

# CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

**Monday, 3 December 2018 at 10.00 am in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre**

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From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

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Item	Business
1	<b>Apologies</b>
2	<b>Minutes</b> (Pages 3 - 12)  The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018.
3	<b>Review on Helping to Increase Support/Capacity of the Voluntary Sector: Evidence Gathering Session</b> (Pages 13 - 20)  Report of the Acting Strategic Director Communities and Environment
4	<b>Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework</b> (Pages 21 - 24)  Report of the Acting Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
5	<b>Corporate Asset Management - Annual Delivery and Performance Report</b> (Pages 25 - 56)  Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
6	<b>Making Gateshead a Place where Everyone Thrives - Six Month Assessment of Performance and Delivery - 2018/2019</b> (Pages 57 - 76)  Report of the Chief Executive, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources and Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance
7	<b>Review of Absence in the Council OSC - Monitoring Report</b> (Pages 77 - 86)  Report of Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
8	<b>Work Programme</b> (Pages 87 - 90)  Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Governance

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## GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 15 October 2018

**PRESENT:** Councillor John Eagle (Chair)

Councillor(s): W Dick, J Wallace, R Beadle, D Bradford,  
L Caffrey, M Charlton, D Duggan, P Foy, J Green, S Green,  
M Hall, M Henry and B Oliphant

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): T Graham, J Kielty, N Weatherley and K Wood

#### **CR2 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 June and 10 July 2018 respectively be approved as a correct record.

#### **CR3 PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE PLAN: UPDATE ON THE REFRESH OF THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report to provide an update on progress made in relation to the implementation of the Council's Workforce Plan.

The Council's workforce strategy and plan were agreed in 2015. The purpose of the strategy is to make sure that the Council has a workforce that can support delivery of the sustained transformation necessary to achieve the services our residents want and need, services which provide value for money, are fit for purpose, flexible and customer focussed.

The report provides a full update for members on work undertaken since October 2017 under the 6 key themes within the strategy. Some key points were highlighted to the Committee:

##### **Leadership Development for Leadership Team**

There is currently a small working group looking at refreshing the Leadership Development Programme.

##### **Upskilling the Workforce**

An upskilling event took place on 4 October which was aimed at upskilling across all levels of the workforce. The Council is also continuing to develop e-learning modules to encourage learning in a convenient and efficient way. Learning is currently available in areas such as management, health and safety, equalities and diversity, ICT and finance. Over 800 modules have been completed during 2017-18

year by Council employees.

### **Mentoring and Coaching**

A mentoring and coaching framework has been developed with the Leadership Team being trained as mentors. The aim is to support capacity building for managers and employees.

### **Apprenticeships**

The Government's changes to the apprenticeship scheme took effect from April 2017. The changes introduced a public-sector apprenticeship target. The Council's target was 2.3% of the workforce (160 employees) on an apprenticeship on an annual basis. The Council has not drawn down all of the apprenticeship levy. From April 2017 to March 2018 the Council had 95 apprentices. From April 2018, 49 new apprenticeships commenced, these are a mixture of current employees who are upskilling and new recruits to the Council.

In an attempt to boost this number and increase the drawn down on the apprenticeship levy, briefings have taken place with Leadership Team and managers. Employees have also been invited to participate in personal consultations to find out more about apprenticeship opportunities. 14 staff attended for one to one discussions with a further 9 having a telephone discussion.

The Council has faced a number of challenges including:

- The lack of available standards and training providers, resulting in the continuation of traditional academic qualifications rather than apprenticeships
- The essential requirement for all apprentices to demonstrate English and Maths and GCSE level when some staff already have degrees and other professional qualifications
- The requirement to spend 20% of time "off the job" in training and the impact this has on service delivery
- Insufficient providers completing the procurement process as they have failed to provide the required assurances in relation to health and safety and/or safeguarding matters
- Insufficient provide in the region to deliver the apprenticeship programme the Council requires
- Providers in the regional cancelling or deciding (sometimes at a very late stage) not to run apprenticeship training due to insufficient numbers of learners to form viable cohorts

NEREO have been invited to look at this issue and officers have been working with apprenticeship providers to address the problem.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

The Council has agreed to adopt the TUC's Great Jobs Agenda which consists of six themes, each with a description of why it matters, along with what the TUs want employers to do and what they want politicians to do. The themes include having a

voice at work, fair and decent pay and learning and progression.

### **Pay Recognition and Reward**

77 employees have been recognised for their long service in the last 12 months. Research has found that there is a direct correlation between employee engagement/how people are managed and their attitudes and behaviour, with business performance. Engaged employees are happier, healthier and more fulfilled and they are more motivated and deliver better business performance. Employee workshops have been held, with the general consensus being that employees just want a simple thank you rather than pomp and ceremony.

### **Pay Protection**

The Council is committed to ensuring that any negative impact in respect of changes to the workforce is minimised and employees continue to receive some level of protection if such changes affect their pay. Balanced against this is a requirement to consider affordability and the financial pressures the Council face. The Council's Pay Protection policy has been reviewed to ensure these principles continue to apply.

### **Review of the Flexi-time Scheme**

A review of the Council's flexi time scheme has been undertaken to make sure it remains fit for purpose and reflects best practice for both employee work-life balance and to meet the needs of the Council.

### **Implementation of a car leasing salary sacrifice scheme**

As part of the employee benefits scheme the Council is considering offering a car leasing salary sacrifice scheme. Proposals will be brought to Cabinet and Council in the near future.

### **Low Pay**

The Council is committed to addressing the issue of low pay and moving towards the UK Real Living Wage rate whilst being mindful of the impact this may have on other areas such as schools and the Council's ability to trade.

### **Wellbeing and Engagement**

Throughout the year the Council's Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator has worked jointly with the public health team and the communications team to promote health and wellbeing campaigns. The Council continues to maintain its 'continuing excellence' rating for the North East Better Health at Work Award. An employee needs assessment in November 2017 highlighted a number of health and wellbeing priorities for the Council's employees. To explore this further, 33 employees took part in a half day workshop, the initial results of which are displayed in the public area near Bewicks. Further work is on-going across 3 workstreams, to implement some of the suggestions.

## Performance and Change

Corporate induction guidance for use by managers has been developed to support the introduction of all new employees at all levels to the Council. A corporate induction workshop has been re-introduced to compliment the induction guidance. This is delivered quarterly and includes input from the Chief Executive and a Councillor who provide corporate context. Feedback from the first event which took place in July 2018 was positive.

The Workforce Strategy and Plan is kept constantly under review, however, in light of the Council's revised Strategic Approach "Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives" it is important to review the workforce strategy and workforce plan to ensure they deliver what the Council needs. A review of the current plan and strategy is ongoing. Consultations with service directors are being undertaken and they will be challenged to think about their on-going and future workforce needs. The scheduling of revisions to the strategy and plan will be aligned with the considerations Services Directors are giving to how they will deliver services, linked to the requirement to make budget savings and consider more efficient ways of working.

It was queried if it would be possible to find out how much the Council is paying in terms of the levy and how much is being drawn down.

It was noted that Phillip Hammond announced some changes were to be made to the apprenticeship levy which would make things easier. It was queried whether the Council were aware of what these flexibilities might be. It was noted that the council are aware of changes being announced, however, the detail of the changes is not yet clear.

It was suggested that consideration be given to working with other employers in terms of providing a degree apprenticeship.

It was noted that officers could look at this option when they take the issue of apprenticeships. It was noted that the idea had been floated with the regional HR officers and there did not seem to be much appetite.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) that the Comments of the Committee be noted in relation to progress on the actions arising from the plan and strategy
  - (ii) that further updates on progress will be brought to Committee on an annual basis.

## **CR4 OSC - REVIEW - SCOPING REPORT - HELPING TO INCREASE SUPPORT/CAPACITY OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

The Committee received a report proposing the scope for the review on "Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector, agreed by the Committee on 16 April 2018.

The Committee were advised that this is not intended to be a review of the overall

health and vitality of Gateshead's VCS, or its effectiveness, although the review may highlight some examples and practices that could be shared and developed further.

The review aims to:

- Establish the extent and nature of the types of support the Council currently provides to the VCS across a spectrum of service areas
- How this activity is resourced and coordinated
- Assess the effectiveness of this Council support in helping the VCS address the needs of Gateshead residents

The Council provide a wide range of support including:

- Financial support in terms of grants and cash contributions
- NNDR Charitable Rate Relief
- Advice and guidance both directly and through commissioned organisations such as Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service
- Commissioned work and contracts
- Sign posting, promoting, sharing and networking
- Community development and capacity building, including funding advice and project activities
- Promotion and development of volunteering opportunities
- The Gateshead Compact

The feedback of the Committee is sought on the scope and timeline of the review.

It is proposed that there will be several evidence gathering sessions as follows:

03 December 2018 – session will cover the analysis of the Council's role in and budget for supporting the voluntary sector and to consider evidence from voluntary organisations.

21 January 2019 – Evidence gathering session

04 March 2019 – Evidence gathering session

01 April 2019 – Evidence gathering session

June 2019 – Date to be confirmed – draft report for consideration

July 2019 – Date to be confirmed – final report for Committee to refer to Cabinet

Members of the Committee welcomed this review topic and there is a need to make sure that it is as thorough and comprehensive as it can be.

It was requested that all Councillors embrace this and contribute in full to the review.

It was suggested that the Community Foundation be invited to attend and opportunities for philanthropic giving be explored. It was also suggested that we

need to make sure they have enough links to us.

It was suggested that there could be potentially some really good examples to bring into the evidence gathering. It was suggested that one important piece of work is to map the organisations that are out there. It was also noted that there is a dwindling pot of money with dwindling staff resource. It was noted that grants and awards seem to see the same groups and the groups aren't capacity building and aren't becoming self-sustaining. It was suggested that there would be a lot to be gained from bringing groups together.

- RESOLVED - (i) That the recommendations of the scope and timeline be agreed.
- (ii) that the comments of the Committee with regards to what is included in the scope be noted.

## **CR5 PERFORMANCE MONITORING: INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN GATESHEAD**

The Committee received a report from the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service to provide an update on the current position within the service and highlighted some of the work which will be undertaken and to highlight some of the key and current issues facing the voluntary and community sector.

In May 2016 Newcastle CVS was invited to provide interim voluntary and community infrastructure support to organisations in Gateshead. Newcastle CVS provided a full service in Gateshead which finished on 31 July 2018 with a new contract starting in August 2018.

From 2016 – 2018 there has been formal contract performance monitoring, monthly meetings with commissioning officers and reports every six months to the Corporate Resources OSC. During this time there has been:

- Delivery of contracts – exceeding targets
- Active engagement in the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board, Gateshead Health and Care System Board, Deciding Together/Delivering Together and other health initiatives
- Publication of Gateshead specific reports – 'Doing Good in Gateshead' and 'GaN Canny'
- Development and Delivery of OurGateshead
- Active engagement in the Gateshead Awards
- Active engagement and dissemination of information on Gateshead Thrive/Anti Poverty Work
- Involvement in 2017/18 and 2018/19 Gateshead Council budget processes, including dissemination of information, organising meetings, writing a full response
- Regular meetings with councillors and Gateshead Council officers and partners active in Gateshead
- Extension of all written and digital materials to include Gateshead
- Development and delivery of the Gateshead Voluntary Sector Leaders Group
- Attendance and (appropriate) involvement at Gateshead Council committees, events

and initiatives

- Development of the Blue Stone Consortium, formerly the Gateshead Commissioning Exchange and Newcastle Consortium, to take on the Public Health England contract for Well Newcastle Gateshead.
- Engagement with funders e.g. Community Foundation (Tyne Wear and Northumberland) and Big Lottery highlighting the lower levels of investment in Gateshead.

Future services will include:

- Changes to the staff team - the Newcastle CVS support and development team is currently going through a programme of restructuring in order to deliver the new infrastructure contracts in Gateshead and Newcastle, within a reduced budget and offering a more generic service; in line with the contract requirements.
- Development and enhancement of networking opportunities for the voluntary and community sector, including a new Gateshead VCS network
- Delivery of a one-day event for Gateshead's voluntary and community organisations
- Newcastle CVS is currently consulting on a name change to reflect its position in Gateshead
- Newcastle CVS will change its governance structure in order that Gateshead organisations can become full members (rule change to be agreed at the CVS AGM on 12 November, to be held at St Mary's Heritage Centre, Gateshead)
- The new infrastructure service will be managed jointly across Gateshead and Newcastle by a single manager, separate workers and shared skills
- Greater engagement of external specialist providers e.g. The Media Trust, Association of Chairs etc
- Continuing development and promotion of the OurGateshead website
- Development, update and rewrite of the Gateshead Voluntary Sector Compact
- Annual key facts briefing for Gateshead
- Participation in Gateshead Council review of Information, Advice and Advocacy Services
- Engage in and respond to the Council's budget consultation process
- Development and coordination of a training programme for the voluntary and community sector. This programme to be developed in consultation with the Gateshead Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team
- Provision of a funding advice service to focus on raising awareness of non-public grant sources of income and revenue
- Representation of sector at key forums including the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board, Gateshead Community Safety Board, Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group and others – either directly or by supporting others.
- Ensure the breadth and diversity of the voluntary and community sector is represented and reflected
- Provision and translation of policy information (local and national)
- Responses to emergent issues
- Provision of monthly sector news and advice email

Some of the key and current issues facing the sector include:

- The impact of welfare reforms (affects users, carers, volunteers and staff)
- Increasing levels of debt and poverty (affects users, carers, volunteers and staff)
- Reduction in council support – funding through contracts, grants and capacity
- Short term contracts with multiple extensions
- NHS moving to larger (and lower value) contracts which are not economic to run
- Changes in Big Lottery Funding – levels of funding, and Reaching Communities

- Reduction in access to social care and diversion to the voluntary and community sector
- Reductions in mental health services and diversion to the voluntary and community sector
- Governance issues for volunteer trustees and management committees
- Increase in service users and carers
- More competition for grants from Trusts and Foundations
- Recruitment and retention of staff (many voluntary organisations can afford only the legal Living Wage and minimum terms and conditions of service)
- Reduction in income generation – people can't afford the fees, charges, subs etc
- Cost pressures affecting all organisations – rental, utilities, inflation etc
- Increasing levels of loneliness and isolation as formerly free / low cost public services are removed or introduce charges
- Organisations that rely on donations have a poorer population to ask

The Committee thanked Sally for the tremendous work done on behalf of Gateshead, it was noted that there had never been so much confidence in the service we are being provided with.

RESOLVED - That the information contained within the report be noted.

## **CR6 VOLUNTEER PLAN - ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Committee received the Annual Update Report with regards to the Volunteer Plan. The Committee has previously agreed that they should receive an annual update on the implementation of the Council's Volunteers Plan, now known as Helping Out.

Gateshead Council has adopted the Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives, and this will supersede the current Council Plan.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2023/2 states that the Council will continue to seek to mitigate demand pressures within services by capacity building within communities, including where appropriate, work with partners and volunteers.

In April 2018 this Committee agreed the content of the Volunteers Plan Refresh. The plan offered a new set of commitments to support residents and community organisations in Gateshead to help each other out.

The original Volunteers Plan (2013) and refresh (2018) have helped provide a co-ordinated approach to volunteering in Gateshead. The plan was originally structured around key principles which aimed to support volunteers as well as organisations and services delivering volunteer opportunities.

Since the creation of the original plan in 2013 there are now 1978 residents registered with Gateshead to volunteer and increase of 1928. A conservative estimate is there could be as many as 8000 to 10000 volunteers helping across our communities.

Corporate volunteer days continue to grow in demand, with a total of over 80

individual organisations being offered tailored bespoke volunteer days supporting an estimated 2500 individual employee volunteers. The economic value to the Gateshead community is estimated at £160,955.

The Volunteer Plan and systems for the management of volunteering projects had remained largely unchanged since 2013 until the refresh. Therefore, some of the systems and processes that support the recruitment and retention of volunteers are now difficult to manage efficiently due to the increasing volume of volunteering requests and the capacity available to process the requests. It has also always been acknowledged that the Council's arrangements only cover a fraction of the volunteering that takes place across Gateshead.

Council officers have worked with Open Lab Newcastle and PACT Lab Northumbria to try and find ways to address some of the issues around recruitment and management of volunteers. One of the main findings from this and other research into volunteer recruitment is that an online system is required to provide appropriate support and alleviate some of the current constraints. The Team are now looking at the various off the shelf volunteer management systems that could be purchased to help improve efficiency and quality of the support.

In May 2014 Gateshead Council Employee Volunteering Policy was refreshed enabling employees to request up to 15 hours paid time to volunteer in Gateshead over a 12-month period. This needs to be matched by at least 15 hours pro rata of employee's own time. The scheme also allows employees to take part in taster sessions. Promotional activity will continue in 2018/19 with an aim to increase the number of employee volunteer days.

Throughout Gateshead there are many different informal environmental Friends of Groups (FOG) that support their local community with the maintenance and upkeep of Gateshead's open spaces and parks.

There are currently an estimated 40 FOGs in 2017. These groups all have their own individual aims and objectives as well as support needs. Development with these groups is supported by the Volunteer Coordinator for Countryside and Environment as well as the Development Officer for Volunteering. One of the recurring barriers for these group was around public liability insurance. As the volunteers making up the FOGs would be delivering activities within open spaces and parks (where there are likely to be members of the public) Public Liability Insurance is a necessity. This is not only to protect members of the public but also the volunteers themselves. A procedure has been established and developed with Gateshead Council to enable FOGs to register their volunteers and received tailored support around tasks within designated open spaces, receive equipment that is required, necessary training and any additional volunteers as well as any other areas of support identified.

A specific area of work which has been identified through recent work is volunteering and young people. Through work with organisations such as National Citizenship Service (NCS) and Tyne Wear Skills there is a strong need to develop some work and support to link young people with volunteering opportunities and projects that are available in Gateshead.

There are several priority areas for future actions which have been identified in the continued delivery of the Volunteers Plan:

- Create a new online management system to recruit volunteers, record volunteers, promote volunteer roles and match available volunteers to opportunities within Gateshead. The system will also need to generate specific reports to monitor volunteering.
- Continue promotion of the Employee Volunteering Scheme specifically group volunteer opportunities for teams of Council employees
- Create and deliver the volunteer programme supporting The World Transplant Games 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2019 (listed in Appendix 1)
- Continue development work with corporate organisations around group volunteering and provide links to the voluntary sector
- Continued development of volunteering opportunities on OurGateshead and using the online resource as a space to share experiences and good news stories to illustrate examples of good practice
- Continued development work with local colleges and universities
- Development of young people and volunteering including Tyne Wear Skills and for example specific tailored projects for groups of young people including sixth forms and secondary schools as well as youth groups
- Continue to provide lead support for volunteering with the Voluntary & Community sector as well as for council service projects and roles.
- Specific support including a conference type event for Environmental Friends of Groups working with Street Scene Team.
- Continue working relationships with Trade Unions regarding the creation of further volunteering opportunities.

