fully	Working towards
We will reduce our environmental impact on future generations by:				
• <i>Ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account for the short, medium and long term.</i>				
• <i>Training and actively encouraging employees to work in an environmentally responsible manner.</i>				
• <i>Considering whole life costs when procuring and managing business activities.</i>				
• <i>Encouraging the use of responsibly sourced construction products in accordance with BES6001 where applicable.</i>				
We will protect natural resources wherever possible by:				
• <i>Increasing the use of sustainable materials.</i>				
• <i>Taking steps to control and reduce water usage and waste water.</i>				
• <i>Preventing harmful discharges into the water system.</i>				
• <i>Ensuring that all timber and paper products are sourced from sustainable forests with a clear chain of custody.</i>				
• <i>Monitoring issues of material scarcity, with particular regard to negative impacts from the over-extraction of materials from endangered environments.</i>				
We will manage waste responsibly by:				
• <i>Reducing waste by promoting re-use, remanufacture and recycling.</i>				
• <i>Disposing of non-recyclable waste in a responsible manner.</i>				
• <i>Utilising emerging technologies that can further reduce waste.</i>				
• <i>Minimising the use of packaging.</i>				
We will reduce the carbon footprint by:				
• <i>Measuring the carbon footprint and developing plans to reduce it.</i>				
• <i>Reducing transportation road miles where practical.</i>				
• <i>Monitoring energy consumption and taking steps to reduce it where practical.</i>				
• <i>Recognising the benefits of sourcing locally and creating local supply chains.</i>				

All responses will be anonymised, however it would help us if you could provide the following information:

Category of business sector e.g. social care/construction etc

Type of organisation e.g. charity, small business etc

Thank you for participating. Please return completed questionnaires to:

By Post: Service Director
 Corporate Commissioning & Procurement
 Gateshead Council
 Civic Centre
 Regent Street
 Gateshead
 NE8 1HH

By Email: procurement@gateshead.gov.uk
(your identity
will be removed)

All information will be held confidentially and will not be shared with any third parties.

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Report - Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure 2016/17

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Summary

The report provides an analysis of complaints and compliments recorded by the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company in the year ended 31 March 2017.

Background

1. The Cabinet has referred the report to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the performance management process, in order to ensure that the process is operating satisfactorily.
2. The Council sees comments, complaints and compliments as an important part of performance management. To make it easier for people to express their views we have a corporate complaints and compliments procedure and it is publicised in the Council News, leaflets in council facilities and on both the internet and intranet. The Gateshead Housing Company has its own complaints and compliments procedure.

Procedure

3. The procedure has three steps, the first of which 'problem solving', relies on the quick resolution of complaints by employees and their managers and does not require the complaint to be recorded. At the second step the complaint is recorded, there is a formal investigation into the complaint and a written response is sent to the complainant usually within twenty working days. The final step enables those complainants who remain dissatisfied to request the Chief Executive (or Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company) to carry out an independent review of the matter.
4. The report focuses upon recorded complaints and compliments with information about the distribution of complaints and compliments across the Council and the categories of complaints.

5. This does not include complaints about statutory Social Services and Children's Services matters which are investigated under their own separate legal requirements.

Complaints Received

6. Over the year 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017:
 - 307 complaints were recorded
 - 754 compliments were recorded
 - 18 complaints were the subject of an independent review by the Chief Executive of the Council and the Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company undertook 20 reviews.

Issues Arising

7. A number of points can be noted arising from the statistics for 2016/17:
 - 307 complaints were recorded in 2016/17 compared with 387 in 2015/16 a decrease of 80.
 - 754 compliments were recorded for the year 2016/17 compared to 723 in 2015/16 – an increase of 32.
 - The number of complainants requesting a review of their complaint by the Chief Executive decreased by fourteen to 18 in 2016/17. The Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company carried out 20 reviews in 2016/17 compared to 14 in 2015/16.
 - 73.3% of all complaints were recorded against the category of quality of service.
 - The proportion of complaints found to be fully justified decreased from 41% in 2015/16 to 36.9% in 2016/17.
 - In addition, the proportion of complaints found to be partially justified increased from 13.6% in 2015/16 to 15.6% in 2016/17.
 - Most importantly, the Council's managers used the information gained through the monitoring of complaints to improve the provision of services.
 - The computerised recording system made it easier to track and respond to complaints. However, this system now requires an upgrade that reflects the new structure of the Council and provides improved statistical interrogation and analysis.
 - There has been a decrease in the number of complaints recorded by the Council during 2016/17. Additionally, there has been an increase in performance of the percentage of complaints resolved within target timescales for the both the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company from 82.7% in 2015/16 to 85.2% in 2016/17.

