

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING**

**Monday, 4 December 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillor N Weatherley (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, B Clelland, S Dickie, K Dodds, M Hood, J McClurey, J Simpson, J Turnbull, A Wheeler, D Bradford, S Hawkins, M Brain, A Douglas, L Green and J McElroy

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): L Caffrey, D Davidson, J Graham and H Haran

**CPL47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Davidson, Cllr Caffrey and Cllr Graham.

**CPL48 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 November 2017 were approved as a correct record.

**CPL49 THE COUNCIL PLAN - SIX MONTHLY ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY 2017/18**

The Committee were presented with a summary of the Six Monthly 2017/18 Performance Report. The presentation updated members on the performance and delivery for the period April to September 2017 in relation to the Council Plan 2015-2020.

From the presentation the Committee were advised that performance is measured using trend analysis against the data reported last year as opposed to annual targets due to strategic outcome indicators having a 5 year target set. It was also noted that the presentation will highlight key actions delivered within the last six months against the three shared outcomes within the new Council Plan 2015-2020.

A summary of performance was presented as follows:

- The OSC Communities and Place performance portfolio is made up of 35 Strategic Outcome Indicators
- 26 of which, data is unavailable at this reporting interval due to the collection frequency of the indicators and will be reported at the Year End interval 2017/18
- 4 of 9 indicators - performance has not improved from last year

- 5 of 9 indicators - performance has improved from last year

It was noted that the areas of performance not improved were: Employment, Economic Activity, Residents Employed in Occupations Requiring High Skill Levels and Households prevented from becoming homeless.

It was also noted that the areas where performance had improved were: Working age people on main out of work benefits, Number of households accepted as homeless, Recycling rates, Homes in the Highest Energy Efficiency Bands and Percentage of renewable/low carbon/energy generated locally.

It was presented to Committee that there have been many key achievements which were:

- £75,000 fund has been secured from North East Local Enterprise Partnership to support the development of the Enterprise zone at Follingsby.
- Plans to redevelop the 10 acre site at Gateshead Quays between Sage Gateshead and BALTIC to create a new 12,500 seat entertainment area and regional conference centre.
- Works have started on the £1.5m Land of Oak and Iron Heritage centre at Winlaton Mill.
- The Heights Scheme received planning approval in May and works have started on site in September 17.
- The Leisure service review has been successfully implemented.
- A new children's soft play area and Clip and Climb facility has been installed at Gateshead Leisure Centre.

In identifying areas for improvement and key future actions, these were:

- £75k secured through funding bids to increase education around Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE).
- The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 will come into force in April 2018.
- Three civil bus lane cameras will come into force in late April – May 2018.
- Work will start on the major maintenance work at Heworth in early 2018.

Cabinet members Cllr Linda Green and Cllr Angela Douglas attended and provided verbal updates on their respective areas of work to compliment the contents of the report and presentation.

Cllr Douglas advised Committee that one of the challenges have been falling numbers of people visiting libraries which follows a national trend but in spite of this three volunteer libraries at Whickham, Felling and Rowlands Gill are progressing well. It was noted that several new initiatives have been implemented to encourage children and young people to visit libraries.

It was noted that there have been a number of positive improvements to leisure services as previously mentioned in the performance report – this was including the new clip and climb facility and new soft play area at Gateshead Leisure Centre. The Committee were also advised that business plans are in place for each leisure

centre and a new app has been developed for customers to download.

Committee were further advised of the new Go Gateshead branding launch to give the service a clear identity in addition to the service working towards achieving Customer Service Excellence accreditation. It was noted that visitors to leisure facilities is increasing and that 25,000 visits are made per year by looked after children and children with a disability. Cllr Douglas also highlighted to Committee the forthcoming Great Exhibition of the North which will open on 22 June 2018 and run through until September.

Cllr Green also provided a verbal update to Committee making note of volunteering successes and challenges in addition to an update on the Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership. Committee were advised that continued garden waste charging, falling newspaper usage along with national levels for recycling stagnating mean it is unlikely that the recycling target of 45% will be met in 2017/18. The South of Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership, on behalf of the 3 Councils, has written to DEFRA to request the inclusion of Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) in the recycling performance figure. Other partnerships and national associations have also made this request but to date there is no change and IBA cannot be included in the recycling figure.

Several questions were asked regarding the developments in employment and economic growth. It was asked whether a breakdown could be provided of Gateshead's non-working population, an officer from the relevant service advised they would source an answer to this for feedback to Committee. It was also asked how the Council class someone as being self-employed – it was noted that this information is provided from the ONS annual population report.

Clarity on how the Council determine what a 'skill' is was requested noting the demand for skilled workers is increasing. Again, an officer from the relevant service offered to provide an answer to Committee in due course.