It was suggested that councillors and senior officers put themselves forward once per year for a particular piece of work.

It was suggested that the voluntary sector be linked with economic development for support.

RESOLVED - that the comments of the Committee be noted.

## **CR7 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the report detailing the work programme for the municipal year 2018/19. The Committee were advised that there had been a couple of changes to the programme which had been highlighted.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the changes to the Work Programme

**Chair.....**

**3rd December 2018****TITLE OF REPORT: Review on Helping to Increase Support /Capacity of the Voluntary Sector: Evidence Gathering Session No. 1****REPORT OF: Anthony Alder, Acting Strategic Director Communities and Environment**

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### **Summary**

This evidence session will provide a summary of the overall support provided to Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector. The session will feature an initial presentation based upon the content of this report followed by a contribution from the Comfrey Project, who will outline how they have developed as a charity with the Council's support since coming to Gateshead several years ago.

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#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 At its meeting in October 2018, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the scope for a review to help develop the understanding of the type of support required by Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), where it is needed the most and why, and in the light of this, where the Council's role, support and resources may best be focussed to maximise impact. The aims of the Review were agreed as:

- establish the extent and nature of the types of support the Council currently provides to the VCS across a spectrum of service areas
- how this activity is resourced and coordinated
- assess the effectiveness of this Council support in helping the VCS address the needs of Gateshead residents.

#### **1.2 Definition of "grassroot" organisations in Gateshead**

According to the Charity Commission website, there are currently 876 registered charities that are either based in Gateshead or name Gateshead within their charitable objects (therefore including regional and national organisations). There are also an estimated 750-1,000 smaller groups, many of them constituted, without funds or staff providing a range of valuable activities within their communities. The term "grassroot" organisation is often used to describe a particular type of voluntary organisation; for the purposes of this Review, this will be considered as referring to those organisations that are Gateshead based or delivering activities and services into Gateshead, with under £250,000 annual income – a description aligned with the eligibility criteria for the main Council funding scheme supporting Gateshead's VCS, the Thrive Fund.

#### **2. Council Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector**

2.1 The Council has long recognised that the presence of a strong and self-sustaining voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the Borough is an enduring key factor in

the ability of local communities to thrive and grow, enabling them to better cope with the decline of public sector resources. Although the overall level of resources the Council provides directly and indirectly to the VCS has diminished since 2010, it continues to provide a wide range of support, a summary of which is set out below.

## 2.2 Financial support - grants

The Council supports the VCS sector through a number of financial approaches, ranging from grants, to contracts and commissioning frameworks. A number of these are set out below by way of illustration rather than audit, the breadth and character of the funds.

### Gateshead Thrive Fund

The priorities of the Gateshead (Capacity Building) Fund (renamed the Gateshead Thrive Fund for 2018/19) are to support:

- projects within the most vulnerable neighbourhoods in Gateshead and/or the most vulnerable residents
- projects which address poverty
- projects building social capital and increasing active participation by residents within Gateshead
- volunteering

The Fund – which is administered on behalf of the Council by the Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland - distributed £321,696 to 39 organisations in 2017/18. In the previous financial year, 62 organisations were supported with a share of £360,000.

### Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund

During 2018/19 and 2019/20 this Fund aims to support organisations looking to introduce innovation through new ways of working, collaboration, scaling up impactful services and thereby addressing the Council's Thrive agenda. The Fund has received a number of applications requesting a proportion of the approximately £450,000 available, and a shortlisting exercise is currently being carried out by a multi-agency panel ahead of presentations to the Panel early in 2019.

### Local Community Fund

In 2017/18, the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team supported ward councillors to allocate just over **£46,000** to 71 individual community organisations and activities across the Borough.

## 2.3 Financial support – commissioning, contract frameworks and NNDR rate relief

The largest proportion of Council financial support to voluntary and community organisations comes through the contracts and commissioning frameworks the Council secures through Care, Wellbeing and Learning, and Public Health.

### Supporting People (Adults)

Set out in the table below are the service activities for adults, some of which is non-statutory, for advocacy, carers, and day care that are currently provided in 2018/2019 by VCS organisations. It should be noted that this is in effect a snapshot given the different contract and grant frameworks involved, and that the same organisation may appear more than once in different service activities.

Service activity	Number of VCS providers involved	Total value of contracts and grants
Advocacy	3	£77,037
Carers (dementia support, short break, befriending, Carers of drug and alcohol misusers)	4	£613,405
Low Level Equipment	1	£7,500
Non-Statutory Floating Support	4	£260,083
Learning Disabilities Floating Support (Statutory)	2	£32,173
Non --Statutory Advice and Support	6	£473,628
Mental Health Day Provision	1	£30,330
Older People Day Provision	5	£348,300
Non-statutory Supported Housing	9	£1,223,443
	<b>35</b>	<b>£3,065,900</b>

#### Supported Living: Adults with Learning Disabilities

There are 27 service providers on the Council's framework for the provision support for people with a learning disability and/or autism spectrum condition within their own home and in the community. Out of the 27 providers 9 are registered as charities. Set out below are the respective contract values associated with each of the 8 charities currently providing services.

Service Provider	Service			Total Value
	Residential	Independent Supported Living	Single tenancy support	
VCS providers (8)	1,709,344	1,269,788	3,790,696	6,769,828
Private providers (19)	0	5,441,626	1,162,177	6,603,803
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>1,709,344</b>	<b>6,711,414</b>	<b>4,952,873</b>	<b>13,373,361</b>
% of budget proportion: VCS	<b>100%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>77%</b>	
% of budget proportion: private providers	<b>0%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>23%</b>	

In addition to commissioned activity, residents in receipt of Direct Payments from the Council may also elect to buy services themselves from charities.

#### Children and Young People Under 18 - Services for complex care needs at home or carers relief

Set out below are the commissioned services provided by VCS organisations for young people under 18.

Service provided	No. of VCS organisations	Contract / Framework value 2018/19
Independent Visitor Service	1	£15,000
Independent Case Advocacy	1	£15,000
Intensive Family Intervention Service	1	£350,000
Crisis Intervention Support Service	1	£175,000
Young Carers Assessment Service	1	£30,000
Jewish Children with Disabilities Out of school club	1	£7,724
Independent Foster Care advice and mediation service	1	£5,950
Adoption Support Service	1	£28,180
Short Breaks Framework:		
- <i>Community Outreach</i>	2	Hourly rate agreed and call offs made via the NEPO portal.
- <i>Home Care &amp; Support</i>	2	
- Parenting and Crisis Support	1	
Parenting and Crisis Support	1	£30,000
Independent Regulation 44 inspections	1	£4,800
LD framework - Outreach	10	£55,770
LD framework - Home Care and Support	9	£27,885
short breaks (life limiting / shortening conditions)	1	£342 per night
Tier 2 Family Help: Befriending for families / overnight support	1	£60,000
Total (not including short breaks framework)		<b>£805,309</b>

#### Public Health

For 2018/2019, 12 VCS organisations were either contracted or provided with grant payments from the Public Health budgets to deliver services relating to drug and alcohol, obesity, and mental health, totalling **£144,820**. The *Make Every Contact Count* (MECC) programme supported 19 community organisations with a total of **£235,251**

#### National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) Relief

Charities are entitled to 80% relief on non-domestic property, which is wholly or mainly occupied for the purposes of the charity. The Council also has the discretion to remit all or part of the remaining 20% of a charity's bill. The profile of this support changes in-year, but as of November 2018, the table below illustrates the extent of the support.

Type of relief	Number of cases	Amount of relief (£)
Mandatory (80%)	217	4,500,000
Mandatory with discretionary (80% & 20%)	63	74,000
Rural Settlement Relief (village shop, post office etc.)	5	6,500
Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC)	15	87,000
		<b>4,667,500</b>

### 3. Volunteering

The Council provides a promotion, coordination and brokerage role for volunteers and volunteering in Gateshead.

- Around 50 Council services and Council-led projects promote an estimated 2,000 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- 170 external partners promote an estimate of 4,770 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- There are 66 organisations promoting group volunteer roles, with an average of 660 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- There are 40 “Friends of” groups that have 600 active volunteer roles and volunteers

### 4. Information, Advice and Guidance

Several Council services provide advice and guidance that helps raise the level of participation of residents with / within community-based activities, improving the health and wellbeing of residents and the viability of community organisations. A few examples are set out below.

#### GO Gateshead Sport and Leisure

Responsible for development of Sport and Physical Activity in Gateshead. The role of the team includes working closely with around 100 voluntary sports clubs (adults and juniors) across the borough, offering advice and support, including signposting with the outcome to build clubs’ capacity and sustainability.

#### Culture

Provides support to around 50 cultural organisations within Gateshead and regional organisations providing activity into the Borough, and during 2018 has provided event advice to around 100 organisations delivering a wide range of public events, from community festivals to fun runs and family fun days.

#### Economic Development and Housing Growth

Provides support to Gateshead-based social enterprises, which includes Community Interest Companies, including setting up, business planning, sources of finance, finding business accommodation, legal structures and governing models.

#### Environment, Housing & Planning

Provides environmental projects advice and guidance to Gateshead residents and volunteers helping to look after Gateshead’s ecology, countryside and open spaces.

### Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering

Provides the Council's principal development support and capacity building function to community organisations in Gateshead. As well as overseeing the administration of the Thrive Fund, Local Community Fund and the Development & Innovation Fund, it also provides advice and support to community organisations on how to set up, register as a charity, governance and management procedures, and identifying funding opportunities (which has been enhanced with the Council's recent procurement of a *Grantfinder* licence). The Team also manages the contract the Council has with Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS), who have been commissioned to complement Council support with VCS networking, learning and training opportunities, specialist advice, advocacy and representation of the sector, and the management and development of the Council's OurGateshead website.

5. **Presentation: The Comfrey Project**

Dr Jo Price, Chair of Trustees at the Comfrey Project, will provide Committee with an insight into the work of her charity in Gateshead, and how working together with the Council is making a difference to the lives of refugees and asylum seekers and links to Gateshead's communities. Further information is to be found in Appendix 1.

6. **Recommendation**

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Comment on the contents of the report and the presentation by the Comfrey Project

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**Contact:** Anthony Alder ext. 3880

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## The Comfrey Project

The Comfrey Project is a charity which works with refugees and people seeking asylum at their Windmill Hills centre in Bensham, and at two allotment sites. Their aim is to improve their conditions of life and general wellbeing, while building skills, resilience, confidence, self-esteem and purpose.





The Council has worked with the Charity, helping it to relocate from Newcastle and grow its relationship with Gateshead residents, aided by funding from the Thrive Fund and Local Community Fund. It is exploring ways to improve the wellbeing of residents in the neighbourhood as part of the emerging Best of Bensham Partnership.



**TITLE OF REPORT:** Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework

**REPORT OF:** Anthony Alder, Acting Strategic Director – Communities and Environment

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### SUMMARY

To provide the Committee with an update in relation to the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework

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#### Background

1. As a reminder for members, the purpose of the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework is to determine the future focus for Gateshead Council working in collaboration with partners and the community. This will ensure that we continue to have robust arrangements in place to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and major incident situations.

#### Incident Management and Response

2. The Emergency Response Team has been involved in responding to a number of incidents once again over the last eight months. A highlight of some of the issues include:
  - **Regent Court Fire** [May 2018] - On Thursday the 10th May, the Council received notification that all the residents from Gateshead's high-rise tower block at Regent Court had been evacuated due to a fire after smoke was seen drifting from the roof. Although there were no injuries or fatalities, the nature of the fire resulted in residents being unable to return to their properties until Monday 14th May, with several requiring longer-term re-housing. This resulted in a major operation with the Council and The Gateshead Housing Company [TGHC] in finding suitable accommodation for the displaced residents over the course of 5 days with officers providing support, guidance and reassurance over the duration. The local ward councillors were informed as part of the Emergency Response Communications Protocol and regular briefings were provided to all councillors throughout the course of the response. The debrief process highlighted the major success of the response provided. Lessons learned will be utilised in any future similar emergencies. A future member's seminar is being arranged to present the debrief findings.
  - **Oak Square Fire** [June 2018] - the Emergency Response Team received a call in the early hours of 22 June 2018 regarding a fire that had broken at a block of flats in Oak Square, Teams. A member of the team was deployed to the scene and the Incident Room was opened to support the coordination of the council

response and recovery. Nine residents were evacuated from the flats, four of whom were taken to hospital and were treated for smoke inhalation. The welfare of the residents was coordinated by both Council and TGHC officers. The local ward councillors were immediately informed as part of the Emergency Response Communications Protocol and regular briefings to all councillors were circulated throughout the day. Findings from the debrief are being currently progressed.

### **Emergency Response Exercising**

3. The council has participated in a number of both internal and external exercises over the last eight months with representation from a number of different groups and services. A number of highlights have included:
  - **Table-Top Exercising** [April, May 2018 and July 2018] – a number of table top exercises have taken place over the last six months which have involved the validation of key event plans, testing of emergency arrangements and protocols and identified many areas of learning and recommendations.
  - **Simulated Fire-Fighting Exercise** [June 2018] – this was a further simulated exercise led by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service [TWFRS] in conjunction with TGHC. It involved the protocol of work to test a new firefighting procedure on high rise buildings which took place at Crowhall Towers in Felling. This was very successful and is to be rolled out to operational fire teams across the region, and continues to highlight the excellent partnership working with TWFRS in the management of fire and tenant safety and reassure residents of the continued focus of fire safety within high rise blocks.
  - **Exercise Stephenson** [June 2018] – the exercise was a three-day counter terrorism exercise planned and delivered by the members of Northumbria Local Resilience Forum. Over the three days there was focus on the initial response, consequence management and recovery phases of a terrorist incident which was on a fictitious scenario in Newcastle City Centre. The exercise involved Northumbria Police, North East Ambulance Service, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Newcastle City Council, Nexus (operators of the Metro), Network Rail and other partners including Gateshead Council. The format of this exercise, which tested consequence management and recovery elements, has been nationally recognised as best practise for future exercising.

### **Key Debrief Findings**

4. As part of all operations, exercises and incidents that are managed by the Council, a debrief process is completed to ensure a thorough analysis of the actions undertaken can be reviewed. This allows us to identify areas of good practice and enables us to learn from issues identified that will help us to improve our future response and planning. A summary of a number of key actions from the last eight months include:
  - Understanding the implications of the Kerslake Report following the Manchester Bombing
  - Reviewing and updating of the Emergency Response Team Action Cards, protocols and procedures
  - Reviewing of the council's out of hours processes and procedures

- Reviewing the terminology in relation to the name of the Major Incident Room to include the consideration of the various protocols and procedures if a major incident isn't declared, and the emergency response process is activated for monitoring and operational purposes only
- Continuing to review the capacity and capability of the Emergency Response Team maintaining the current numbers and skill levels of team members
- Reviewing of the management of the strategic command and control
- Further strengthen the awareness of all groups and services in relation to emergency response processes and procedures
- Reviewing of the Council's Evacuation Protocol
- To ensure that documented multi-agency debrief aims and objectives are met and identified learning and good practice is shared regionally, the Council now sit as a member of the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum Training and Exercising Group Audit Group which met for the first time on the 21st September

## Update on Progress

5. A number of the key debrief findings cut across the themes of Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework, however further updates from the areas from the last six months include:

***Building resilient and stronger communities - working with businesses, the voluntary sector, partner agencies, communities and individuals to ensure they are better prepared for and able to recover from emergencies:***

- The Resilience Team has recruited two new Community Resilience Volunteer Wardens in different areas of Gateshead which takes the total to ten across the borough.

Future priorities include:

- Further development of our arrangements for sharing and mapping information about vulnerable people, the use of the Cabinet Office Resilience Direct system, the prioritisation of assistance and identification of support that needs to be provided during and after an incident
- Developing an approach to explore and utilise spontaneous volunteering in an emergency or incident situation – regionally principles have been developed but this needs to be translated and implemented to a Gateshead approach.

***Assessing Risk – identifying hazards and threats that may affect Gateshead implementing measures that may prevent an emergency or incident occurring:***

- Closer working arrangements are now in place and work is developing through the Risk and Resilience Group with the Corporate Audit and Risk Team to strengthen the approach to internal business continuity and critical services risks to the Council.
- The Council is part of a Northumbria Local Resilience Forum Risk Working Group that is in the process of reviewing the methodology and regional risk assessments in line with national approaches.

Future priorities include:

- Reviewing and adapting the criteria used to assess critical services within internal business continuity planning when there is an emergency or major incident in conjunction with the Audit and Risk Team in Corporate Resources
- Reviewing the council's approach in relation to the revised CONTEST guidance (June 2018) and continue to assess risk of terrorism occurring

***Enhancing our partnership arrangements to respond and recover – the effective response and co-ordination of arrangements in the event of an emergency or incident occurring and achieving a rapid return to normality:***

- A number of the Council's senior officers have recently completed the Multi-Agency Gold Incident Commander accredited training with the College of Policing Training which has developed knowledge and skills of being able to have clear understanding and awareness of the strategic element of the response to an incident or emergency

Future priorities include:

- Review our humanitarian assistance arrangements and continue to develop relationships with voluntary organisations and community facilities, utilising the Government's Human Aspects Guidance
- Developing a further Strategic Emergency Response Table Top Exercise for Chief Executives

## **Recommendations**

6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Consider and comment on the progress report
- Indicate whether it is satisfied with the progress achieved within the last eight months
- Agree to receive a further report in April 2019.

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**Contact:** David Patterson

**Ext:** 2807

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Corporate Asset Management – Annual Delivery and Performance Report

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

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## SUMMARY

This report provides 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 Committee is requested to consider whether sufficient progress has been made in relation to property performance.

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## Background

1. In June 2009, as part of the review of how the Council manages its property portfolio, it was recognised that councillor engagement was essential in both the monitoring and scrutiny of the way in which the Council uses its property portfolio to deliver its services and priorities.
2. It was agreed this would be in respect of two specific elements:
  - approval of a Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan (CASMP); and
  - monitoring the performance of the property portfolio.

The CASMP sets the strategic direction for the use of the Council's land and buildings in support of its policy priorities. It provides the focus for the efficient use of property assets to support service delivery and the strategic management of, and investment in, the Council's property portfolio.