Local Government Ombudsman

8. During the course of 2016/17, the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) investigated 17 complaints. Of these 7 were closed following a detailed response from the Council, 2 were not upheld and 8 were upheld partially or fully. Councillors will note that a summary of those cases upheld has been

presented to the Cabinet. Each case has provided learning opportunities in terms of reviewing policy, maintenance of records, the operation of systems and the provision of guidance and training to staff. The Council maintains a good working relationship with the LGO and all cases have now been settled to their satisfaction and the complainants.

Supporting Local Scrutiny

9. Councillors may be aware that throughout the year the LGO has produced a number of focus reports. These highlight particular subjects or systemic issues coming from casework. They draw on lessons learned from complaints and have included recommendations on good practice. These reports have been used to inform reviews and case studies undertaken by the Council's overview and scrutiny committees. The LGO has also established a new Councillors' Forum that brings together councillors from across the political spectrum to help the LGO better understand the needs of Councillors and to help them act as champions when undertaking their scrutiny roles. They have also, in consultation with the Local Government Association, produced a workbook for Councillors that can be accessed via the LGA's website.

The Housing Ombudsman

10. From 1 April 2013 the Localism Act 2011 extended the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman to cover all social landlords, including Councils. The Housing Ombudsman is able to consider complaints in so far as they relate to the provision or management of housing. The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) continues to investigate complaints about allocations and the lettings policy.

During 2016/17, the Council has been contacted by the Housing Ombudsman in respect of 6 cases. Of these, three cases had not exhausted the Housing Company's complaints procedure, one case was not within Housing Ombudsman's jurisdiction, one case, the Housing Ombudsman determined that there was service failure and ordered compensation of £100 to be paid for the time and trouble to pursue the complaint and also recommended that the Housing Company consider reviewing its policy in relation to inspections being carried out following repairs and one case, the Housing Ombudsman determined that there was maladministration and ordered total compensation of £450 for inconvenience be paid.

Recommendation

11. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse the information in the Annual Report and satisfy themselves that the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure is operating satisfactorily

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TITLE OF REPORT: Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure - Annual Report 2016/2017

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of the Report

1. The report asks the Cabinet to consider and endorse an analysis of the complaints and compliments recorded during the year 2016/17.

Background

2. This report focuses on complaints and compliments that the Council deals with under its Corporate Complaints and Compliments procedure. It provides a statistical analysis of the complaints and compliments received for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
3. Appendix 2 to this report details:
 - The number of complaints recorded in the year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017
 - The categories of complaints (note: a complaint may fall into more than one category).
4. Appendix 3 to this report details:
 - The number of complaints resolved in the year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017
 - The number of complaints resolved within the target time of twenty working days
 - The number of complaints closed (ie dealt with as issues other than complaints)
 - The number of complaints open (ie unresolved at 31 March 2017)
 - The number of resolved complaints that were found to be justified or part justified.
5. Appendix 4 provides an analysis of the compliments received and complaints recorded and resolved across all Council services and the Gateshead Housing Company.
6. Appendix 5 details examples of where complaints have been used to improve practice and performance across the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company.
7. Appendix 6 provides examples of compliments that have been recorded in the year 2016/17.
8. Appendix 7 provides information about the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.

9. Previous annual reports have provided a three year comparison of complaints and compliments recorded. Fundamental changes to the structure of the Council's services preclude the inclusion of this comparison year's annual report. It is intended that comparative data will be reintroduced in future reports.

Proposal

10. It is proposed that the analysis provided for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 be agreed.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that the Cabinet
 - (i) Agrees the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure Annual Report for 2016/17 as detailed.
 - (ii) Notes the report will be considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For the following reason:

To have an effective and timely complaints procedure.

CONTACT: Brian Wilson extension 2145

APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure supports Vision 2030 and the Council Plan.