It was noted that the move towards trends as opposed to targets was welcomed when measuring performance. A question was asked around road safety figures which weren't presented, it was stated that these figures come out annually so will come to Committee at the appropriate time.

It was asked what work is being done to ensure there is quality housing being provided in the private rented sector – it was noted that quality standards in private rented property are regularly assessed and that a sample of properties have been identified for future inspection. Advice and guidance is also provided to private landlords from the Private Sector Housing Team.

A comment was made that in order to remain competitive with private gyms the Council should look into providing 24 hr accesses. It was stated that expending opening hours is being looked into but that it would be preferred to have all hours of opening to be staffed. It was also noted that there would be greater health and safety considerations if gyms were open when no staff were present.

An update was provided to Committee from Cllr McElroy, it was advised that there

are a number of upcoming transport developments such as the Felling Bypass improvements and the bus lane enforcements to improve public confidence. It was noted that air quality work is ongoing in partnership with North Tyneside and Newcastle Councils. Cllr McElroy also updated Committee on the recent theft of cabling on the Metro line which caused a lot of disruption for commuters.

A question was asked on the improvements to the A1 and the delays related to this. It was noted that a letter has been sent to the Highways Agency but there has been no response yet.

It was asked about planned works to the Tyne Bridge to be costing in the region of £10million – it was noted that there will be a meeting of the Tyne Bridge Joint Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> December to discuss this however the day-to-day maintenance of the Bridge is the responsibility of Newcastle Council.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the information from the report and presentation be noted and agreed.

## **CPL50 OSC REVIEW - EVIDENCE GATHERING**

The Committee received an update and presentation on road safety from officers from Transport & Highways.

Committee were advised that there are several effects on communities as a result of road traffic accidents, there were:

- Immeasurable loss and trauma
- Economic loss to UK economy
- Huge burden on Health Service
- Cost to LAs and Emergency Services
- Financial loss to employers
- Significant congestion

It was further noted that effective road safety results in:

- Saved lives and prevented injuries
- People living healthy and full lives
- Prevented emotional and physical trauma
- Saved public money/supported policies
- Tackled health inequalities
- Improved quality of life

An overview of the total reported road user casualties by road user group in Great Britain from 2016 was provided. It was also noted from the presentation that all collisions reported to Northumbria Police where someone has been injured are recorded on the national CRASH database.

From the presentation Committee were informed of the various engineering

interventions that can prevent road traffic accidents and the education, training and publicity interventions that the Council are involved in.

A further overview of enforcement interventions was provided including civil enforcement of bus lanes. It was also noted that the speed management strategy is considered crucial to reduce casualties and that speed limits are limits, not targets.

The Committee were advised that it continues to be a challenge to identify interventions that are acceptable, affordable and effective and that popular solutions do not always deliver the most powerful results. From the presentation it was noted that we need effective road safety and speed management strategies and that secure financial staff resource is required to deliver on those strategies. It was concluded that to continue to make a tangible, measurable difference, we must be prepared to take tough actions that focus on driving down incidents involving serious and fatal injuries on our roads.

It was asked whether the road user casualties information had been provided by car insurance companies – it was advised that car insurance companies do not provide this information and can be guarded about releasing such statistics. It was subsequently confirmed that at a national level, insurance companies are very reluctant to share any raw data on road traffic collisions that have been reported to the, meaning that we need to make do with any limited level of analysis that they choose to undertake themselves. However the analysis that is subsequently shared by insurance companies generally supports the analysis that we conduct with Police data. It is unlikely therefore that we would need to change our intervention strategy should insurance data become available.

It was asked whether Council staff could have an app installed on their handsets that prevents calls and texts being received, it was noted that there is no Council policy to require this however consideration could be given in future if issues were highlighted. It was subsequently noted that all drivers of fleet vehicles are issued Driver's Handbooks detailing their responsibilities.

It was said that the traffic calming around Saltwell Park was welcomed however it was noted that traffic has increased in surrounding streets as commuters use alternative routes to avoid the speed bumps.

A comment was made that no amount of highways engineering can prevent all road traffic accidents – it was highlighted that of 7 deaths recorded on Gateshead roads 3 were 17 years old and all involved speeding.

It was asked what the procedure is to have flashing speed signs installed – it was noted that currently they are only introduced as an integral element of wider traffic calming or traffic management schemes but that the protocol is to be reviewed to determine whether they should also be considered as a stand-alone intervention.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the information from the report and presentation be noted.

**CPL51      WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report on the provisional annual work programme and agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues/identify any changes/additions to the programme.

RESOLVED:

- (i)            That the work programme be noted.