The Council's vision therefore is for an effective and appropriate land and property asset portfolio supporting Vision 2030 and the Thrive agenda: Making Gateshead a place where everybody thrives. At a time of continuing budgetary constraint, and increasing pressures on resources due to rising demand, it is essential that the Council can demonstrate that it has a property portfolio that is: fit for purpose; appropriate for service delivery; sustainable and performing well; and supports the overall aims and ambitions of the Council.

3. The performance of the assets is assessed against the provisions of the Council Plan, the CASMP and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4. The CASMP, together with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Workforce Strategy, is one of the three main corporate strategies that support the Council Plan.
5. The establishment of the role of Corporate Property Officer (a role held by the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance since 2010), along with the subsequent creation of the Corporate Asset Strategy Team, continues to work well; and the ability to take a more strategic approach to the way the portfolio is managed overall has enabled the Council to deliver budgetary savings through the reduction of its operational portfolio by way of rationalisation and consolidation.

### **Performance Update**

6. Appendix 1 of this report sets out an update of asset management performance and property performance. The Annex 1 to Appendix 1 details the definition for the accessibility indicators. The report includes trends in how the Council property is performing over the periods:
  - 2014/2015
  - 2015/2016
  - 2016/2017
  - 2017/2018
7. As advised in previous reports, the National Property Performance Indicators (NaPPMI) are no longer collated by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and as such the Council is now having to use its own data to consider its own year on year performance in areas such as energy consumption, water use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### **Recommendations**

9. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:
  - (i) Note the progress achieved over the period
  - (ii) Comment on the level of progress to date.



**Property Performance Report  
2017 -2018**

## **Introduction**

## **Property Performance**

## **Executive Summary**

## **Context**

### **Part 1: Key Achievements**

- 1.1. Property Projects Completed between April 2017 to March 2018
- 1.2. Community Right to Bid
- 1.3. Community Asset Transfer

### **Part 2: An Efficient Property Portfolio**

- 2.1. Objectives
- 2.2. Condition and Required Maintenance: PMI 1
- 2.3. Environmental Property Issues: PMI 2
- 2.4. Suitability
- 2.5. Accessibility: PMI 3

### **Part 3: Generation of Income and Capital**

- 3.1. Non-Operational Property Portfolio
- 3.2. Surplus Land and Property Assets

### **Part 4: Support of Service Delivery**

- 4.1. Office Accommodation
- 4.2. Service Strategies
- 4.3. Area Reviews

### **Part 5: Future Action**

### **Annex 1: Accessibility Indicators' definitions**

## Introduction

Gateshead's sustainable community strategy, Vision 2030, aimed to improve the wellbeing and equality of opportunity for the people of Gateshead, enabling them to realise their full potential and enjoy the best quality of life.

Whilst the Council Plan adopted in 2015 had proved to be a valuable document in driving forward the delivery of Vision 2030, it was acknowledged that in a time of even greater austerity, and where more was demanded from the Council in terms of service need, the Council needed to develop a new strategy.

After major reflection and consultation, a new approach was developed and launched in 2018 which is underpinned by the principle that Gateshead should be '**a place where everyone thrives**'.

The Council has developed five pledges to help and guide it in making future decisions:

- 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

The new Thrive agenda is supported by a number of corporate and service strategies developed to ensure resources are aligned to meet the Council's priorities. These include:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 – 2022/23
- Gateshead Economic Growth Acceleration Plan 2014 – 2018
- Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010 - 2030
- Housing Strategy 2019– 2030 (currently in draft and subject to consultation)
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013 - 2043
- Culture Strategy 2014 – 2017 (to be refreshed)
- Workforce Strategy 2015 – 2020
- Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015 - 2020

It is imperative that, with the current budgetary constraints on local government, the Council is confident all the resources at its disposal are deployed as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan provides the framework within which the Council can ensure that its property assets are fully utilised in terms of:

- Operating as efficiently as possible in terms of outgoings
- Generation of sustainable income

- Support of service delivery

This report provides an overview of how the Council's portfolio is performing against these three criteria.

## **Property Performance**

Benchmarking is a way of demonstrating how the property portfolio is performing in relation to other, preferably similarly constituted, authorities; it provides a snapshot of performance and compares information to identify areas of improvement and best practice.

Benchmarking has, in the past, been undertaken on a national basis using key, nationally recognised indicators. However, over the last few years, due to budgetary pressures, the opportunity to benchmark with other directly comparable authorities has effectively ceased, as they have withdrawn from the various benchmarking groups, including those administered by national bodies (e.g. CIPFA).

As a result of the lack of national data the Council will continue to rely on its own data and consider its year-on-year performance in areas such as energy consumption, water use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The Council is a member of the regional One Public Estate initiative. The Partnership was established to identify the potential for shared services and/or shared use of properties and the subsequent release of properties and land for residential and economic development. As well as the potential for capital receipts, any reduction in the number of operational buildings will also give rise to revenue savings due to the reduction in running costs and releases sites/buildings for economic and housing development.

The partnership is currently trying to determine what impact, if any, the North of Tyne devolution proposals are likely to have on the operation of the Partnership.

Whilst there was some improvement nationally during 2017-2018 in the overall economic position, Brexit and events internationally have meant that the economy is not as buoyant as it might otherwise have been. Central government has during 2017-2018 continued with its austerity measures as a result of which local government, particularly in the North East, has not benefited from an upturn in the economy and has therefore been particularly badly affected by funding from central government continuing to reduce year on year. As such, councils continue to function in an environment of decreasing budgets and, as a result of the austerity, increasing pressure on resources, particularly in the areas of children and adult services. Local authorities therefore have had to continue to deliver more with less.

In this context it is important that asset management makes a significant contribution to future strategies. Along with all of the other corporate resources, good management of property assets is even more important in this critical period for public services.

## Executive Summary

The Council continues to take a proactive approach to the management of its property portfolio:

- investing in its fabric to ensure its properties are fit for purpose;
- identifying and implementing energy efficiency initiatives;
- ensuring that it is used efficiently and effectively; and
- driving value out of its tenanted non-residential portfolio.

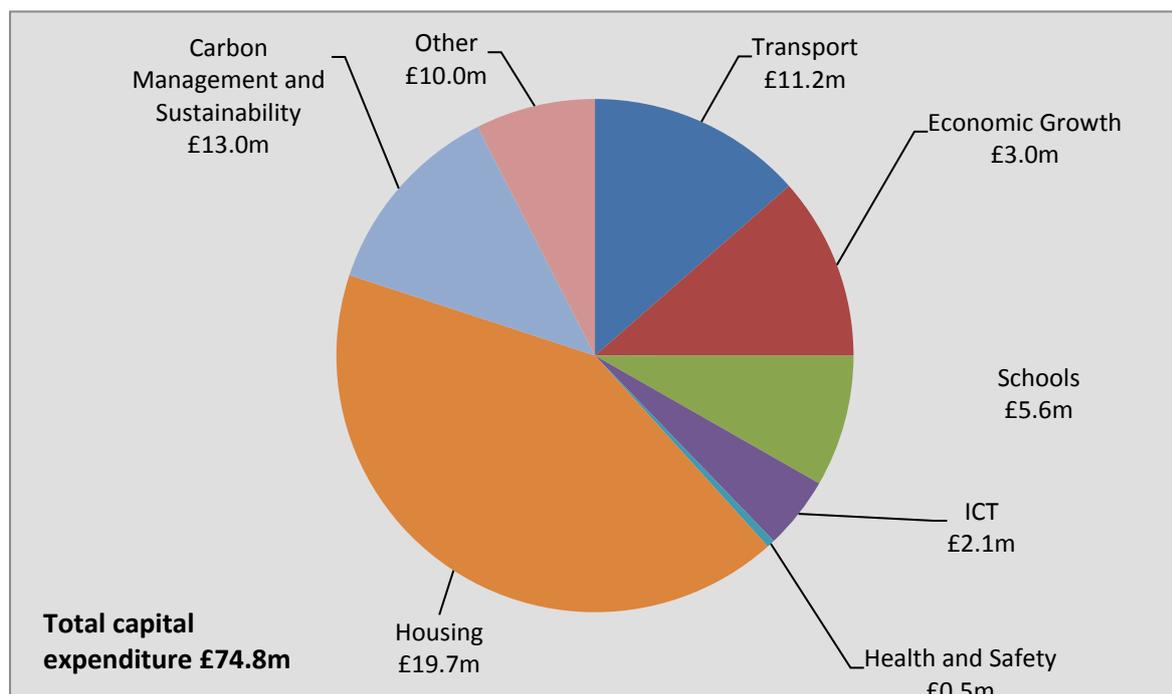
The benefits of which can be seen as follows:

- investing in its fabric to ensure its properties are fit for purpose:
  - the majority of its operational portfolio falling within condition category A and B with a slight increase in 2017/18 in those properties within category A (definitions in paragraph 2.2.1); and
  - Currently 60% of the Council's operational portfolio is considered to be performing well and operating efficiently and supports the delivery of the service and is considered suitable for use now and in the future, whilst 31% of buildings are considered to be performing well but with minor issues. These figures reflect a change since the last suitability survey was undertaken in 2013 when 80% of the portfolio was considered to be performing well and operating efficiently and supporting the delivery of services. Whilst there has been a reduction in the overall satisfaction in the suitability of the property to support service delivery the buildings generally support the delivery of services and would be considered suitable. There is room for improvement in certain areas and the issues highlighted will be reviewed and action taken where it is considered appropriate.
- identifying and implementing energy efficiency initiatives:
  - year on year improvement in terms of electricity usage;
  - in 2017/18 gas usage increased compared to the previous year but this was a reflection of the extreme winter weather as a result of the 'Beast from the East'; and
  - a further reduction in carbon emissions.
- ensuring that it is used efficiently and effectively:
  - co-location of services within buildings officers from Northumbria Police are now co-located with a number of Council services in the civic centre e.g. Children and Families and Trading Standards;
  - reduction in the overall portfolio and therefore building related costs e.g. the release of the bottom depot at Saltwell Park to facilitate the development of Regent Funeral Services and the transfer of the properties used by the Behavioural Support Service to River Tees Multi-academy Trust; and
  - 80% of council buildings now meet the Disability Equality strand of the Equality Act standards (local Indicator 7a)
- driving value out of the tenanted non-residential portfolio:

- reduction in the number of void properties from 12 to 4 within the industrial portfolio and from 8 to 5 in the retail portfolio;
- sustained rental income with an increase in the net income by £117,913; and
- reduction in the number of properties on the surplus property register to 5, thus reducing holding costs

## Context

1. Gateshead Council takes a strategic approach to investment in its land, buildings and infrastructure to ensure that it secures the best value from the resources available. The total value of its property assets at March 2018 was approximately £412m (excluding housing stock). The 2017/18 Capital Programme invested a total of £74.8m in capital schemes, £68m being invested directly in the Council's assets of which £18m related to property assets, primarily funded by prudential borrowing.
2. The chart below illustrates how the total Capital Programme was spent across the Council's Services:



3. The Council's vision is for an effective, appropriate land and property asset portfolio supporting the Thrive agenda: Making Gateshead a Place where Everyone Thrives. It is for property that is appropriate for service delivery, fit for purpose, sustainable, provided through a regular systematic challenge of the assets, and delivered through high-quality, flexible asset management.
4. Our Six Key Property Objectives that support this were set out in the CASMP 2012 – 2015 and were reconfirmed in the CASMP 2015 - 2020. They are:
  - **A strategic approach to management of our assets and involving our partners;**
  - **Justification of holding assets based on business need;**
  - **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 that are fit for purpose.**
5. Whilst this provides the framework for assessing our assets, it is also important to understand property performance and develop improvement strategies. The efficiency of the property portfolio is reported in Part 2 of this report. Unfortunately, as previously indicated, the Council has been unable to include returns against national performance indicators and comparison with other local authorities. As such the focus of the report must be on the Council's own year on year performance.

## **Gp2**

6. The Council has continued to make progress in developing the corporate property data base: Gp2. The data base holds information on the Council's property portfolios and is bringing together the existing, disparate asset management data sources into a single co-ordinated system, which is also capable of synchronising with other corporate data systems. Gp2 has been methodically tailored for the specific needs of various users and new modules developed by the Corporate Asset Strategy Team to be suitable for the Council's use.
7. The Council's operational buildings, surplus properties and development sites are aligned with the compulsory key attributes specified within the government's transparency agenda regulations. In addition, property data has been added to ePims, the government's property data base, enabling the local authorities involved in the One Public Estate access to property information, to help identify potential opportunities for shared services/shared use of buildings. As the ePims system develops, additional data will need to be uploaded to the system.
8. Gp2 now supports Property Services in being the main source of data relating to the non-operational property management records, and there is now a rolling programme in place whereby records relating to low value assets such as allotments are uploaded on to the system. The Business Centre team has also been approached to add their property management records.
9. The surplus declaration procedure is monitored using the List facility on Gp2 and all energy meter numbers have been added, which has helped streamline systems for surplus buildings and disposals assisting to identify savings. The List facility on Gp2 is also used by the Environmental, Housing and Planning function in Development Transport and Public Protection to help monitor performance in relation to housing growth, and co-ordinate a release programme for the Council's land.
10. The upload of the schools' asbestos data is now 87% complete, and the information is being actively used, with over 70% of the uploaded properties having been re-inspected and updated. A system improvement to Gp2 now

enables survey data to be uploaded directly to Gp2 on site, using an App, which will make the process of data input more efficient.

11. Up to date condition surveys are now available for 65% of the operational portfolio and reports created by Gp2 help with budget setting and the work programme for Strategic Maintenance. Using the App to upload condition survey data on site is also to be explored.
12. The Planned Programme Module is being used by Facilities Management to monitor the compliance testing of their portfolio. The module has also been set up to run the inspection programmes for Display Energy Certificates (DEC), Condition Surveys, Asbestos Risk Assessments and Water Hygiene Risk Assessments. As a result of adding the Buildings Insurance revaluation programme to Gp2 this year, Corporate Finance has been able to identify a saving of £290,000.
13. The alignment of the finance asset register and records on Gp2, which addresses the issue of multiple names/entries for the same property, is being tested while the rolling programme for Asset Revaluation is being set up on the system.
14. The Help Desk and Orders module is in regular use by Facilities Management to monitor the reactive maintenance of their portfolio and by Street Scene for one off jobs. The Helpdesk module is also used by Schools for reporting repairs and there is a link to Gp2 on the Schools' Portal, so that Schools can directly access information relating to their net capacity data, condition survey data and some statutory compliance reports.
15. Following the transfer of Construction Services to The Gateshead Housing Company, Facilities Management took over responsibility for cyclical maintenance and the suitability of using the Planned Programme and Orders modules to run the Cyclical Maintenance programme for all buildings is to be explored.

## **PART 1: Key Achievements.**

### **1.1 Property Projects Completed between April 2017 and March 2018**

- 1.1.1. With completion of the major works to the Civic Centre, as part of the Workspace Strategy in 2015/2016, attention is now focussed on the remaining areas on the ground floor and the public spaces and reception areas.
- 1.1.2. The Registrars area including the facilities available for wedding ceremonies was upgraded in 2017/2018 and the next phase to be refurbished will be the areas occupied by Cemeteries and Crematories, IT Business Support and Occupational Health and Health & Safety. It is anticipated that this work will be completed during 2018-2019. Officers are also looking at how the public spaces might be improved to provide enhanced facilities for both visitors and staff in terms of reception and meeting facilities. Options will be developed for consultation.
- 1.1.3. As a result of changes in service delivery, improved communications technology, and reduction in the workforce, the utilisation of desk space is continually under review.
- 1.1.4. This ongoing review has highlighted the opportunity for the Council to develop the Civic Centre as public sector hub whereby vacant office accommodation can be offered to other public sector/partner organisations. This proposal will enable the Council to secure an income, reduce its running costs for the building, and provide the opportunity for enhanced service delivery through partnership/cross-organisation working.
- 1.1.5. The Council has been supported with the Civic Centre project through the One Public Estate which has provided revenue funding which has enabled the Council to secure additional resource to bring pace to the project.
- 1.1.6. During 2017/2018 the school estate across Gateshead saw further capital investment with a range of works implemented across a number of school sites.
- 1.1.7. The Council will continue to promote energy saving measures across its portfolio when an opportunity arises both through its own resources and SALIX and SEELS finance.
- 1.1.8. Gateshead Energy Centre is now complete, and providing a private wire network to 10 sites including the Leisure Centre Cluster, and the heat supply to 4 commercial customers, with the final touches being added to the Leisure Centre Cluster and around 400 residential properties
- 1.1.9. The Council £2.5m, 3MW, battery storage unit installation at Park Road Depot is now operational, with a number of options open to support the

private electricity network and generate additional income by providing flexibility services to the National Grid.

1.1.10 The HEIGHTS tower block programme is well under way. Regent Court had some tenants supplied by the DHS before the end of March and the entire block will be completed around November 2018. Barford and Stretford Courts, Ripley and Willoughby Courts and Bedale and Acomb Courts are all well under way, with the construction of brand new plant rooms to service the combination of CHP and Ground Source Heat pump technology. The project has secured £4.5m of European Regional Development Funding to support delivery.

1.1.11 All of the above mentioned schemes contribute towards improving the opportunity to access good quality and efficient service provision, a key element of Making Gateshead a Place where Everyone Thrives.

## **1.2 Assets of Community Value**

1.2.1 The Localism Act 2011 provides that the community have the opportunity to have listed and to bid for properties of 'community value'. A report was approved by Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012 which set out a protocol for dealing with applications received from groups and associations arising from the legislation.

1.2.2 As there were no new applications received in 2017/ 2018, the list of Assets of Community Value therefore remains at five which are:

- Trinity Church, Gateshead
- The former Lambton Arms, Eighton Banks
- Swinburne Street Offices, Gateshead
- The Black Bull, Blaydon
- The Sun Inn, Swalwell

## **1.3 Community Asset Transfer**

1.3.1 The Council has adopted a very pro-active approach to working with local communities and associations supporting the idea of community asset transfer. In September 2012 Cabinet approved a revised Community Asset Transfer Policy which addressed a number of issues that had been highlighted through the implementation of the earlier policy which had been agreed in 2009.

1.3.2 To date, 22 former community centres have been transferred to Charitable Incorporated Organisations or Sports Clubs with The Winlaton Centre and Emma Memorial Hall being completed in 2017/18. There is now only one community centre remaining to be transferred (Barley Mow) and discussions are progressing with the community group the outcome of which will be reported in next year's performance report.