Background

2. The Council aims to respond positively to complaints, put things right that have gone wrong, and ensure that it learns from the experience to deliver continuously improving services to the people of Gateshead. The Corporate Complaints and Compliments procedure is widely publicised across the Borough. The Gateshead Housing Company operates its own procedure as the body responsible for the day to day management and maintenance of council housing in Gateshead.
3. The Council operates the corporate complaints system to handle complaints and compliments to: make it easier for members of the public to raise issues of concern; ensure that such complaints are responded to quickly and in a consistent manner and to enable the Council to learn from the issues raised and amend procedures and practices as necessary.
4. The report focuses on complaints that the Council deals with under its Corporate Complaints Procedure. Excluded from the procedure are:
 - most Social Services and Children's Services matters - for which there are separate statutory procedures
 - matters for which there is an existing system of appeal/redress
 - most complaints about schools.
5. The aim of the procedure is to resolve complaints as quickly and fairly as possible at as low a level of formality as possible.
6. The procedure has three steps:
 - Step 1 - problem solving – to try and sort it out quickly and informally by providing information or taking appropriate action
 - Step 2 - investigation – the complaint is recorded and investigated by a Senior Manager who will aim to respond within twenty working days
 - Step 3 - review – the Chief Executive (or Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company) to look again at complaint and aim to respond within twenty working days.
7. Computerised recording of Step 2 complaints was designed to ensure a consistent method of response to complaints across the Council. The system now requires an upgrade that reflects the new structures of the Council's services and provides improved statistical interrogation and analysis and options for this are being considered. Also, the monitoring and reporting of corporate complaints and compliments should be aligned to the Council's performance management framework.

A designated officer oversees and monitors the operation of the Corporate Complaints Procedure and the system as a whole under the responsibility of the Chief Executive. This includes the collation and analysis of the statistics for the Council and the conduct of the Step 3 reviews.

8. The procedure enables people to express their views and register their complaint or compliment:
- In person at a Council office
 - By telephone
 - By fax
 - By e-mail
 - By a complaints/compliments form which is available at council facilities and on our website
 - By letter
 - Through a councillor
 - Through someone acting on their behalf
 - With the assistance of other organisations
 - Through social media

Consultation

9. There has been no external consultation undertaken in the preparation of this report.

Alternative Options

10. There are no alternative options.

Implications of Recommended Option

11. **Resources:**
- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no new financial implications arising from this report.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance confirms that there are no human resources implications arising from the report.
 - c) **Property Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance confirms that there are no property implications arising from this report.
12. **Risk Management Implication** – Potential failure to act on complaints received is minimised through regular monitoring.
13. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure contributes to the implementation of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
14. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

15. **Health Implications** – There are no health implications arising from this report.
16. **Sustainability Implications** – There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.
17. **Human Rights Implications** – There may be human rights implications in a number of complaints made to the Council. Therefore having a Corporate Complaints Procedure will assist the Council in carrying out its duties under the Human Rights Act 1988.
18. **Area and Ward Implications** – None.
19. **Background Information** – Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure.

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Service Area	Category of complaint						
	Total No of Complaints	Quality of service	Access to service	Employee	Policy	Damage/Injury	Other
Communities & Environment							
Waste Service & Grounds Maintenance	13	6	-	1	1	-	8
Facilities Management, Catering	1	-	1	1	-	-	1
Construction Services	2	-	1	-	1	1	1
Development & Public Protection	18	11	-	1	1	1	9
Transport & Highways	8	7	1	3	2	1	1
Culture, Communities, Leisure & Volunteering	17	2	1	1	-	-	13
Housing Services	6	3	-	1	2	-	-
Corporate Services & Governance							
Development Law & Democratic Services	3	2	-	-	-	-	1
HR and Litigation	2	-	-	2	1	-	-
Corporate Resources							
Customer & Financial Services	20	14	3	3	1		1
Gateshead Housing Company							
East	53	40	-	18	5	1	3
West	30	25	3	1	3	1	1
Central	51	41	-	11	3	5	3
Inner West	30	30	-	5	1	2	2
South	53	44	-	11	1	1	13
TOTAL	307	225	10	59	22	13	57