## PART 2: An Efficient Property Portfolio

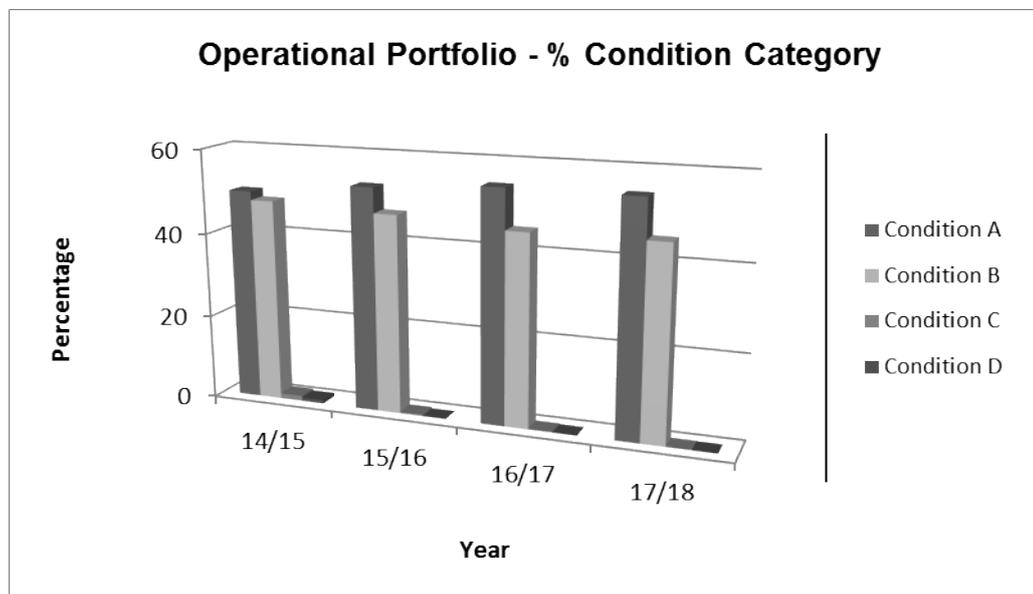
### 2.1 Objectives

2.1.1 The Council is committed to developing a more effective and efficient property portfolio that is 'fit for purpose'. This will not only reduce the cost of running the property portfolio, but will help to contribute to the delivery of the Thrive agenda. In particular it is:

- Creating and sustaining quality places to work, by addressing issues around condition and maintenance of buildings, by disposing of buildings that are no longer suitable for use and investing in sustainable, well designed, multi-use buildings.
- Promoting wellbeing, health and independence, by making physical improvements to buildings, providing facilities that are easier to access and offering alternative ways of accessing services.
- Managing the environment by implementing measures to improve the energy efficiency of our existing property and, where possible ensuring new buildings use technologies that reduce environmental impact.

### 2.2. Condition and Required Maintenance

2.2.1 Percentage of Gross Internal Floor-Space in Condition Categories A – D (excluding housing):



Definition of condition categories:

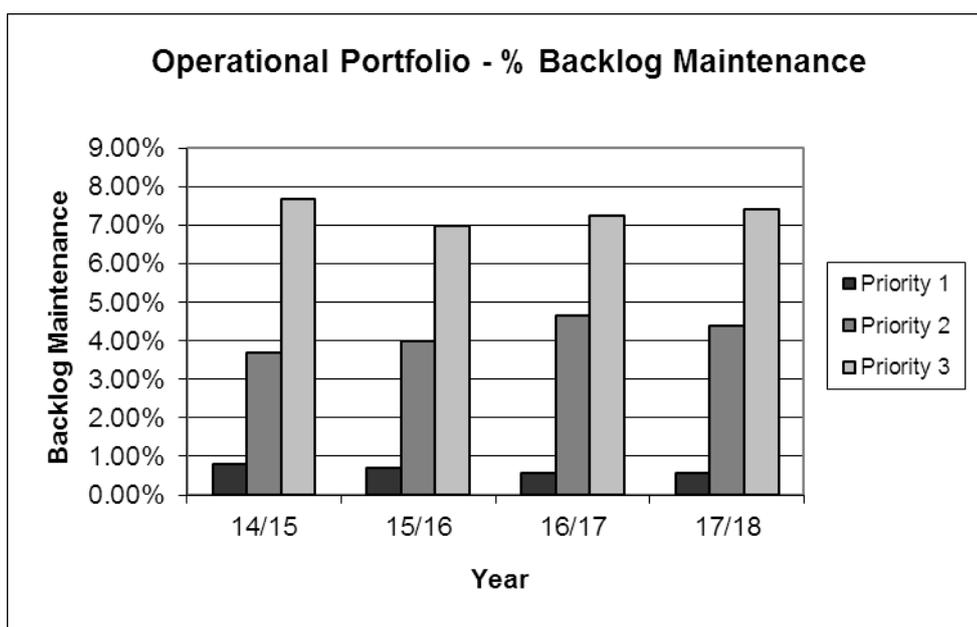
- A: Good – Performing as intended and operating efficiently.
- B: Satisfactory – Performing as intended but showing minor deterioration.
- C: Poor – Showing major defects and/or not operating as intended.
- D: Bad – Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure.

## Performance

Despite the pressure on budgets, the Council has continued to allocate funds, albeit on a reduced basis, to maintain its operational portfolio to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose. This is reflected in the above figures. There are currently four buildings in category D: Ryton Cemetery Chapel, Garden House Cemetery Chapel and Derwent Park Wooden Pavilion and Saltwell Cemetery Garage, none of which are currently being used for service delivery. The future options for the chapels are now being considered, including change of use with the potential to dispose of the buildings to secure a capital receipt.

There will continue to be fluctuations in the percentage of buildings in categories A and B with the ongoing updating of the building condition surveys, and whilst the Council continues to move from a number of disparate property information systems across the Council into the corporate data base system Gp2.

### 2.2.2. Percentage of Backlog- Maintenance in Priority Levels 1 – 3 (excluding housing)



Definition of priority levels:

- 1. Urgent** - works that will prevent immediate closure of premises and/or address an immediate high risk to the health and safety of the occupants and/or remedy a serious breach of legislation.
- 2. Essential** - work required within two years that will prevent serious deterioration of the fabric or services and/or address a medium risk to the health and safety of the occupants and/or remedy a minor breach of legislation.
- 3. Desirable** - work required within 3 to 5 years that will prevent deterioration of the fabric or services and /or address a low risk to the health and safety of the occupants and/or a minor breach of legislation.

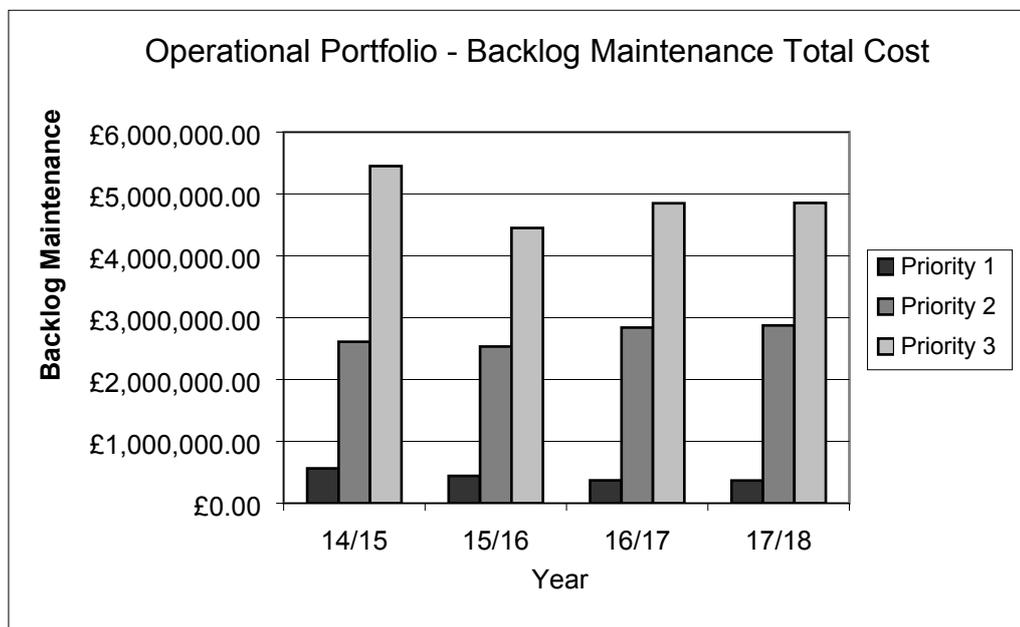
## Performance

During 2017/18 the Council continued to target Priority 1 work as a result there are now fewer buildings requiring urgent works. The Council will continue to target such works in the coming year.

The percentage reduction for Priority 1 work is also assisted by the disposal of poorer quality buildings.

The back log maintenance required to the remainder of the operational portfolio does not need to be undertaken within the periods specified in the Priorities 1 – 3.

### 2.2.3 Total Cost of Required Maintenance



## Performance

The cost of backlog maintenance in priorities 1-3 has increased slightly during 2017/2018, rising from £8,059,413 in 2016/17 to £8,096,605 in 2017/2018.

This increase arises in part due to more accurate data and also from additional properties being the subject of condition surveys. It is only now that full condition surveys have been undertaken for the parks which has highlighted that works are required to paths, gates and boundaries.

As mentioned earlier in the report, 65% of the condition surveys have been completed and as the outstanding 45% are completed it is likely that additional works will be highlighted

The Council will continue the process of targeting spend and rationalising the operational portfolio.

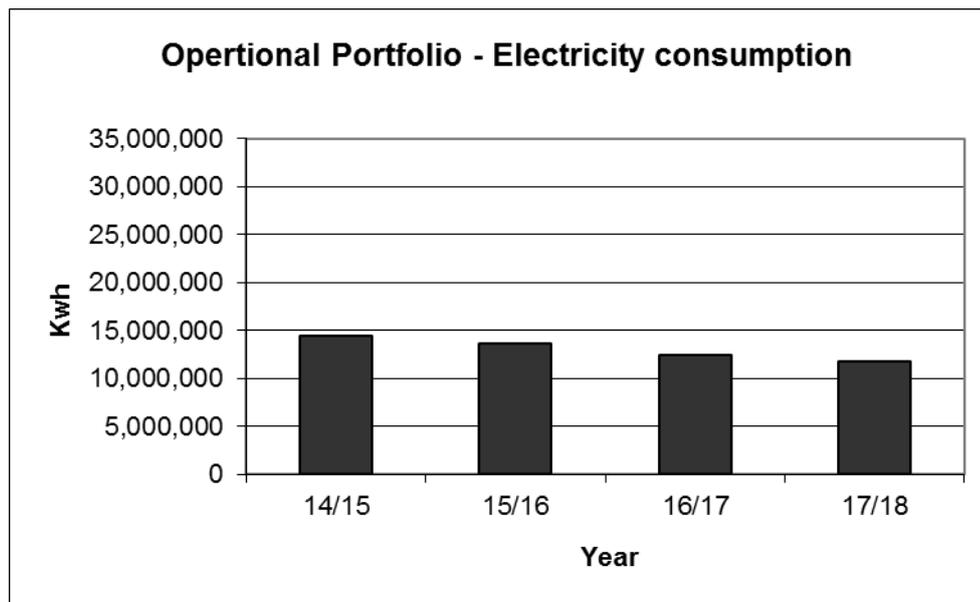
### Overall performance

By adopting a proactive approach to strategic maintenance, the Council is ensuring that its properties continue to be fit for purpose. In addition, by undertaking repairs and maintenance works in a timely manner costs can be minimised.

## 2.3. Environmental Property Issues

2.3.1 The figures used to produce the annual comparison are taken straight from the Council's Energy Management data base. They are imported into the data base straight from supplier EDI (electronic billing) files. The bills are almost completely supported by smart meter readings to ensure accuracy, with only a handful of hard to reach or out of signal supplies supported by manual readings.

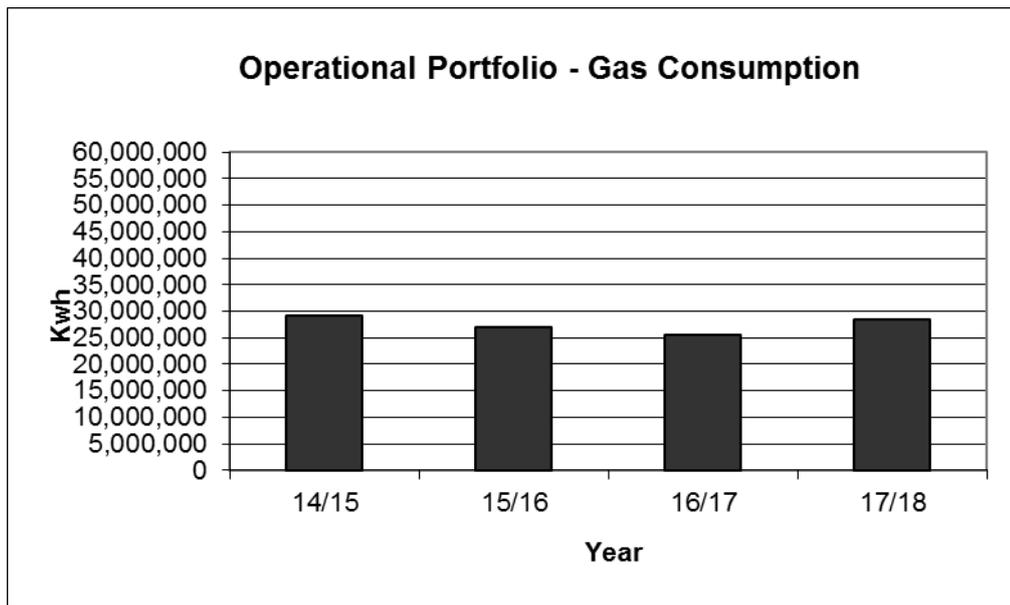
### Electricity Consumption



2.3.2 Electricity consumption continues to fall and is down another 3.5% on 2016/17 figures and now by 27% since 2010/11. Consumption reductions in 2017/18 are again aided by the comprehensive solar programme across the borough, which has generated almost 1.7m kWh of electricity this year. The Civic Centre is now also supplied by the private wire network of Gateshead Energy Company, so whilst this will not affect consumption there will be a further cost saving.

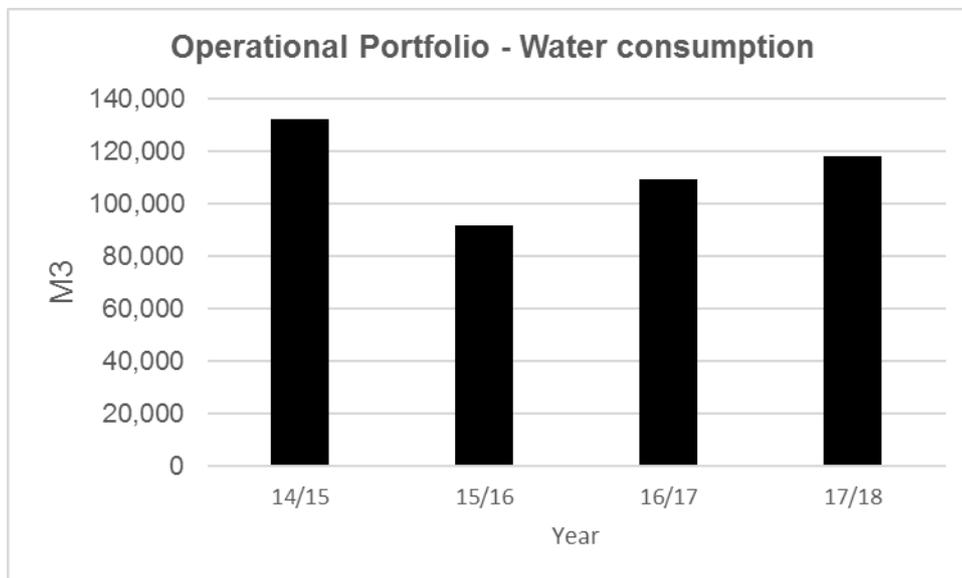
Ongoing investment in other energy saving measures to lighting, pumps and motors, is also reflected in this figure.

## Gas Consumption



2.3.3 2017/18 saw gas consumption increase due to the severe winter, and the effect of the Beast from the East, but when weather corrected a further drop of 0.7% had been achieved. The continuing improvements will again be boosted in 17/18 following the migration to the district heating scheme of a number of large council sites.

## Water Consumption



2.3.4 Water consumption has increased by around 8.27%. The Council changed suppliers for water, following deregulation of the water market in April 2017 and the new supplier has encountered problems in past and current metering, billing and charging processes which has led to some accounts being charged more in 2017/18 to make up for undercharging in 2016/17. This is now largely resolved and from 2018/19 it will be possible

to determine how actual water consumption has performed and where efficiencies can be made.

### **Carbon Emissions**

2.3.5 In 2009 the Council committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 35%, with a revised deadline of 2016.

2.3.6 As at March 2017 that target has been achieved. The total actual and weather corrected carbon emissions for property and street lighting have decreased by a further 8% and now stand at 44% since 2007., This is due in part to the completion of the 5 year programme to retrofit all street lighting with efficient lanterns (either LED, or high efficiency dimmable lanterns). Street light energy consumption alone has reduced by over 65% since 2010/11 and further savings are still expected.

In addition to this, the expansion of the Gateshead Energy Company private wire network to the Civic Centre and the two depots at Shearlegs Road and Park Road has further reduced carbon emissions.

#### Tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year, from Council buildings and streetlights.

Carbon emissions Tonnes/yr.	2007/8	2016/17	2017/18	%change since 07/08 the baseline date
Actual	21,692	13,221	12,176	-44%
Weather corrected	22,184	13,685	12,061.	-44%

2.3.7 The Energy Service Team provides a full utilities management service, to council buildings, schools and academies as well as providing informal support and advice to community groups. The services include billing, metering carbon management and reporting and energy conservation work.

2.3.8 Using SALIX funding the Council has, during 2017/18, completed an additional £420,000 of energy efficiency projects in relation to the Council's property portfolio.

2.3.9 Key projects delivered in 2017/18 include:

- Major works at Gateshead International Stadium, replacing all lighting with LED, improved efficient sports hall heating, BMS optimisation, other minor energy efficiency measures.
- First phase replacement LED lighting and BMS/ventilation efficiency works at Leam Lane Multi-Purpose Building.
- Replacement of 'zebra crossing' lighting with LED equivalent.
- Replacement LED lighting in the director's car park together with occupancy controls i.e. previously on full-time.

- Replacement LED lighting at Shadon House together with BMS optimisation.

2.3.10 A full report on carbon reduction targets will be provided to the Communities and Place OSC as part of its 2017/18 programme.

## 2.4. Suitability

2.4.1 Suitability surveys are undertaken on a three yearly cycle the most recent being in 2017. The results are set out in the table below, providing a comparison to the results of the 2013 survey.

2.4.2 The users of the buildings completed an electronic survey, and their responses used to assess the property's suitability. The 2017 survey included some additional questions, regarding external and internal signage, and the occupants' opinion in relation to the property's condition and its suitability for service delivery.

Survey Year	Response level	No. of Buildings	Category A*	Category B*	Category C*	Category D*
2013	71%	134	83.08%	13.24%	3.68%	0%
2017	88%	127	59.8%	31.5%	6.3%	2.4%

2.4.3 There were an additional 35 returns in 2017 whilst no returns were submitted for 40 properties which had been reported on in the 2013 survey, of these; 28 have either been the subject of community asset transfers e.g. community centres, no longer used for direct service delivery and closed e.g. Tynedale PIC or where the service is being delivered by the voluntary sector e.g. volunteer run libraries.

2.4.4 Eight properties which were thought as Good in 2013 were considered to be Poor in 2017 (moving from category A to C). As at the last report covering the period 2016/17 of the 8 properties one had closed and 3 were the subject of a Community Asset Transfer or would be closed. One was subject to the review and three were to be assessed to determine why they are now considered poor. The three remaining properties were to be reviewed during 2017/2018.

2.4.5. Throughout 2017/18 officers have continued discussions in connection with the transfer of the three properties by way of Asset Transfer (Felling Park Bowling club being one such property). Officers have also monitored the facility which was considered to be no longer large enough to deliver the service. Of the three remaining properties which were considered poor one, which was a bowling pavilion, is no longer used; alternative

**A: Good** – performing well and operating efficiently. The building supports the delivery of the service and is considered suitable for use now and in the future.

**B: Satisfactory** - performing well but with minor issues. The building generally supports the delivery of the service and would be considered suitable. There is room for improvement in certain areas but the property is fundamentally suitable.

**C: Poor** – showing major problems and/ or not operating optimally. The building impedes the delivery of services and would not be considered suitable.

**D: Bad** – does not support the delivery of services at all. The building seriously impedes the delivery of services and would definitely not be considered suitable.

accommodation is being sought for another (Highfield Children's Centre). The third property is the Barley Mow Park Pavilion and officers in the Corporate Asset Strategy Team are working with the Service to determine what appropriate action is required.

- 2.4.6 There are 3 properties which fall into category D, 3 of which are the same properties which fall under category D on the condition category namely: Ryton Cemetery Chapel, Garden House Cemetery Chapel and the wooden pavilion in Derwent Park all of which are not used to support service delivery

## **2.5. Accessibility**

- 2.5.1 The Council is committed to making its services accessible for all residents and visitors. As such it is taking the necessary steps to identify and remove barriers that may prevent people from using our services. It will ensure that where practicable and reasonable its operational buildings are accessible and compliant with equality
- 2.5.2 However, as a result of budgetary pressures the capital funding to progress the Equality Act Upgrade programme was removed in 2017/2018. Despite this removal of funding, the Council is still in a better position than many other local authorities due to the large amount of accessibility upgrade works provided to date.
- 2.5.3 The Council completed its programme of priority schemes during 2016/2017. In light of the removal of the designated Equality Act Upgrade funding, future focus will be to ensure that any new projects will continue to consider the Council's Equality Act obligations and a best practice approach to inclusive design and accessibility provision will need to be adopted.
- 2.5.4 80% of the Council's buildings now meet the Disability Equality strand of the Equality Act standards (Local Indicator 7a) which compared with 76% being compliant as at 2015/16.

## PART 3: Generation of Income and Capital

### 3.1. Non-operational Property Portfolio

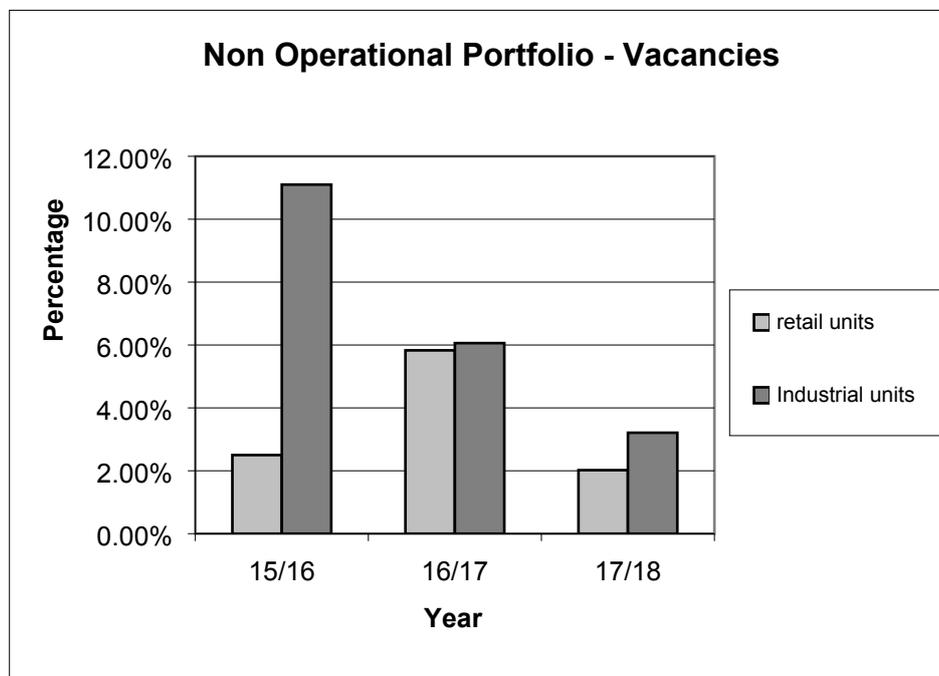
3.1.1 The Non-operational Property Portfolio includes 198 industrial units and 156 shops supplemented with allotments, grazing sites, garages and ground leases. The rent roll over the last 3 years was as follows:

- £3,174,408 in 2015/16
- £3,844,385 in 2016/17
- £3,998,490 in 2017/18

3.1.2 The cost of managing the portfolio at £1,697,938 (which covered maintenance and void costs such as rates and service charges and a sum of £260,509 to on the maintenance and security of the surplus property) was similar to 2016/2017 (£1,661,746) and as such the net income from the non-operational portfolio of £2,300,552 was slightly higher than in 2016/2017 (£2,182,639). This revenue income contributed to the Council's General Fund.

3.1.3 Between 2016/17 and 2017/18 the level of voids for industrial units has fallen from 12 to 4, whilst the level of retail units standing empty has decreased from 8 to 5

3.1.4 The trend over the three year period is shown on the table below:



3.1.7 There are no national indicators to benchmark across as this information does not necessarily demonstrate performance. It is more an indication of

the market conditions and what action the Council is taking to try and mitigate the situation.

3.1.8 Following a strategic review of the Council's non-operational portfolio, a suite of local property performance indicators has been agreed. The highlight for performance in 2017/18 is:

- Nett income from the TNRP was £2,300,552. A total of 26 new lettings, 15 lease renewals and 12 rent reviews were completed over the year.

3.1.9 During the course of 2017/18 discussions continued with Public Sector Plc (PSP), following the establishment of a Limited Liability Partnership between the Council and PSP: 'PSP Gateshead LLP'. The Partnership and Operational Boards have been established and are meeting on a regular basis to identify projects that can be taken forward by the Partnership. The Partners are progressing a transfer of the Council's Tenanted Non- Residential Property Portfolio, to drive property and asset management opportunities.

3.1.10 By way of background, PSP was developed in 1997, to develop relationships between the public and private sector founded on cultural exchange, trust and equality of relationship, rather than the traditional (sometimes adversarial) relationships based strictly on contract. PSP affords the additional opportunity for public sector staff from council workforces to supply resources to unlock this value.

3.1.11 The Company is a funding joint venture underwritten and supported by Cabot Square Capital. However, it is not a Local Asset Backed Vehicle and therefore not an outsourcing model where services are simply bought from and provided by the private sector. PSP prefer to label the approach as "insourcing" in that it works with a local authority, bringing finance, skills and resources, but also utilising, and enhancing if necessary, in-house resources in order to facilitate a project.

## **3.2. Surplus Land & Property Assets**

3.2.1 The Council continues to strive to secure the disposal of surplus assets as quickly and efficiently as possible, as this helps to avoid vandalism or antisocial behaviour associated with vacant property, both of which can pose a risk and cause problems for local residents. It also reduces the holding costs and the amount of maintenance required to the property portfolio. Often early demolition is the most appropriate course of action.

3.2.2 As at March 2018 there were 5 properties, (Gateshead Old Town Hall, former Hookergate School, The Courtyard, Low Fell (former WING building) former Wrekenton multi-purpose building and former Dunston Hill School, valued at £3,580,000 on the Council's surplus property register. Although the economic outlook over the year, and subsequently property values, continued to improve, the ability for the Council to take

advantage of this improvement was limited with fewer opportunities to identify properties which were surplus to the Council's requirements, as a result of the rationalisation programme undertaken in previous years. Details of the capital receipts received over the last three years are as follows:

- 2015/16 - £1,363,436
- 2016/17 - £1,020,452
- 2017/18 - £1,704,708

The capital receipts are used to support the Council's Capital Programme.

- 3.2.3 However, off-setting this reduced opportunity to generate capital receipts from surplus buildings, there have been opportunities in relation to the Council's land holdings.
- 3.2.4 The Council sells land through a variety of channels: e.g. open market, through the Council's Joint Venture Vehicle, to its trading company vehicle (The Gateshead Trading Company). The options are considered at the Land Development Group which is a cross-Council group, with membership comprising officers from, amongst others, Economic Growth, Legal Services, Corporate Finance, Property & Corporate Asset Management, Development Transport and Public Protection.
- 3.2.5 A number of development sites have been included in the Council's Joint Venture Vehicle (JVV), whilst other sites will be brought to market as part of a planned approach to deliver the Housing Strategy and Economic Growth Acceleration Plan.
- 3.2.6 The Council's partner in the JVV is Evolution Gateshead (a consortium of Galliford Try and Home Group) who was selected after a full OJEU Procurement process with financial close in April 2012. The JVV is now known as The Gateshead Regeneration Partnership (GRP).
- 3.2.7 The Partnership is looking to regenerate 16 sites across the Borough, totalling 65 hectares. Redevelopment began with a bundle of three sites at Saltwell, Deckham and Birtley Northside.
- 3.2.8 The first three sites were transferred in January 2014 and this first bundle currently has planning approval for 309 homes (including 60 affordable homes). Progress is as follows:
- 16 affordable homes have been built and occupied in Deckham
  - Birtley Phase 1 comprising 47 units (of which 8 are shared ownership) is complete with all units now sold
  - Birtley Phase 2 which comprises 147 units (of which a further 8 are shared ownership) is underway, with the first homes on the upper plateau now occupied. The lower plateau will start in late summer

2018. 98 homes remain to be sold. The site will be completed in late 2020.

- The first phase in Saltwell comprises 99 new homes which will all be built out by October 2018. All 18 affordable rented properties are occupied, and seven of the ten shared ownership have been sold. Only 5 out of 71 private sale homes remain to be sold.
- The second bundle is made up of 52 homes on Kelvin Grove, the second phase in Saltwell; 39 homes at Whitehills Drive in Windy Nook; and 23 homes on the former Rowlands Gill Primary School.
- All three sites have full planning permission, and development will start in winter 2019.

3.2.9 The Partnership is currently considering which of the remaining sites will make up the third bundle. As soon as delivery of the three sites in the second bundle is confirmed, GRP will accelerate design and feasibility work on this next bundle.

### **Significant Land Disposals in 2017/18**

- Former Marley Hill school
- Land at Derwent West Bank
- Land at Wrekenton Town Centre

### **Surplus Asset Declarations**

The following are a few of the properties declared surplus to the Council's needs during 2017/18:

- 11 Gladstone Terrace
- 112/114 Kells Lane
- Garages at Garth Farm Road
- Bottom Depot at Saltwell park

### **Surplus Asset Demolitions**

The following are a few of the properties demolished during 2017/18:

- Tower Court shops and maisonettes

Estate Regeneration Demolitions:

- Clasper Village Phase 3
- Residual Properties at Bleach Green
- Chandless Estate Sub-station

## **PART 4: Supporting Service Delivery**

### **4.1. Office Accommodation**

- 4.1.1 The Civic Centre is now the main office location for Council employees. In addition to which there are offices associated with the main depots at Park Road and Shearlegs Road and the training centre at the Dryden Centre.
- 4.1.2 The Corporate Asset Strategy Team continues to review the use of the Council's office accommodation as it is recognised that as a result of changes in service delivery, improved communications, technology, and reduction in the workforce, office needs change.
- 4.1.3 As a result of the changes the space required for Council purposes in the Civic Centre has substantially reduced. It was identified by the Corporate Asset Strategy Team that there was the potential for this vacant space to be used for the co-location of partner organisations to enhance service delivery and generate an income and reduce costs for the Council. It was therefore agreed that the Civic Centre be developed as a public sector hub. Work was undertaken to enable staff to be relocated to create a vacant accommodation to be offered to potential occupiers from across the public and voluntary sector. To date the Council has been successful in securing the occupation of Citizens Advice Bureau's new Trading Standards Advice Service. As at March 2018 discussions were ongoing with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust to take space within the building to deliver the 0-19 Service on behalf of Public Health. These discussions proved successful and the organisation occupied the space from summer 2018. A number of other partner organisations are viewing accommodation within the building which will hopefully lead to further lettings. A further update will be provided in the 2018/19 report.

### **4.2 Service Strategies**

- 4.2.1 As the size of the operational portfolio has been reduced over the last few years, the opportunities to secure further rationalisation will reduce. However, officers in the Corporate Asset Strategy Team will continue to work with Services during the year to identify service specific buildings that are no longer needed as a result of consolidation
- 4.2.2 Service Directors have produced a business plan for the delivery of their Service which should include a section on accommodation need both now and anticipated as budget proposals are implemented and alternative delivery models progressed. By working with Service Directors in connection with their accommodation needs the Corporate Asset Strategy Team can ensure that best use is made of assets to enable running costs to be mitigated whilst ensuring that services are delivered effectively for clients and residents. During 2017/18 the following outcomes were achieved:

- Use of the Council's land to secure additional private and social housing. The Council's Trading Company, Beacon Living is developing the former Derwent House APU as Woodhouse Mews to provide 21 apartments and the former Lyndhurst Centre to provide 36 houses for sale and 6 affordable rent. Sites have been sold to the private sector including the former Ravenswood site and at Crawcrook;
- Working with registered social providers to secure further social housing across the borough an example being the sale of a site at Swanway to Home Group;
- Millway, the former Ravensworth Terrace Primary School building were transferred to the River Tees Multi-academy Trust to support the conversion of the Behavioural Support Service to Academy Status

4.2.3 With regard to the school estate, local authorities continue to have ownership and asset management of school buildings. Local authorities will also continue to manage capital allocations for maintained schools. As schools convert to academies, responsibility for managing their individual condition budgets move from local authorities to academy trusts.

4.2.4 For 2017/18 Gateshead received £1.5m of School Condition Allocation. This amount is indicative of the next two years allocations which will be updated annually to reflect schools converting to academy status. The School Condition Allocations take into account the information collected by the Government through the Property Data Survey programme about the condition of schools and includes a core condition funding component based on pupil numbers.

4.2.5 The funding was allocated to improve and maintain the condition of the school estate maintained by Gateshead, including rewires, boiler replacements, window replacements, roofing schemes etc.

4.2.6 Local authorities have responsibility for ensuring that every child has a school place including the duty to ensure that there are sufficient school, special school and alternative provision places to meet demand. The requirement to provide additional school places is called Basic Need. The Council will determine that there is Basic Need at a school if the forecast number on roll exceeds the top of the net capacity range and there are no suitable alternative places at schools within a reasonable distance.

4.2.7 The Department for Education allocates Basic Need funding each year to local authorities to ensure there are sufficient school places in areas of need. Local authorities are able to use this funding to expand existing schools, including maintained and non-maintained, academies and Free Schools in areas of need. In 2018/19 Gateshead have been allocated £10.9m of basic need funding. In 2017/18 a scheme and estimate was approved to create a new expanded school on a new site to replace the existing Gibside School.

4.2.8 In the second phase of the Priority School Building Programme Gateshead was successful in a bid to replace three demountable classrooms at

Winlaton West Lane Primary with a new build extension. Work will commence on the modular extension during Summer 2018.

4.2.9 As part of the successful Targeted Basic Need bid, in September 2017 Ravensworth Terrace Primary School opened as a 2FE (227 additional places) new build school off Mount Pleasant Road in Birtley.

4.2.10 Across the borough, the Council has considered the potential pupil impact associated with planned housing growth and proposed site allocation in the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Newcastle and Gateshead. The Local Plan provides a strategy for delivering 11,000 new homes in Gateshead. Financial contributions from developers will cover the cost of additional school places where proposed development is likely to result in the generation of additional pupil numbers in excess of that which local schools can accommodate. In 2017, an additional 105 spaces were created at Emmaville Primary from Section 106 contributions to accommodate the housing growth in the Crawcrook area.

### **4.3 Area Reviews**

4.3.1 Opportunities to work with other public sector organisations such as the Northumbria Police, NHS Property Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and individual doctors' practices are considered on an area/locality basis the outcome of which will be a more efficient use of the estate. The Council is currently working with two doctors' practices in the borough together with the Community Health Partnership and the Gateshead Health Trust to deliver two community health hubs which will incorporate a range of health and other public sector services.

## **PART 5: Future Actions**

To ensure that the assets are used to support the Council Plan, officers will, throughout the coming year:

- Play an active role within the OPE Partnership to bring forward opportunities for shared services and property utilisation which supports the Council in rationalisation of its portfolio to support service delivery, generate revenue savings and potential capital receipts.
- Progress development of the Civic Centre as a public sector hub
- Progress the development of the corporate web-based asset management database (Gp2) which will ensure delivery of accurate up to date benchmarking data;
- Monitor the new suite of indicators for the performance of the non-operational portfolio;
- The Corporate Asset Strategy Team will continue to co-ordinate the Strategic Maintenance budget to ensure that spend is focussed on properties to be retained by the Council as set out in the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015-2020;
- Work with Services to enable the continued delivery of services within the areas and neighbourhoods within a reduced level of funding and a smaller portfolio through alternative models of service delivery and the more efficient use of the retained property;
- Identify future funding and implement schemes in relation to the energy saving measures and opportunities for income generation from PV;
- Identify development opportunities for both housing and commercial schemes to assist in driving forward the Council's housing and economic growth strategies.
- Continue to work with PSP to develop a range of projects for consideration by the Council.