Please note that a complaint may fall into more than one category

COMPLAINTS RESOLVED 1 APRIL 2016 to 31 MARCH 2017

APPENDIX 3

Service Area	Number of Complaints resolved	No. resolved within 20 working days	No. of complaints closed	No. Fully justified complaints	No. of partly justified complaints	No. of unresolved complaints
Communities & Environment						
Waste Service & Grounds Maintenance	10	9	3	-	-	-
Facilities Management, Catering	1	1	-	-	-	-
Construction Services	1	1	1	1	-	-
Development & Public Protection	13	5	5	-	1	-
Transport & Highways	7	5	1	1	1	-
Culture, Communities, Leisure & Volunteering	17	16	-	1	1	-
Housing Services	6	4	-	-	1	-
Corporate Services & Governance						
Development Law & Democratic Services	3	2	-	-	1	-
HR & Litigation	2	-	1	-	-	-
Corporate Resources						
Financial Services	18	14	2	5	2	-
Gateshead Housing Company						
East	50	47	3	22	8	-
West	29	27	1	14	7	-
Central	45	37	6	24	9	-
Inner West	30	23	-	18	6	-
South	52	50	1	18	7	-
TOTAL	282	241	24	104	44	-

Number of complaints

Adult Social Care and Independent Living and Children's Services operate their own separate complaints recording system

During the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 the Council recorded 307 Step 2 complaints (compared to 387 during 2015/16). An analysis of these complaints reveals the following:

Communities and Environment

- Recorded 65 complaints
- Accounts for 21.2% of all complaints recorded
- Development and Public Protection received 27.7%, Culture, Communities, Leisure and Volunteering received 26.2% and Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance received 20% of complaints in this service group
- 44.6% of complaints concern quality of service.

Corporate Services and Governance

- Recorded 5 complaints
- Accounts for 1.6 % of all complaints recorded
- Property Services received 60% of complaints in this service group
- 40% of recorded complaints concerned quality of service.

Corporate Resources

- Recorded 20 complaints.
- Accounts for 6.5% of all complaints recorded.
- Customer and Financial Services received 100% of complaints in this service group.
- 70% of complaints concern quality of service.

Gateshead Housing Company

- Recorded 217 complaints
- Accounts for 70.7% of all recorded complaints
- 82.9% of complaints concern quality of service.

Category of complaints

The subject matter of complaints varies considerably. However, the resolved complaints can be broadly summarised into six categories. **It must be noted, however, that a complaint can fall into more than one category.**

The following table shows the total number of complaints in each category together with the proportions of the total number of complaints received by the Council.

Category of Complaint:	No Complaints 2016/17	Percentage of all Complaints
• Quality of services	225	73.3%
• Access to services	10	3.3%
• Employee	59	19.2%
• Policy	22	7.2%
• Injury/damage to person or possession	13	4.2%
• Other	57	18.6%

Closed Complaints

The total number of closed complaints is 24. These are complaints recorded on the system and subsequently identified and dealt with as issues other than complaints.

Resolution of complaints within target timescales

The Council has a target timescale to resolve step 2 complaints within 20 working days of receipt. The Council aims to resolve the majority of complaints at step 1 - sorting problems out on the spot. One of the aims of the procedure and of the recording system is to ensure that complaints are responded to as quickly as possible. The system allows service managers to review actual performance at any time and identifies those areas where improvements in response times are necessary. 241 complaints were resolved within the target timescale of 20 working days. This represents 85.2% of recorded complaints less the closed and open complaints. Of the 217 received by the Gateshead Housing Company, 11 were closed and 184 were resolved within the target timescale. This represents 89.3% resolved within the target timescale compared with the 91% achieved in 2015/16. Of the 90 complaints recorded by the Council, 10 were closed and 57 were resolved within the target timescale. This represents 71.3% resolved within the target timescale compared with 79.3% achieved in 2015/16.

Number of Complaints that were justified

Of the 282 complaints resolved, 104 (36.9%) were fully justified and 44 (15.6%) were partly justified and appropriate remedies were offered to the complainants. This compares with the position in 2015/16 when of the 368 complaints resolved, 151 (41%) were fully justified and 50 (13.6%) were partly justified.

Service Group Analysis

An analysis of the complaints resolved by each service group reveals the following:

Communities and Environment

- Of the 65 complaints recorded, 10 were closed and none unresolved.
- 74.6% of the remaining complaints were resolved in target timescales
- 5.5% of resolved complaints were fully justified
- 7.3% of resolved complaints were partly justified.