## Annex 1

### Accessibility Indicators definitions:

#### National & Local Indicators

Local Indicator 007 has been reported since June 2009; soon after its introduction to replace National Indicator BV156 (Many Councils consider that the latter is not a robust indicator of performance)

Gateshead Council has developed a suite of Indicators around LI 007 which will enable performance monitoring across a number of asset types. This data has been passed to the Octopus Group and CIPFA for their consideration as a Benchmarking standard

The suite is as follows

#### **Local Indicator 7 - Accessibility to Buildings and Open Spaces:**

7a - The percentage of the authority's buildings open to the public in which all areas (open to the public) are suitable for and accessible for disabled people.

*For this indicator the standard for accessible and suitable will be as defined in Approved Document M of the Building Regulations 2004.*

7b - The percentage of the authority's schools which are suitable for and accessible for disabled people.

*For this indicator the standard for accessible and suitable will be the "one star" standard as defined in the Accessibility Strategy (Education and Schools) 2006 - 2010*

7c - The percentage of the authority's residential buildings with communal areas in which all public access areas are suitable for and accessible for disabled people

*For this indicator the standard for accessible and suitable will be as defined in Approved Document M of the Building Regulations 2004.*

7d - The percentage of the authority's open spaces that have had a disability access audit carried out.

*For this indicator the standard for accessible and suitable will be as defined in British Telecom (BT) Countryside for All Standards and Guidelines (1997)*

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**TITLE OF REPORT:** Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives – six month assessment of performance and delivery 2018/2019

**REPORT OF:** Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive  
Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources  
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance

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## **SUMMARY**

This report provides the six-month assessment of performance and delivery for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018 in relation to the Council's Thrive agenda.

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### **Background**

1. The report forms part of the Council's performance management framework and gives an overview of progress for the priorities appropriate to the remit of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).
2. The Council's new strategic approach Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives, was approved by Cabinet in March 2018 to ensure the Council continues to get the best outcomes for local people and remains a viable and sustainable organisation into the future.
3. As part of the Council's performance management framework, five year targets were replaced with a single 2020 target with strategic indicators identified as either target or tracker indicators. These targets were approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2016.

### **Delivery and Performance**

4. The six-month assessment of performance for 2018-19 focuses on the achievements and actions undertaken during the period 1 April 2018 – 30 September 2018. Areas for future improvement are also identified.
5. The strategic indicators aligned to this committee have been reviewed and for the most part are consistent with the Council's Thrive agenda. Implementation of new strategic indicators to measure performance relating to Trading and Digital transformation will be in place for the 2019/20 performance reporting cycle.

### **Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that Corporate Resources OSC:
  - (i) consider whether the activities undertaken during this timeframe are supporting delivery of the Thrive agenda;

- (ii) note the intention to develop new strategic indicators for Trading and Digital transformation, to be included in the 2019/20 performance reporting cycle;
- (iii) agree that the report be referred to Cabinet on 22 January 2019, with the recommendations from this OSC, for consideration as part of the composite report relating to the Council's overall performance.

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**Contact: Marisa Jobling**

**Ext: 2099**

## **Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Delivery & Performance – Six Month update 2018/19**

**3 December 2018**

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### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

Corporate Resources

#### **Chair:**

Councillor John Eagle

#### **Vice Chairs**

Councillor Bill Dick

Councillor Jonathan Wallace

### **OSC Role and Remit:**

- The management of the Council's financial, human and physical resources
  - Support for the democratic process;
  - Social inclusion
  - Equalities and Diversity
  - Efficiency, value for money and procurement
  - The involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council
  - Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience
-

## **Overview**

1. This report relates to how well the Council is achieving against the strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.
2. Progress of strategic indicators, future focus and areas requiring improvement in line with the Committee's remit, have been assessed over the period April 2018 to September 2018. A table highlighting the performance of the indicators is provided at Appendix 1.
3. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the current position relating to implementation of budget proposals that have previously been highlighted as potentially having a disproportionate impact in relation to equalities.

## **The Management of the Council's Financial, Human & Physical Resources**

### **4. Council Tax collection**

*Ref 1: Percentage of council tax collected which was due to be paid in that year*

At this six-month stage, Council Tax collection of 53.3% is 0.7% below the first half year performance at 2017/18, however the amount of Council Tax collected in the first six months of the year is £6 million higher than the corresponding period last year.

To improve collection rates, we are continually reviewing business processes and given the financial challenges faced by many of our customers, we continue to make affordable, realistic payment arrangements subject to individuals' circumstances.

### **5. Business Rates Collection (NNDR)**

*Ref 2: Percentage of business rates collected*

Actual collection is 55.7% which is just below the figure of 56.5% reported in the corresponding period last year. However, collection is on target for year end, despite an increase of £780,000 in the amount of business rates to be collected. We continue to maximise collection by reviewing working practices and proactively challenging business rates avoidance tactics.

### **6. Invoices**

*Ref 3: The percentage of undisputed invoices paid on time*

The Council paid 82% of undisputed invoices within 30 days for the first six months of this year, compared to 77% for 2017/18. This increased performance is due to ongoing improvements in processes and further introduction of purchasing cards.

### **7. Benefit Claims**

*Ref 4: Speed of housing benefit claims (processing) – average time to process new claims and changes in circumstances.*

For the first six months of the year housing benefit claims have been processed in 9 days which represents an improvement of 2.19 days for the equivalent period last year. This performance is despite the challenges faced by the council in supporting

universal credit claimants. The focus for the remainder of the year will be to further improve performance.

The Council has an annual service level agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions to provide Universal Support (assisted digital support and personal budgeting and support). However, from April 2019 following recent government announcements, Gateshead Citizens Advice will assume responsibility for providing universal support to Universal Credit claimants. The role of the Council in supporting residents and how we work jointly with Citizens Advice needs further clarification.

## 8. **Staff Sickness**

*Ref 5: Working days lost due to sickness (excluding school staff)*

The rate of sickness absence at the six-month stage for 2018/19 is 5.93 days (per FTE). This is an improvement compared to the same period in 2017/18 which, due to a system error previously reported to Committee, was recalculated to 6.41 days lost.

A separate monitoring report regarding sickness absence is presented on this agenda for the Committee's attention.

## 9. **Employee Engagement**

*Ref 8: Employee engagement e.g. Gateshead Council is viewed as a good place to work*

In the recent employee survey, 73% of employees agreed with the statement that the Council is a good place to work. This figure is up 9% compared to the 2016 survey figure of 64%.

The corporate employee survey was undertaken in August 2018, with 1,585 responses received which equates to 39% of the council's workforce. Out of 35 questions asked, 16 were new for 2018. Of note is that 75% of employees who responded indicated their awareness of the Council's Thrive agenda and 70% understood how their role contributed to Thrive.

The remaining questions when compared to the 2016 survey, show increases in all but 4 questions. The decreases, whilst not significant, do highlight there are still areas for improvement with communication within teams, employees not having the materials and equipment to do their work, having the right balance between home and work life and line managers not being approachable.

Corporately, work is ongoing to develop an action plan to improve in these areas. Service Directors are sharing the results with their staff and will be reviewing their own practices to see where improvements can be made.

The corporate Employee Forum, which is chaired by a Service Director, currently has 38 members and during this six-month period, they have considered several topics such as the Thrive agenda, thinking differently about how to deliver services, an update on the Workforce Plan and the findings from the Employee Health Needs Assessment. The forum has also taken the opportunity to feedback on the

implementation of the Microsoft Office 365 and issues affecting individual employees.

#### 10. **Workforce Plan**

This Committee received a comprehensive update relating to the implementation of the Workforce Plan, at their meeting in October 2018. The areas of focus for the next 6 months include:

- Refresh of the Council's workforce strategy and plan
- Implementation of 2019 pay awards; considering budget impact, impact on trading and commercialisation, and Living Wage aspirations
- Maximising the apprenticeship levy
- Demonstrating actions have been taken because of the employee survey
- Further consideration of employee terms and conditions
- Further roll out of i-Trent and e-learning to provide for more efficient ways of working
- Conducting fire risk assessments on behalf of TGHC for all Gateshead Council Housing
- Development of a Leadership Development Programme (subject to budgetary constraints)
- Consideration of the adoption of a salary sacrifice car leasing scheme
- Development of a Financial Wellbeing initiative for employees

### **Social Inclusion, Equalities & Diversity**

#### 11. **Superfast Broadband**

*Ref 9: Improve Superfast Broadband connectivity-Increase coverage in Gateshead to 98.9% by June 2019*

The six-month performance of Broadband Delivery UK (part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) stands at 97.28%. which is showing a steady rise compared to this time last year, towards the overall target of 98.9%.

#### 12. **Diversity Forum**

During this six-month period, the Diversity Forum has met twice and received presentations and information on a range of topics, including Mate Crime, Community Safety priorities, the Integrated Communities Green Paper, the Roma community in Gateshead, and voluntary sector work with the diverse Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Newcastle and Gateshead.

#### 13. **Employee disability survey**

An employee survey relating to disability was undertaken during March/April 2018. There were 374 employees who responded to the survey and just under a third of those respondents (32%) considered themselves to have disability.

71 employees felt they received adequate backing from the Council to do their job. Whilst just over half of 89 respondents said they knew where in the Council they could access support and guidance.

The survey also asked if employees had experienced disability discrimination - 78% of 82 respondents said they had not suffered discrimination from managers; 81% of

79 said they had not suffered discrimination from other staff; and 91% of 79 said they had not suffered discrimination from service users.

The findings of this survey, along with the results of the corporate employee survey, will be used to inform the development of an action plan designed to improve the knowledge and understanding of employees and managers so that disabled employees feel supported and able to fully contribute in the workplace.

#### 14. **Equality impact monitoring of budget proposals**

Appendix 2 summarises the assessments provided by services of the impact of budget proposals following implementation. Subject to these assessments, it is proposed to cease monitoring of the following proposals:

- Cross-cutting proposal – Voluntary and Community Sector
- Post 16 Home to School Transport
- Adult Social Care Demand Management model
- Sport and Physical Activity
- Labriut Centre
- Independent Supported Living Schemes
- Early Help Service
- Review of the Toy Library
- Community Links
- Review Domiciliary Care Packages

The Committee will receive an update on the remaining 5 proposals in the year end performance report, expected in June 2019.

#### 15. **Tackling poverty**

Following the Thriving for All Conference in February 2018, a 'Tackling Poverty in Gateshead Board' was created comprising of leaders from cross sector organisations to take strategic oversight of approaches to tackling poverty in Gateshead. The board is chaired by Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Catherine Donovan and vice chaired by Alison Dunn, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Gateshead. Committee will be aware that Alison joined the Council in October 2018 on a secondment arrangement, as strategic lead for tackling inequality and poverty in the borough. Alison will continue to undertake both roles.

The 'Gateshead Community Food Network' has now formed, bringing together over 50 community organisations and businesses to explore ways in which they can work together to have a greater impact on food poverty in Gateshead.

The 'Gateshead Child Poverty Network' was launched in July bringing together over 70 cross sector delegates to a themed discussion to identify steps to take to reduce child poverty in Gateshead. The network aims to bring innovative ideas and practical solutions to frontline delivery across Gateshead.

Fuel poverty remains a significant issue across Gateshead, particularly for older residents. Work is underway on a 'switching campaign' aimed at reducing energy bills for residents. Further work is being done to explore additional energy saving advice and cost-free modifications for vulnerable households.

The Council recognises that a more holistic approach to the collection of resident debts, and a wider view of a household's ability to pay should be considered. Development of a corporate debt policy is currently being explored.

The Council is working alongside the Blaydon Methodist Church to bring about a 'Poverty Truth Commission' in the west of the borough. There are many successful examples of Poverty Truth Commissions across the UK whereby residents with lived experiences of poverty can work alongside decision makers from parliament, local government, charitable and business sectors in order to influence local policy in relation to tackling poverty where they live.

A second annual conference will be hosted in February 2019, to hear of progress to date, and to allow those organisations supporting the poverty agenda to have their voices heard once more and allowing approaches to be shaped by those delivering on the frontline.

### **Capacity Building in Communities, Volunteering & Resilience**

16. On 1 August 2018, the Council recommissioned Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service to provide an infrastructure support service to voluntary and community organisations across Gateshead for the next 3 years.
17. Committee will recall receiving an annual update on the Council's volunteers plan "Helping Out", at their meeting on 15 October 2018.
18. A progress update on Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework is provided as part of this Committee's agenda.

### **Increase the levels of ambition and aspiration of vulnerable groups across Gateshead**

#### **19. Young people leaving care**

*Ref 10: Ensure young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship*

This indicator is reported on an annual basis. However, the current position at the six-month stage is positive in that there are now 5 apprentices who are care leavers, working in the Office of the Chief Executive, Care, Wellbeing and Learning and Corporate Services and Governance. Opportunities will continue to be explored to increase this number year on year.

### **The Council's arrangements for securing efficiency and money; and the development and operation of the Council's procurement strategy**

#### **20. Trading**

As the Council is seeking to increase income through developing its approach to trading and commercialisation, it would be prudent to include traded activities performance in future Overview and Scrutiny performance reports. This reflects the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy objective to generate income, which can be used to support the Council's priorities to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. Specific indicators are in the process of being developed but are

likely to include the amount of traded income achieved as well as some service specific traded activities. This will enable performance against trading and commercial activities to be considered by the Committee. It is intended that the new indicators will be included for the 2019/20 performance reporting cycle beginning in April.

## **21. Statement of Accounts**

This year, the Statement of Accounts was finalised in accordance with the earlier statutory deadlines of draft accounts by 31 May 2018 (previously June) and audited accounts by 31 July 2018 (previously September).

On Monday 27 July 2018, Mazars issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2017/18 Statement of Accounts. The key messages from Mazars Independent Auditor's Report are:

- [the accounts] give a true and fair view of the financial position of Gateshead Council as at 31 March 2018 and of its expenditure and income for the year;
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice; and
- the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year.

The early closure in line with the first year of the revised deadlines is a significant achievement and should not be underestimated. The previous two years dry runs and early preparation has contributed positively to the outcome. All Groups and Services have contributed to this success by adhering to the deadlines in the Final Accounts timetable.

A review of the 2017/18 process will be the starting point for the 2018/19 work and the approach will include opportunities for feedback and contributions from all employees, external partners and Mazars to enable further improvements to be delivered on the existing framework.

## **22. Budget**

The Council is operating in an ever-changing policy landscape. The levels of uncertainty and the impact of government decisions are significant. The challenging local context of reduced funding and increasing demand on council services has compelled the council to refocus on what matters most.

The likely continuing requirement and scale of budget savings, over and above the £157m already taken from budgets since 2010, represents an increasing challenge for the Council. There will be more pressure on the income the council gets from council tax and business rates to fund vital services. To strengthen its financial position, the Council will have to consider other ways to generate income and be self-sufficient.

As demand for our services increases and government funding decreases, the Council faces the challenge of an estimated financial gap of £42.7 million over the next two years.

The Council is responding to the financial challenges in a planned way through an approach based around four inter-related areas: economic growth, income

generation, managing demand, and identifying savings/efficiencies. The council will have to make very difficult choices in the years ahead about which services to prioritise.

### **23. General Data Protection Regulation**

The Council is working with 263 schools, colleges and charities within and external to the borough, as well as partners such as NEPO and Gateshead Housing Company. This has generated income into the Council. Over 500 training sessions have been delivered to council employees, councillors, partners and schools including governors. Officers have also been asked to speak at national data protection conferences.

## **Involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council**

24. During this six-month period, 13 consultations have been undertaken using the Council's consultation portal in relation to local transport schemes, Adoption North East, Coatsworth Conservation Area Shopfront Design, Gambling Statement of Principles and You and Your Local Area Survey.

### **25. You and Your Local Area Survey 2018**

This survey was undertaken between June and August 2018. The survey was completed by 910 Viewpoint ONLINE members and 1,137 members of the public, totalling 2,047 respondents.

Highlights to note:

- 64% of respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This is a decrease on the satisfaction level in 2016 which was 75%.
- 91% of respondents felt that people in their local area usually get on well together.
- 28% of respondents said they regularly volunteer (at least once a month), 27% said they volunteered less often and 45% said they had never volunteered.
- 13% of respondents said they had heard of the Council's Thrive agenda, however 88% indicated they were supportive of the 5 pledges.
- 41% of respondents stated that their personal financial circumstances are either only just coping or are really struggling. This is particularly an issue for those of working age, with fewer (30%) of those aged 65+ experiencing difficulties.
- 42% of respondents are satisfied with the way the Council runs things, which is 9% lower than in 2016. However, this reduction in satisfaction has not resulted in a corresponding increase in dissatisfaction. 29% of respondents are dissatisfied (up 1% from 2016) and a further 29% are neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
- 39% of respondents are confident that the Council will provide the best possible services it can within its available budget. A further 27% neither agree or disagree.

### **26. Digital**

Since the new version of [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk) was launched on 17th May 2018 the data recorded for page views is no longer comparable to previous years. However, since the site was relaunched it has received over 4 million page views of which 53% were via a SmartPhone, 12% on a tablet and 35% on a computer which demonstrates the importance of delivering websites that function seamlessly on

mobile devices. We now have access to improved demographics data for the website, for instance 27% of the website's audience are aged between 25-34 with over 10% of the audience aged over 65. Statistics show that 55.3% of the people accessing our site are female.

Due to the improvements that have been made to online payments we have again seen a significant rise in card payments on the website. In the last 12 months the website has processed £17.5m in income, which is a 22% increase compared to the previous year.

Due to the difficulty in providing baseline data for all Council transactions by phone call, face to face and online we propose that we begin reporting on specific measurable transactions instead. This could include:

- Online payments
- Fly tip reports
- Garden waste bin subscriptions
- Registrars appointment booking
- Adult social care forms

It is intended that the new indicators will be included for the 2019/20 performance reporting cycle beginning in April next year.

The implementation of the new digital platform is near completion. New websites and services delivered on the platform in the last 6 months as well as [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk) include [online payments](#), [Gateshead JSNA](#), [Gateshead Goes Local](#), [PROTO](#), [Beacon Living](#), [Safeguarding in Gateshead](#), [Reporting Hate crime](#) and [Smokefree Gateshead](#).