Corporate Services and Governance

- Of the 5 complaints recorded, 1 was closed and none unresolved
- 50% of the remaining complaints were resolved in target timescales
- 0% of resolved complaints were fully justified
- 25% of resolved complaints were partly justified

Corporate Resources

- Of the 20 complaints recorded, 2 were closed and none unresolved.
- 87.5% of the remaining complaints were resolved within target timescales
- 31.3% of resolved complaints were fully justified
- 12.5% of resolved complaints were partly justified.

The Gateshead Housing Company

- Of the 217 complaints recorded, 11 were closed and none unresolved.
- 89.3% of the remaining complaints were resolved within the Council's target timescales
- 46.6% of resolved complaints were fully justified
- 17.9% of resolved complaints were partly justified

Reviewed Complaints

Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaints to individual service managers can request an independent review by the Chief Executive (or the Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company). The Chief Executive of the Council undertook 18 reviews across several service areas and categories of complaint in 2016/17 compared to 32 in 2015/16. The Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company undertook 20 reviews in 2016/17 compared with 14 during 2015/16.

Method of Submitting Complaints and Compliments to the Council

The system provides a variety of methods by which a customer can register a complaint with the Council and record compliments received by the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company. This can be done by telephone, visit in person, letter, internet form, compliment form or e mail.

An analysis of the compliments received is as follows:

Communities and Environment recorded	236
Care, Wellbeing & Learning recorded	171
Corporate Services & Governance recorded	19
Corporate Resources recorded	29
The Gateshead Housing Co recorded	299

The total number of compliments received above for 2016/17 is 754, compared to 723 received in 2015/16.

USING COMPLAINTS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

The information gained through the monitoring of complaints should be used to improve the provision of the services throughout the Council reflecting the Council's overall approach to value for money and continuous improvement. There were several occasions where the resolution of a complaint led to additional instructions being given to employees to reinforce existing procedures. Changes to the provision of services have also been made as a result of complaints received or the opportunity to improve has been identified.

- The Libraries Service when updating its catalogue on the library website will take the opportunity to improve navigation on the system particularly for renewing books online.
- Customer and Financial Services has reviewed procedures and introduced a manual intervention prior to the automated file being sent to the Department of Works and Pensions to pick up on Council Tax payments being made over the weekend or on the Monday of a Court hearing.
- Customer and Financial Services has arranged for incoming e mails to be added to the list of documents that are automatically checked to see if any further documents have been received from claimants following the issue of a benefits review letter. Also, when a document is re-indexed, the process due date must be amended.
- The Street Scene Service has introduced a new ICT package to improve how street lighting enquiries are received and recorded so that faults can be dealt with in accordance with the target repair period.

In Housing a number of improvements were implemented by the Gateshead Housing Company to improve service delivery:

- To ensure that when officers are not available for work, their calendars are reviewed so that customers with appointments are contacted so that these can be re-arranged.
- The Gateshead Housing Company is working with its contractor to improve both the repair process and communication with the customer when there are delays.
- The Gateshead Housing Company is to give further training to Estate Officers dealing with condensation related visits.

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APPENDIX 6

COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED BY THE COUNCIL

The total number of compliments received in 2016/17, as outlined below, is 754, compared to 723 received in 2015/16.

Communities and Environment recorded	236
Care, Wellbeing & Learning recorded	171
Corporate Services & Governance recorded	19
Corporate Resources recorded	29
The Gateshead Housing Company recorded	299

The examples below are just a small selection of the compliments and comments that have been recorded in the 2016/17. Individuals' details have been removed.

- Housing Services – The member of staff who was the interpreter in a housing/risk identifying appointment was totally amazing. More information was obtained from the client in that one appointment than had been managed in four previous face to face appointments.
- Sport and Leisure – I attended a 12 week wellness course and I think that Gateshead residents are very lucky and privileged to have this service especially in times of Austerity. I have found it very motivational and educational.
- Libraries - I must praise the staff at Gateshead Library. They tried to solve a problem I had with my TalkTalk provider about my losing my phone and broadband service. She was tolerant and professional and patient. I am elderly and I have poor hearing. I have always found your staff friendly, patient and very professional and credit to any company. Let your staff know how much they are appreciated.
- Arts Development - Just to say a big thank you as my two children had a great time at the Culture Camp Make A Movie In A Day and they've not stopped talking about it. We would definitely be interested in attending any future courses.
- Council Housing, Design and Technical Services – The Citizens Advice Gateshead wrote in to say how fantastic the team had been in supporting them with the move in to the Civic Centre. Nothing has been too much trouble.
- Planning and Environmental Strategy – the Community Infrastructure Levy presentation was most informative and I am grateful to all who arranged and led the event. It was a good opportunity for the public and private sectors to come together and gain a greater understanding.

- Environmental Health – Two members of the Private Sector Housing team were thanked for the help they had given and for attending a residents' meeting about action that can be taken to resolve issues of noise and anti-social behaviour from two households in the area. The meeting was well structured and they understood what was needed from them to help the Council and Police to do their job.
- Trading Standards - formal action was taken against a business who had been trading fraudulently and this amounted to compensation of £108,000 being split amongst 372 consumers.
- Development Control – two members of staff were thanked for their efforts in dealing with a dangerous structure.
- Housing Renewal - I had works carried out to my property as part of the falls prevention scheme. I was very pleased at the professional approach and thanks to the team including the fitter for a job well done.
- Transport Strategy - What a huge difference the installation of speed humps on Kibblesworth Front Street has made to the speed of traffic passing through the village especially morning and early evening. My elderly neighbours are equally pleased and have said that they feel much safer pulling off their drives on to the main road. Well done Gateshead Council.
- Council Tax - After resolving a resident's enquiry about having difficulties paying his council tax, he said it was great that the Council's policy was to extend payments to March making payments smaller. It made the difference between him not being able to pay to being able to pay and he was really pleased.
- Benefits Section - Information was provided to the fraud and error service regarding an appeal. The Department for Works and Pensions thanked the officer for her quick response and excellent work.
- Payroll Section - An employee said that the member of staff who dealt with his issues with HMRC and his tax code had been very proactive and took ownership of the query. He was impressed that he was emailed after 5pm to let him know that HMRC had advised payroll of his correct tax code for September pay date.
- Repairs and Maintenance - A tenant said thank you to the workers who attended today to repair the heating as they were very helpful and have done a good job.
- Construction Services - I would like to pass on my thanks and appreciation of a very difficult job very well done. My property has been virtually rebuilt. The workers were cheerful in nature, kept him informed as to what was to happen and when and ensured the place was clean and tidy when they left.

- Highways and street lighting – the staff were thanked for repairing the street lights and for sorting it all out.
- Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance - This is to thank you in appreciation for the collection (besides the usual one on a Tuesday) of the green bins before Passover and managing the extra loads after Passover.
- Neighbourhood Services - We arranged to have some discarded furniture items removed and we were overwhelmed with the attitude of the two operatives who came. They should be commended for the help and consideration they gave to us as disabled people. If more people had this attitude then we would know all was well.
- Horticultural and Technical Services - rang to thank crew, fly tipping was reported earlier in the day and it has been cleared straight away.
- Gateshead Housing Company – I reported that the scaffolding on next door's Council owned property had knocked out my satellite dish signal. By the time I got back from work the dish had been moved and my Sky signal was back up and running. Please pass on my thanks to the staff involved for the very good service we received.
- Gateshead Housing Company - Thank you for the help I received from the Advice and Support Officer with my Universal credit claim. It was a pleasure meeting her and I enjoyed working with her as she was very thorough and professional and an inspiration.
- Gateshead Housing Company – My thanks to everyone in the Lettings Team who made the whole registration process simple, helped with my bidding and advised on areas leading to allocation of the property.
- Gateshead Housing Company – A tenant complimented the decorator that had attended his property. He would like to give him a pat on the back for doing an excellent job.
- Gateshead Housing Company - The workforce that carried out the re-wiring and boiler change in our property were very helpful and pleasant nothing was a bother for them. Their work was very efficient and they never left any mess. Thank you for the great job they did, I cannot praise them highly enough.
- Gateshead Housing Company – thanks for helping me to remove pay as you go energy meters and replace with normal credit meters. He made it all very straight forward and I have saved a huge amount of money.

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EXTERNAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN AND THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO provides a free independent and impartial service to the public. They provide an initial point of contact for those wishing to make a complaint through a telephone contact centre in Coventry, or if a person remains dissatisfied following the examination of a particular matter by the Council. Protocols are in place between the Council and the LGO that provide for the majority of cases to be considered through the Council's own procedures before any investigation is considered by their office.

Leaflets and information about the LGO are available at Council offices and all those who exhaust the Council's and the Gateshead Housing Company's procedures (where appropriate) are provided with the leaflet. The day to day management of the relationship with the LGO is undertaken by a dedicated officer who acts on behalf of the Chief Executive in this respect.