Areas of focus over next 6 months:

- Complete the implementation of a digital platform to support the delivery of the digital strategy, including the following websites and digital services;
  - An appointment booking system for the Registrars Service by January 2019
  - Online forms for social care requests that aim to reduce call level volumes for Adult Social Care Direct in November 2018
  - Online forms to support Landlord licensing
  - New website for Business Gateshead
  - A Customer Account so residents can log in to view payment history, track progress of completed forms, appointment bookings etc
  - A consolidated online system for both Corporate Complaints and Members enquiries by April 2019
  - Increase the number of online payments e.g. car park permits
  - A new digital news and events service
  - A location-based reporting tool that builds on the success of the report fly tipping service
  - Improved digital services for Waste and Recycling
- Supporting the review of individual services to transform how services can be delivered digitally to deliver savings and efficiencies, income generation and contribute to an improved customer experience.

The Council recently signed up to the Local Digital Declaration which is intended to support local government to design and build good digital public services. Through

the Local Digital Fund, the Council was successful at the expressions of interest stage to submit a final bid by 15 November 2018, to support research for an online Taxi Licensing solution, in partnership with Sunderland, Northumberland and Sheffield local authorities. Successful bidders will be notified by 3 December 2018.

**PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE**

Strategic Indicator			Year End		Six Month		Trend	Target
			2016/17	2017/18	2017/18	2018/19		
<i>Maximising Growth:</i>								
Ref 1	% of Council Tax collected that was due to be paid	Higher is better	95.8%	95.9%	54%	53.3%	↓	96.6%
Ref 2	% of Business Rates collected	Higher is better	97.3%	98.6%	56.5%	55.7%	↓	97%
Ref 3	% of undisputed invoices paid on time	Higher is better	71.44%	77.1%	77.2%	82%	↑	95%
<i>Reducing Costs:</i>								
Ref 4	Speed of housing benefits claims (processing) - average time to process new claims and changes in circumstances	Lower is better	7.75 days	7.72 days	11.19 days	9 days	↑	7.5 days
Ref 5	Staff sickness (excluding school staff) per FTE	Lower is better	9.9 days	12.75 days	6.41 days	5.93 days	↑	8.0 days
Ref 6	% increase in digital based transaction/contact from established baseline	Higher is better	Baseline year	Not available	Annual Indicator	To be reviewed		TBC
Ref 7	Percentage increase in online transactions	Higher is better	Baseline year	Not available	Annual Indicator	To be reviewed		TBC
<i>Increasing collective responsibility:</i>								
Ref 8	Employee engagement: e.g. good place to work	Higher is better	64% 2016 survey	Survey not undertaken in 17/18	Survey not undertaken in 17/18	73% 2018 survey	↑	70%
Ref 9	Improve Superfast Broadband connectivity - increase coverage in Gateshead to 98.9% by June 2019	Higher is better	94.3%	96.41%	95.26%	97.28	↑	98.9%
<i>Equality Objective: To increase levels of ambition and aspiration of vulnerable groups across Gateshead</i>								
Ref 10	Ensure young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship	Higher is better	1	4	Annual Indicator	Annual Indicator		TBC

### Monitoring of equality impact relating to previously agreed budget proposals

#### ***Cross-cutting proposal – Voluntary and Community Sector***

The monitoring of impact on the community and voluntary sector in relation to equalities has continued:

- Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team continue to work with over 200 community groups and charities across Gateshead, from grass roots groups to key charitable partners. The team, along with Newcastle CVS provides advice and support with action planning, funding, development, risk assessment, health checks and governance. In addition to capacity building, the team is supporting a number of key projects supporting communities with large scale projects; Chopwell, Beacon Lough East and Bensham and Saltwell, Teams and Birtley.
- The Council no longer provides a weekly-bulletin providing details about new funding opportunities. Instead the Council has subscribed to an online tool called *Grantfinder*. The licence for this is available to all employees and councillors with a gateshead.gov.uk email address.
- The Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team, along with the Community Safety Team and Northumbria Police have delivered 4 “World Café” style community engagement events in Beacon Lough East, Chopwell, Bensham and Birtley. The events brought together over 150 residents in total to discuss local issues and how the community can work closely with the Council and Northumbria Police to respond to the priorities raised by residents. The event is based around participants having a conversation whilst having something to eat, each “course” involves a question and residents use the table cloths to record their views which are then collated into a community plan. The Safer Gateshead Partnership will be reviewing the progress of the plans throughout 2019/20.
- So far in 2018/19 the Council has allocated £108,000 through the main Gateshead Thrive Fund to 11 community organisations delivering activities in Gateshead. Round 2 of the fund opened on 29 October and will close on 11 January. The Council has also launched the Innovation and Development Fund. The fund has a specific focus on supporting organisations that are looking to make a significant change, something that is not "business as usual". Examples include:
  - carrying out market research / feasibility studies to establish an evidence base for a new service;
  - launching a new service in a new neighbourhood;
  - investing in new equipment or other capital to help deliver more effective or efficient services.
- A proportion of the Innovation and Development Fund will be ring fenced to develop and run a Gateshead VCS Enhanced Leadership programme. This will provide a valuable complementary resource to both the main Investment Fund and the Gateshead Fund, specifically designed to establish of pool of upskilled staff, and trustees / board members.
- Local Community Fund - since the Fund was first introduced, over 900 voluntary and community groups and projects have now been funded and supported.

This committee has agreed the scope of a Review of the Council Support to the Community and Voluntary Sector at its meeting on 15 October 2018. The review will help the committee understand what support is currently provided to the sector, what impact this support has and what needs to change to ensure the support meets the needs of the sector in the future.

As the issues that affect the sector will be picked up as part of the review, it is proposed that monitoring of this budget proposal is no longer undertaken within this performance report.

### **2014/15 – Post 16 Home to School Transport**

Following a consultation exercise between October and December 2013, the Council agreed to introduce a charge for post-16 home to college transport for learners with SEN, to be implemented from September 2016. However, the decision has since been reviewed and a financial contribution to Post-16 transport in the academic year 2016-17 was not introduced. The Council reviewed its decision during 2017 and agreed to implement a charge from September 2017.

Between September 2017 and 2018 15 young people have been successfully travel trained by the Council's Independent Travel Trainer (ITT) and 11 by the procurement of Children North East's 'Bus Buddy Scheme'. Some of those successes have also participated in a DVD and presentations to members highlighting their powerful stories of ITT leading to employment and independent living.

In the academic year 2017/18 – 13 children were eligible for the charge and 16 in the academic year 2018/19. There have been no complaints or appeals in relation to the charge and Looked After Children and households with maximum working tax credit remain exempt from the charge.

It is recommended that continued monitoring is no longer required.

### **2014/15 – Sport and Physical Activity**

As part of the Leisure Service review in February 2017, Cabinet approved a new service structure which would combine the resources from within the Sport, Physical Activity & Health Development Team, and Leisure facilities. The services rebranded into one service as GO Gateshead Sport & Leisure and completed a Service Structure Review, which complimented an earlier service rebrand (Go Gateshead). This rebrand was designed to align the service to become more commercially focused and invest in income generating roles. The review provided specific resource to ensure that an 'Operations' and 'Business & Community Development' functions are adequately resourced.

Following the implementation of the review, the service is now able to provide more commercially focused activity to generate income whilst continuing to grow activity aimed to the Council's Thrive Agenda such as;

- Developing the commercial approach;
  - Improving sales in key products such as;
    - Go Memberships
    - Clip n Climb
    - Go Bears Den
    - Aquatics
  - Improvements in technology such as the website and digital marketing.
  - Increasing Income through events.
  - Investing in employees, to improve in key areas such as customer service, whilst embedding a sales culture.

- Capital Investment in 3G Pitch and Athletics Track at Blaydon and Gateshead International Stadium.
- Development of a community engagement plan which includes;
    - Supporting over 100 voluntary sports clubs operating across Gateshead and many in the most deprived neighbourhoods, many engaging 200 plus members.
    - Targeting activities and initiatives in areas of deprivation,
    - Supporting communities of interest such as looked after children and children with a disability, to increase physical activity levels.
    - Working with local groups including GP's to improve access to physical activity.

It is recommended that continued monitoring is no longer required.

**2016/17 – Adult Social Care Demand Management model**

Managing demand across Adult Social Care, and with individual clients, is a function which is embedded within The Care Act (2014) in terms of reducing and delaying the need for care and support. Any changes to packages of care are managed via an individual assessment or review of need, and should adhere to the requirements of the Care Act in terms of being satisfied that the proposed care meets the individuals' needs. This also enables people the opportunity to appeal should they not agree with the outcome of the assessment. Officers do not feel that this proposal requires any further corporate overview or scrutiny.

**2016/17 - Labriut Centre**

The 'Labriut Healthy Living Centre' is being supported to access funding through the MECC programme to help embed the 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC) approach over the next year. A dedicated MECC lead is working with the Jewish Community to identify how the MECC approach can be best delivered and embedded with the support of key community leads. Initial health needs have been identified by the community in relation to nutrition and physical activity and further work will look at training staff in these areas and adapting resources and information to help deliver key messages. To sustain the approach a 'Train the Trainer' model will be adapted and supported by the MECC team going forward. Throughout the grant process the MECC team will work alongside key community leads and the programme will be evaluated to capture key outcomes of the approach.

The newly commissioned 0-19 service by Public Health (Health Visiting and School Nursing Service) continues to provide support around the Healthy Child Programme. NHS England continues to provide support and monitor vaccination uptake rates within this community. It is recommended that in relation to the monitoring of the equalities impact of the budget decision made in 2016, no further updates are required.

**2016/17 - Reduction in funding for NHS Health Checks**

The NHS Health Checks Programme is a mandatory Public Health function and local authorities have a duty to ensure a NHS Health Check is offered to all eligible residents aged between 40 and 75. NHS Health Checks are currently delivered by 30 GP practices in Gateshead and 15 pharmacies. The national target is for 20% of the eligible population to be invited, and of those invited 50% uptake. In 2017/18 in Gateshead 15,478 (26.4%) eligible people were invited for a NHS Health Check and 10045 (64.9%) people received a NHS Health Check.

For the 2017/18 contract specification, the following information was added for local authorities to tailor the delivery of the programme in a number of ways to achieve the objective of reduced health inequalities. Although local authorities have a duty to offer the NHS Health Check to all eligible people, Public Health England is supportive of approaches prioritising invitations to those with the greatest health risk. For example, by prioritising invitations to people with an estimated ten-year cardio-vascular disease (CVD) risk score greater than 10% or those living in their most deprived areas. Discussions on how best to undertake this prioritisation continue with GP practices through the local NHS Health Check implementation group. It is recommended that continued monitoring is required.

### ***2016/17 – Independent Supported Living Schemes***

The framework for the provision of support at home and in the community for adults with learning disabilities has been in place since 1 April 2017 with a new contract, specification and pricing schedule. There has been no negative impact raised or identified because of the framework, which now has 28 providers and 4 who currently have pending applications to join. As the framework is a dynamic purchasing system, providers can come on to the framework at any time and work will continue to attract new providers. A new specification is also being developed which will be for Mental Health and Complex needs support within the framework. Continued improvements are being made to effectively measure on outcomes that are being delivered. It is recommended that in relation to the monitoring of the equalities impact of this budget decision, no further updates are required.

### ***2016/17 – Early Help Service***

The Early Help service has been remodelled and restructured. This is a targeted service and the introduction of thresholds for early help in line with statutory Children's Services has enabled mitigation against the savings which were attached to the restructure. It is recommended that continued monitoring is no longer required.

### ***2017/18 - LiveWell Programme***

Following the decommissioning of the LiveWell integrated lifestyle service a small amount of money was retained to establish a new approach. Making Every Contact Count (MECC) provides a sustainable approach in Gateshead and supports the opportunistic delivery of consistent healthy lifestyle information and enables individuals to engage in conversations about their health at scale across organisations in Gateshead.

Three MECC Development Leads are now in post with responsibilities for; substance misuse, lifestyle advice (healthy weight, nutrition and physical activity) and public mental health. The MECC team have established links with Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) organisations and have made significant progress in the roll out of the MECC grant funding. The MECC team are working closely with the 20 CVS grant organisations to help them further embed MECC principles within their organisational policies, thereby sustaining the approach into the future.

A comprehensive MECC training programme on health and wellbeing topics has been developed and is available for CVS organisations in Gateshead to access and to further develop their skills. To further increase sustainability there has been a focus on the delivery of a 'Train the Trainer model'. This approach helps to ensure that training and information can continue to be delivered within organisations by identified trainers and that skills and expertise are embedded within organisation and communities in Gateshead. Whilst phase one of the MECC project has focussed on the CVS grant

recipients, the next phase is currently targeting 3 Council Services (Library services, Adult Social Care and Gateshead Housing Company) and further work is being undertaken to identify additional groups and communities who have been identified as a priority but have not yet accessed MECC training and information.

The MECC programme is continuing to be evaluated in the short and medium term against the aims and objectives of the programme. An independent external evaluation of the MECC programme in Gateshead is currently being planned and therefore continued monitored is proposed.

### ***2017/18 & 2018/19 - Review of commissioned arrangements/supporting people voluntary organisations***

A new supported housing model for Young People, aged 16 – 25 was procured in March 2018 and commenced in July 2018. SAILS (Supported and Independent Living Service) is providing a range of services via four organisations. Two Care Leavers were directly involved with the evaluation of tenders as part of the procurement process. One element of the SAILS service includes on-site psychological interventions, provided by clinicians.

Since the initial review of supported housing in 2016, all other supported housing contracts were extended until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Supported housing services for people aged 26 and over will be commissioned in 2019 following final consultation with experts by experience, who will be involved in the drafting of an outcome focussed specification. It is therefore recommended that continued monitoring is required once the new service commences.

### ***2018/19 Recommissioning Learning Disability Care Packages***

As part of the project to review commissioning arrangements for people with learning disabilities, a small Achieving Change Together team has been established under the service manager for Adult Social Care. Specifically designed to fit in with the Council's Thrive agenda of ensuring people reach their full potential, the team assesses high cost packages in depth to ensure the package is appropriate to need and assists in helping users maximise their potential.

This approach enables users and support staff to help build up the skills and confidence to help change their lives and improve their outcomes. This can often lead to less support and the generation of savings. In the six-month period to October 2018 savings have been generated on the back of improved outcomes with several residential care providers seeking to deregister and deliver more independent supported living arrangements instead.

By the end of the financial year 2018-19 it is hoped all the two hundred cases initially identified will have been reviewed. It is recommended that continued monitoring is required.

### ***2018/19 – Review of the Toy Library***

The Council was able to relocate the toy library from Chowdene Children's Centre to Deckham Children's Centre and achieve economies of scale. The work of the toy library has been integrated with the children's centre staff based in Deckham, which has made it possible to extend the opening hours, attract more members and generate a small increase in income. The outreach work has also been able to continue. It is recommended that no further monitoring is required.

### ***2018/19 – Review of Carers Services***

Due to a legal challenge received in relation to the tender for this service, the Council has not been able to formally award the ‘Supporting Carers Together in Gateshead’ contract. As the legal challenge is ongoing, current contracts in Gateshead have been extended to ensure carers continue to be supported. It is recommended that continued monitoring is required.

### ***2018/19 - Community Links***

Following the decision to implement this proposal, the service has sought to integrate the support of volunteers who are “linked” to specific services, into the day to day running of those services. For example, the volunteers who support people at Marquisway Day Centre, are now supported by the staff team at Marquisway. In recognition of the fact that some volunteers do not provide support into a specific service, there was an agreement reached with Your Voice Counts, that for volunteers not linked to a specific service/ resource, they would take on the coordination, support and recruitment of new volunteers going forward. Thus far both approaches are working well and are becoming embedded as mainstream business.

As part of the consultation on this proposal, a significant number of representations were received, both from volunteers and people who were supported by volunteers; all were expressing concerns regarding the proposals. The fact that we have not received any concerns or further representations since the change to the model, provides a degree of assurance that it is working well in its new form. It is therefore requested that ongoing monitoring is no longer required.

### ***2018/19 - Review Domiciliary Care Packages***

This proposal incorporated a range of options in terms of reducing reliance on long term domiciliary care services. As each person requires an individual reassessment with the client, and changes would only be made where it was evidenced that it was possible and safe to do so, there has been a very individualised and personalised approach to implementing this proposal. Additionally, since the proposal was developed, there has been a significant turnover in terms of new clients coming into the adult social care system, and existing clients leaving the system. Going forward officers do not feel it is necessary to continue to monitor this budget saving.

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**TITLE OF REPORT:** Review of Absence in the Council – Monitoring Report – Six Month review

**REPORT OF:** Mike Barker, Strategic Director Corporate Services & Governance

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on actions taken since the last monitoring report which was considered on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

**Background**

1. Members will recall that following a review of the Council’s sickness strategies, systems and procedures in 2005, Cabinet requested that the management of sickness absence continued to be scrutinised, with a view to reducing absence levels within the Council’s workforce.
2. The report presented in June 2018 provided statistical information relating to the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, along with an update on actions taken by the Council and its managers during that period. It also focussed on data relating to absence due to stress and absence by age profile.

**Statistical Information**

3. The average sickness days per FTE for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was 12.75. When monitoring absence, it is preferable to compare the same reference periods e.g. April to March each year, however, as an interim update, the average sickness days per FTE for the period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018 has been calculated at 11.82.
4. Quarterly average sickness days per FTE are compared with the same quarter last year, as detailed below:

Quarter	Average sick days per quarter, per FTE	Quarter	Average sick days per quarter, per FTE
April 2017 to June 2017	3.36	April 2018 to June 2018	2.99
July 2017 to September 2017	3.43	July 2018 to September 2018	2.94

5. There has been no change in the top three causes of sickness absence in the Council. Appendix 1 details the reasons for absence, highlighting that across the Council as whole, stress/depression and mental ill health accounts for just over 30.12% remains the largest cause of sickness absence. Post-op recovery/hospital treatment makes up 18.49%, and other musculo-skeletal conditions account for 14.49% of all sickness.
6. Again, whilst it is preferable to compare the same reference periods, as an interim update, the table below details the **total number of days lost due to sickness per Group, and the average days lost per FTE per Group**, comparing years April 2017 to March 2018, and November 2017 to October 2018.