During the year the LGO investigated seventeen complaints. Of these, seven were closed following a detailed response from the Council and two were not upheld. A summary of the LGO's findings and the actions taken by the Council for each of the eight cases upheld partially or fully is detailed below:-

Case One

The Ombudsman found fault at how the Council responded to requests to cut back trees on land it owned behind the complainant's home. The fault caused confusion, uncertainty and time and trouble for the complainant who arranged for contractors to remove the trees.

The Council complied with the Ombudsman's request to pay the complainant the cost of removal of £600.

Case Two

The Ombudsman found evidence of some fault in the Council's safeguarding process which caused some uncertainty for the complainant although it did not bring into question the overall outcome of the safeguarding investigation.

The Ombudsman recommended some procedural improvements in addition to those already made by the Council.

Case Three

The Ombudsman determined that the Council had failed to respond properly to the complaint about the damage its contractors caused to property during installation of a level access shower.

The Council agreed to pay the complainant £1,000 in reimbursement for the damage caused.

Case Four

The Council's contractor installed a handrail at the complainant's home without consulting her and she was worried about the stability of the steps into which the handrail was cemented.

The Council agreed to replace the handrail in consultation with the complainant.

Case Five

The Ombudsman determined that there was fault by the Council in arranging care for the complainant's mother following a discharge from hospital. This was exacerbated by poor communication with the complainant which caused confusion and uncertainty.

The Council agreed to pay £250 compensation to the complainant.

Case Six

The Ombudsman determined that the Council failed to disclose the ecologist's advice on the presence of bats for a property sale and delayed responding to a complaint.

The Council apologised to the complainant and agreed to pay £350 in compensation. It also agreed to remind officers of the need to ensure that all relevant information obtained during consultation on a sale is included in the information provided to potential purchasers.

Case Seven

The Ombudsman determined that the Council was at fault in the way it changed the complainant's father's respite allocation dates without proper notification.

The Council acknowledged this, reviewed the arrangements for respite and re-set the dates and the Ombudsman considered that this remedied the injustice.

Case 8

The Ombudsman determined that the Council failed to draw up a care plan for the complainant's mother after her eligible needs were assessed.

However, the Council had informed the complainant of the planned arrangements and she had accepted them. It had also explained how to identify disability related expenditure but the complainant did not do so. Neither the complainant nor her mother suffered any injustice as a result of this.

The Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review is available on their website at www.lgo.org.uk.

The Housing Ombudsman

From 1 April 2013, the Localism Act 2011 extended the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman to cover all social landlords, including Councils. The Housing Ombudsman is able to consider housing complaints in so far as they relate to the provision or management of housing. The Local Government Ombudsman continues to investigate complaints about allocations and the lettings policy.

During 2016/17, the Council was contacted by the Housing Ombudsman in respect of six cases. Of these:

- Three cases had not exhausted the Housing Company's complaints procedure.
- One case was not within Housing Ombudsman's jurisdiction.
- One case, the Housing Ombudsman determined that there was service failure and ordered compensation of £100 to be paid for the time and trouble to pursue the complaint. It was also recommended that the Housing Company consider reviewing its policy in relation to inspections being carried out following repairs.
- One case, the Housing Ombudsman determined that there was maladministration and ordered total compensation of £450 for inconvenience be paid.

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TITLE OF REPORT: **Volunteering in Gateshead – A New Approach**
REPORT OF: **Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment**

Summary

This report provides an update regarding the process to create a new web based volunteer portal for Gateshead and the format for consulting with committee at the meeting.

The portal will form part of a new digital platform for volunteering that will be accessible at all times by residents, community groups, the wider VCS as well as other public sector organisations along with private sector organisations.

Introduction

1. Gateshead Councils Volunteers Plan has been in existence since 2013 and in that time the numbers of residents participating in volunteering has steadily increased.

The 2013 plan also incorporates a pathway to process volunteering requests. Since the creation of the plan there are over 1600 residents registered with the council with over 8,000 volunteers working across various council services.