Group	Total days lost: April 2017 to March 2018	Days per FTE within the Group	Total days lost: October 2017 to September 2018	Days per FTE within the Group
Care, Wellbeing and Learning	20638	16.77	18831	15.26
Communities and Environment <sup>1</sup>	10518	9.26	8037	9.66
Corporate Resources <sup>2</sup>	8248	12.16	10341	10.58
Corporate Services and Governance	1337	9.21	903	6.13
Office of the Chief Executive	372	9.49	125	3.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>41158</b>		<b>38237</b>	

## Actions Since the Last Report

### Corporate Management Team

7. The Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team (CMT) take sickness absence very seriously and regularly monitor absence levels to ensure managers understand that they are responsible, and accountable, for the management of sickness absence in their respective areas.
8. CMT considered a report on sickness absence in September 2018 which focussed on how sickness is managed, with a 'deep-dive' into the actions within the Care, Wellbeing and Learning (CWL) Group. The CMT discussion provides the focus of this report and is detailed below.

### HR Advice and Support

9. The HR service ensures the Council's frameworks for managing sickness are reviewed regularly; the last review being March 2015. As part of the normal policy review process, and to support the Council's drive to manage sickness effectively,

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<sup>1</sup> Whilst the number of reported days sickness has decreased, there has also been a decrease in the number of employees within this Group (transferred to Resources in August 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Whilst the number of reported days sickness has increased, there has also been an increase in the number of employees within this Group (transfer of Trading and Commercialisation from Communities and Environment).

the policy is currently subject to review and will be discussed with our Trade Union partners in the near future. The review will ensure latest ACAS guidance and HR best practice is followed, and that any recent caselaw is incorporated. Unions are supportive of the Council applying the sickness procedures fairly, consistently and robustly.

10. The roll-out of mandatory sickness absence management training also continues. This training emphasises that it is a manager's responsibility to manage sickness absence, taking appropriate action where necessary, and ensuring it is documented and recorded.
11. The HR service also provides comprehensive monthly sickness absence data to management teams to enable effective and timely case management of both short-term and long-term absence. Absence data takes two main forms:
  - A report for each service showing who has been absent over the last 12 months, the duration (days lost) and the reason for absence; and
  - A sickness absence dashboard for Group Management Teams (GMTs) which includes trend graphs and bar charts summarising the average days lost per service and the % breakdown for the different causes of absence.
12. A summary of the intensive HR support provided to services since the last report is detailed in appendix 2
13. Efforts made to reduce sickness have resulted in a downward trend, however, the absence rate across the Council remains high and is currently<sup>3</sup> 11.82 days lost per FTE.

### **CMT Focus on Care Wellbeing and Learning**

14. CMT focussed on the CLW Group as sickness across that Group is high, with some teams within the Group running at more than 30 days per FTE. This is clearly unacceptable and has a negative impact on the continuity of services that can be provided to vulnerable adults, children and their families.
15. In response to this, a review of the management of sickness absence was initiated across the CWL Group. This review included consideration of how individual managers are being held to account for the management within their own teams.
16. **Actions Arising from CWL Review**

#### **(a) Communication**

The Strategic Director informed all CWL employees of her concern regarding absence levels and that addressing this issue was a priority for the Group management team. This message was conveyed via an email from the Strategic Director to every employee in CWL. The email highlighted the concerns over the high absence rates, reminded employees of absence reporting arrangements, and

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<sup>3</sup> For the period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018

confirmed the formal stages in the policy that would be applied consistently by all managers. Service Directors in CWL have also highlighted their concerns through service and team briefings.

**(b) Procedure**

The CWL Group piloted the introduction of an additional 'informal' stage in the sickness management procedure. This relates to short-term absence trigger points which is where an employee has had three or more separate periods of sickness over the preceding 12 months. Rather than waiting to see if a third absence occurs, managers in CWL sent letters after the second absence. This essentially reminds the employee that if they are absent on a third occasion within the reference period they will be invited to a stage 1 'informal action meeting'.

There was a mixed reaction from the workforce to this initiative, with concerns about the impact on otherwise good attendees who may have had two unavoidable absences, possibly related to a serious illness. Trade Unions also expressed concerns about the introduction of the letter in relation to employees with a disability and, in their view, the overall negative impact this letter could have on staff morale. However, since high levels of absenteeism persist, letters continue to be sent although managers engage with employees at the time the letter is issued to fully explain the rationale and to offer support.

**(c) Presentation and analysis of data**

The Strategic Director personally discusses absence management at 1:1 meetings with all Service Directors. In turn, Service Directors discuss sickness absence management at their SMTs. This ongoing review includes the presentation and analysis of absence data and the engagement with all staff regarding concerns about high sickness levels. Directors consider sickness absence as a strategic priority in Appraisal and Development discussions, with some managers agreeing individual performance targets around managing sickness.

Service Directors and managers work closely with their HR Adviser who 'case manage' every individual case to ensure the absence is being managed in accordance with the policy and associated timescales. This focusses on short-term absences where employees have met the triggers, and those long-term absence cases where there is no likelihood of an early return to work.

Sickness dashboards provided by HR are formally reviewed every month at GMT meetings to highlight trends and consider interventions. For example, absences across the Group due to 'stress, depression, anxiety, mental health & fatigue' account for 33.12% of all absences. In an attempt to address this, there has been considerable focus on the management of stress related absences, with work continuing using the action plans developed as an outcome of the recent stress surveys in CWL. The action plans, developed jointly with Unison, are designed to ensure managers identify and as far as reasonably practicable put actions in place to alleviate work related stressors.

The CWL Group also considered re-introducing congratulatory letters for individuals who have had 100% attendance in the previous year. Ultimately, this course of action was not taken forward on the basis that it could become counter-productive, particularly where colleagues have had a 100% attendance record for preceding years but may unfortunately have had one absence. As an alternative to sending individual letters, the Group is looking to recognise 100% attendance at a service or team level.

**(d) Co-ordination of absence management**

Every individual manager is ultimately responsible for managing the performance of their teams, including managing sickness absence. This is one of the fundamental principles of the Council’s philosophy of ‘managers who manage’. In some instances however, the size of the service in terms of the number of employees is so high that the managers need assistance to track sickness absence cases. To do this, Absence Management Co-ordinators (AMCs) have been re-introduced in the CWL Group. AMCs existed previously across the Council but were discontinued when support services were consolidated. The role of the AMC is to work with managers and HR to track absence cases and ensure the policy has been applied. The AMCs also ensure a consistent approach is taken and that return to work interviews take place and are recorded in the HR system, and that formal absence review meetings are held for both short-term and long-term cases. AMCs carry out this work in addition to their existing duties of employees which does however inhibit the time commitment available.

17. The table below compares the sickness data at September 2017 and September 2018 within each CWL service area and whilst absence levels remain high, it does demonstrate that the effort put into managing sickness has been successful.

Care, Wellbeing and Learning Group - Service	Average sickness days per FTE September 2017	Average sickness days per FTE September 2018
<b>Overall - Care Wellbeing &amp; Learning</b>	16.94	15.26
Early Help	12.96	12.43
Social Work - Children & Families	14.79	13.44
Learning & Schools	8.02	8.14
Adult Social Care	22.54	20.27
Health & Social Care Commissioning	17.13	10.26

**What will we do next?**

18. HR Advice will continue to provide dashboards and more detailed data to services and provide advice and support in order that managers can take appropriate action to address sickness absence effectively. The review of the Council’s Sickness Policy and Procedure will be progressed with suggestions for improvements being discussed with Trade Union partners.
19. As part of the North East Better Health at Work Award the task and finish groups established will continue to develop and take forward wellbeing initiatives around the priority areas as identified by employees in the health needs assessment.

20. Strategic Directors and Service Directors will continue to monitor and address absence.

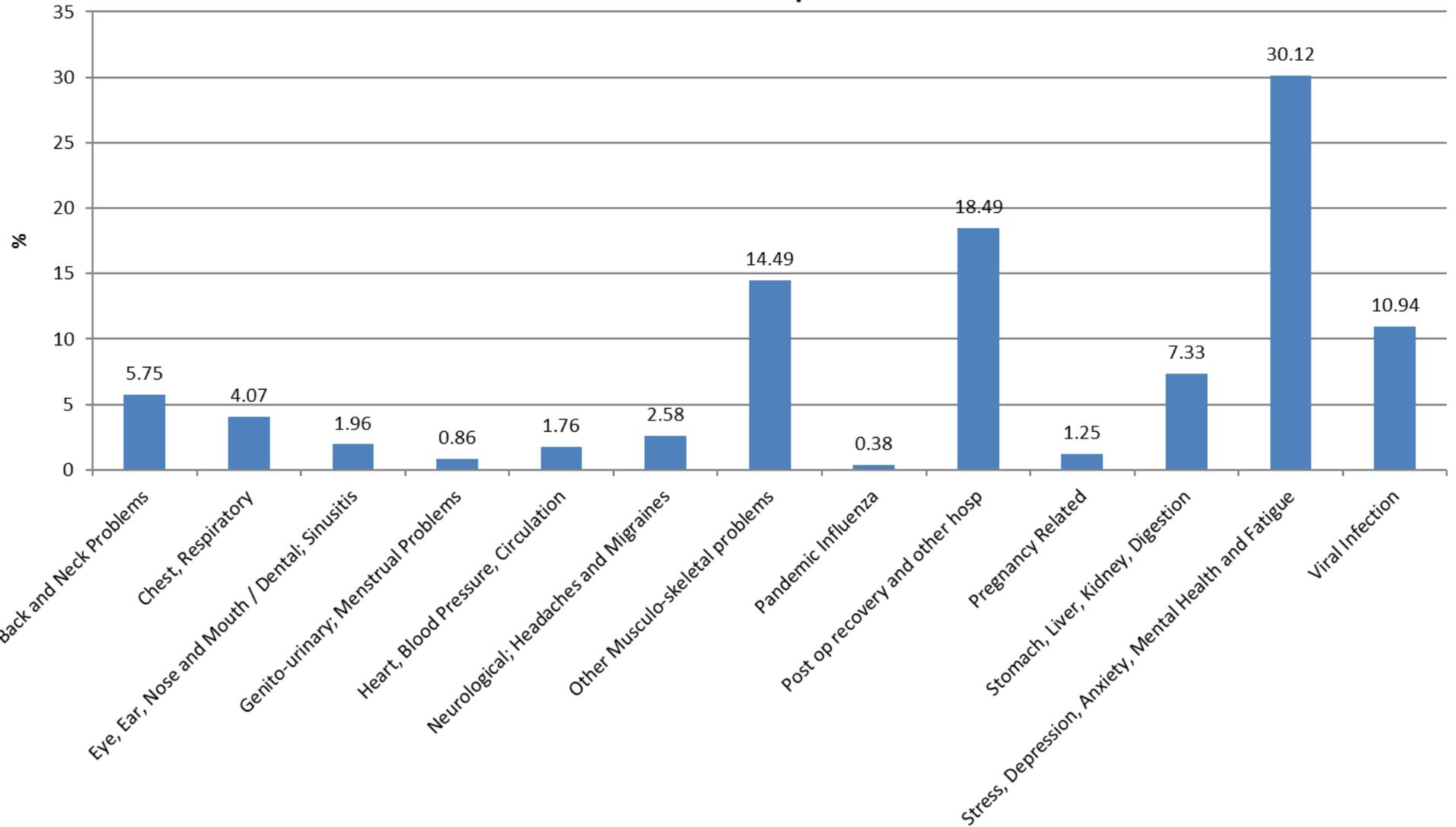
## **Conclusion**

21. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought on:
- a. Whether the Committee is satisfied that this 6-month review report, with a focus on CWL, provides a suitable update on the actions being taken to reduce sickness absence levels.
  - b. Whether the Committee would prefer to receive a full report on sickness absence monitoring on an annual basis, with a 6-monthly review to be included on the overall six-monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery report presented to this Committee. This approach would enable consistent data comparison i.e. across whole financial years.
  - c. Suggestions for improvements to the Council's Sickness Absence Policy to be discussed further with Trade Union partners.

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**Contact:** Janice Barclay - Service Director, HR and Workforce Development.  
**Ext.** 2101

### Causes of Sickness Absence 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2018



## Reducing Sickness Absence - HR Support

<b>Group/Service</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Adult Social Care &amp; Commissioning and QA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email sent from Strategic Director to every employee in CWL. The email highlighted the concerns over the high absence rates, reminded employees of absence reporting arrangements, and confirmed the formal stages in the policy that would be applied consistently by all managers.</li> <li>• Pre-warning letter (after 2 absences) to employees who will hit triggers if absent again.</li> <li>• The selection of 3 absence management co-ordinators.</li> <li>• HR provide monthly spreadsheets to absence management co-ordinators broken down into long term absence or those who have hit short-term absence triggers. HR highlight the actions required to be taken by line managers for each absentee on the spreadsheet and the co-ordinators liaise with line managers to ascertain if actions have been carried out by end of month and report back to HR.</li> <li>• ASC Provider Services management produce a rank order of services by the % of sickness absence in each team/service (ranked lowest to highest % sickness absence).</li> </ul>
<b>Communities and Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers are supported by HR to ensure they follow the sickness policy. This is driven by the provision of monthly dashboard information, and regular monitoring of cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Leisure Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase focus on applying all elements of the sickness absence policy and procedure and monitoring of sickness.</li> <li>• Communication – sickness is a key priority. Management and HR briefed operational management team on current position, target and action plan.</li> <li>• Internal briefing relating to sickness absence to be issued to inform all employees of the current position, the cost and to reinforce the responsibilities of management and employees in managing attendance.</li> <li>• Managers will present monthly business plan snap shots for each facility to all employees and will also be reported at SMT.</li> <li>• HR will continue to present dashboard information at SMT monthly meetings.</li> <li>• Monthly monitoring spreadsheet will be discussed fortnightly with the Service Director, management team and HR to ensure the policy is being followed, trends /causes identified, and proactive work undertaken to manage sickness absence.</li> <li>• Issuing the ‘pre-trigger’ letter has been considered but not actioned at this stage. This will be reviewed in 6 months to determine whether adding this additional stage is necessary.</li> <li>• Business Manager within the service will have responsibility for sickness and coordination.</li> <li>• Further sickness management training to be delivered by HR and OH in December (for those who hadn’t attended the HR management</li> </ul>

	<p>sickness briefing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of stage 1 and stage 2 interviews completed against those required for each service</li> <li>• Any concerns to be fed back to the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Trading and Commercialisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catering and Cleaning</li> <li>• Strategic and Hard FM</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Culture Service</li> </ul>	<p>The Sickness Action Plan above is being implemented across Trading and Commercialisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meetings/communication with managers regarding ongoing cases</li> <li>• Monthly monitoring spreadsheet</li> <li>• HR Dashboard information presented monthly at SMT</li> <li>• Communication reinforcing responsibilities regarding managing sickness absence.</li> <li>• % of stage 1 and stage 2 interviews completed against those required for each service</li> <li>• Any concerns to be fed back to the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Corporate Finance/Customer and Financial Services/ICT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meetings with Service Directors/communication with managers regarding ongoing cases</li> <li>• Monthly monitoring spreadsheet</li> <li>• HR Dashboard information presented monthly</li> <li>• % of stage 1 and stage 2 interviews completed against those required for each service</li> <li>• Any concerns to be fed back to the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Care – Children &amp; Families/Early Help</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR has developed an excel spreadsheet which allows HR and management to keep track of all sickness cases (i.e. long-term sickness, and where an employee has hit the triggers) and HR use this to record the advice given and action taken. This spreadsheet is updated on a monthly basis and any new information is highlighted (for example if an employee has had a further absence and therefore is required to progress to Stage 2).</li> <li>• HR attend SMT on a monthly basis (1-hour slot) and this time is used to discuss each case on the spreadsheet, with actions being considered and tracked.</li> <li>• Managers are expected to send HR a copy of all letters following any meetings, so HR has a record that they have been complete.</li> <li>• The Service follow the sickness absence procedure and manage sickness in accordance with this.</li> <li>• Sickness monitoring is an item on Strategic Director’s monthly 1-1s with Service Directors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Corporate Services and Governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above, sickness information is emailed to Service Managers on monthly basis for action.</li> <li>• Review of the Sickness Management Policy and Procedure on-going.</li> </ul>

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**TITLE OF REPORT:** Annual Work Programme

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

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**Summary**

The report sets out the provisional work programme for Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2018/19.

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1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 16 April 2018 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.

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**Contact:** Angela Frisby

**Extension:** 2138

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Corporate Resources OSC 2018/2019	
25 June 18	<p><b>PART 1 OF AGENDA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution/role/remit (to note)</li> </ul> <p><b>PART 2 OF AGENDA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council Plan – Year End Assessment and Performance Delivery 2017-18</li> <li>• Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce Update</li> <li>• Gateshead Fund Update</li> </ul>
10 July 2018 – additional meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adhoc Policy Issue – Consult OSC on refresh of Corporate Asset Strategy</b></li> </ul>
10 Sept 18	Cancelled
15 Oct 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Plan Progress Update / Review of Workforce Strategy</li> <li>• OSC Review – Scoping Report - Helping to increase support / capacity of Voluntary Sector - explore how organisations link with each other and specific services within council</li> <li>• Implementation of Gateshead Volunteers Plan – Annual Report</li> <li>• Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update</li> <li>• OSC Work Programme</li> </ul>
3 Dec 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSC Review – Evidence Gathering - Helping to increase support / capacity of Voluntary Sector - explore how organisations link with each other and specific services within council</li> <li>• The Council Plan – Six Monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2018-19</li> <li>• <b>Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework - Progress Update</b></li> <li>• Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce Update</li> <li>• Corporate Asset Management – Delivery and Performance Report</li> <li>• OSC Work Programme</li> </ul>
21 Jan 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSC Review – Evidence Gathering - Helping to increase support / capacity of Voluntary Sector - explore how organisations link with each other and specific services within council</li> <li>• <b>Brexit - ?</b></li> <li>• Annual Health and Safety Performance Report</li> <li>• Corporate Complaints Procedure - Annual Report 2017-18</li> <li>• OSC Work Programme</li> </ul>
4 March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OSC Review –Evidence Gathering</b> - Helping to increase support / capacity of Voluntary Sector - explore how organisations link with each other and specific services within council</li> <li>• Information Governance Report</li> <li>• <b>Tackling Social Exclusion</b></li> <li>• Welfare Reform – Progress Update</li> <li>• OSC Work Programme</li> </ul>
1 April 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OSC Review – Interim Report - Helping to increase support / capacity of Voluntary Sector</b> - explore how organisations link with each other and specific services within council</li> <li>• Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework - Progress Update</li> <li>• Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2017</li> <li>• Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update</li> <li>• OSC Work Programme Review</li> </ul>

Issues to Slot in

- PSP Performance Monitoring
- Gateshead Communities Together Annual Update