2. The system for the management of volunteering projects has remained unchanged since 2013 but now requires updating. This process is now difficult to manage efficiently due to the increasing volume of volunteering requests received. The current process is also highly dependent upon council management of the volunteer recruitment and placement process.
3. This reliance runs contrary to the council's commitment to empowerment and capacity building of residents, communities and community organisations, many of which successfully run their own volunteering opportunities.
4. Through technological advancement there is a need to create a system that enables residents and community organisations to manage their volunteering needs more efficiently whilst considering the effective use of modern technology.
5. In addition much of the volunteer plan requires updating and more measured content is required with a new system for volunteering that is the central focus to the plan. The volunteer plan also needs to be incorporated as a key element of the council's commitment to making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives.

Research

6. Initial research into volunteering was conducted by Northumbria University on behalf of the council which concluded in September 2017 revealed that the process for

administering volunteering was too bureaucratic and a “digital platform will have profound benefits for the organisation”.

7. To create a new portal it is intended to work with an external partner with the appropriate human resources, technical ability and expertise to develop and implement the project.
8. Northumbria University’s Psychology and Communication Technology (PaCT) Research Group along with Newcastle Universities OpenLab have both agreed to work with the council in the creation of a new system.

Consultation and Involvement

9. To create a new system we require a consultation process that includes key stakeholders:

- Community Organisations
- Residents that currently volunteer
- Organisations that currently facilitate volunteering
- Elected Members

Workshops will be held in January to enable a number of these key groups to meet with the Universities to consider their volunteering needs from a new system.

10. Committee on Monday 16 October 2017 (Minute CR12 refers) agreed to continue to receive updates and engage in the development of the new system. As part of presenting this report, officers and staff from Newcastle and Northumbria Universities will follow the following format:
 - Provide an introduction to volunteering and current processes
 - Deliver a session led by Newcastle and Northumbria Universities to gather views and thoughts from members regarding volunteering.

The format for the session will be as follows:

- Presentation - Overview to volunteering in Gateshead and outline of the current project
- To ask councillors for specific feedback on the project
- Question and answer session regarding volunteering in Gateshead and how councillors support and encourage volunteering in Gateshead

The session will last no longer than 40 minutes.

Recommendations

11. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
 - Contribute to the consultation through the format of the session as set out in paragraph 10 above.

Stephen Ward ext.3148

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**CORPORATE RESOURCES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 January 2018**

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Work Programme

REPORT OF: Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2017/18.

1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 3 April 2017 and Councillors have agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes/additions to this programme.
2. Appendix 1 sets out the work programme as it currently stands. Any changes proposed to the programme will be set out in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to
 - a) Note the provisional programme;
 - b) Note that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Contact: Angela Frisby

Extension: 2138

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DRAFT Corporate Resources OSC 2017/2018	
26 June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution/role/remit • The Council Plan – Year End Assessment and Performance Delivery 2016-17 • Sickiness Absence / Health of the Workforce Update • Gateshead Fund Update
4 September 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework - Progress Update • Case Study – Procurement of Goods and Services from Local Suppliers • OSC Work Programme
16 October 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities Impact Assessments and the Council Plan – Progress Update <i>No longer a standalone item, including in the Six Monthly Performance Report (November 2017)</i> • Implementation of Gateshead Volunteers Plan – Annual Report • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update • Implementation of Workforce Strategy – Progress Update • OSC Work Programme
27 November 17	<p>PART A (ad hoc policy issues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *DCLG Consultation on disqualification criteria for Mayors and Councillors <i>*(new issue received)</i> <p>PART B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan – Six Monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2017-18 • Corporate Asset Management – Delivery and Performance Report • Annual Health and Safety Performance Report • OSC Work Programme
22 January 18	<p>PART A (ad hoc policy issue)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge <i>(new issued agreed at 27/11/17 OSC)</i> <p>PART B</p> <p>Corporate Complaints Procedure - Annual Report 2016-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateshead Communities Together Annual Update • Presentation / Consultation on the development of web based volunteers system <i>*(new item)</i> • Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce – issue to be slotted in • OSC Work Programme
26 February 18 (5.30pm meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance Report • Case Study – Welfare Reform • Refresh of the Volunteer Plan 2018 <i>*(new item)</i> • OSC Work Programme
16 April 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework - Progress Update • Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2017 • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update <i>*(moved from January 18)</i> • OSC Work Programme Review

Issues to Slot in

- **PSP Performance Monitoring – February 2018 (tbc)**
- **Sickness Absence / Health of Workforce (date tbc)**
- **Gateshead Communities Together Annual Update**