

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 17 June 2019 at 10.00 am in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies
2	Constitution (Pages 3 - 4) Report of the Chief Executive
3	Minutes (Pages 5 - 10) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2019
4	Role and Remit (Pages 11 - 12) Report of the Chief Executive and Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance.
5	Annual Report - Freedom of Information Act Procedure 2019 (Pages 13 - 16) Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance.
6	Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives - Year End Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2018/19 (Pages 17 - 42) Report of the Chief Executive, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources and Strategic Director Corporate Services and Governance
7	Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce - Annual Update (Pages 43 - 56) Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
8	Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector - Interim Report (Findings) (Pages 57 - 64) Report of the Acting Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
9	Annual Work Programme (Pages 65 - 68) Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director Corporate Services and Governance

Contact: Sonia Stewart - Tel: 0191433 3045 - Email: soniastewart@gateshead.gov.uk, Tel: (0191) 433 3045, Date: Friday, 7 June 2019



TITLE OF REPORT: Constitution

REPORT OF: Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

Purpose

To note that the constitution of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair as approved by Council for the 2019/20 municipal year is as follows:-

Chair	Councillor J Eagle
Vice Chairs	Councillor S Ronchetti Councillor J Wallace
Councillors	R Beadle D Bradford L Caffrey D Duggan P Foy T Graham S Green M Hall J Kielty R Mullen B Oliphant C Ord J Simpson N Weatherley K Wood

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the report.

CONTACT: Sonia Stewart

Extension 3045

This page is intentionally left blank

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 1 April 2019

PRESENT: Councillor John Eagle (Chair)

Councillor(s): J Wallace, R Beadle, D Bradford, L Caffrey, M Charlton, D Duggan, P Foy, T Graham, J Green, S Green, M Hall, M Henry, J Kielty, B Oliphant, N Weatherley and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): W Dick

CR24 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2019 be approved as a correct record.

CR25 IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN GATESHEAD

The Committee received a report and presentation with regards to the implementation of Universal Credit in Gateshead.

The Committee were advised that Universal Credit has been implemented in 2 phases in Gateshead. In 2015 the "Live" service was introduced for single, non-householder, no children, new job seeker allowance claimants. The rollout of "Full" service in October 2017 was for new claims and change of circumstances. All Universal Credit claims are made via an online application resulting in a single household payment paid monthly in arrears.

The support the implementation of Universal Credit, the Council agreed a Delivery Partnership Agreement with DWP up to 31 March 2019 to provide Universal Support, which mainly included assisted digital support and personal budgeting support. With effect from 1 April 2019, Citizens Advice has become responsible and is funded by DWP for "Help to Claim" support. This is only to assist claimants with their on line claim to the first payment stage. Citizens Advice has not been funded for Personal budgeting support.

The Committee heard from Dr Mandy Cheetham with regards to the research she had undertaken in partnership with Newcastle University. The research used qualitative methods and the team undertook interviews with Universal Credit claimants living in Gateshead (22), Newcastle (10) and South Tyneside (1). Interviews also took place with staff working in Gateshead in Housing (4), the Local Authority (11) and VCS Orgs (22).

The Aims of Universal Credit were to simplify the benefits system, make work pay,

reduce fraud and error and encourage people into work.

Some of the issues identified by claimants are as follows:

- Online claims process
- 5 week assessment period difficult to manage/delays
- Advance payments
- Incorrect awards
- Monthly payments
- Deductions (leaving people in hardship and destitution)
- Resolving issues difficult (passing people from pillar to post)
- Appeals process overlong
- Increased debt / borrowing (reliance on friends and family)
- Impact on claimant's physical / mental / social / financial health / housing security / employment prospects

Some of the comments from staff include:

- If you wanted to devise a system that discriminated against people with learning disabilities, this would be it ... it absolutely particularly discriminates against people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities
- If you're not au fait with a computer, it can be really a bit daunting
- The impact has been horrendous

Its hitting people that can least afford it the hardest with an increased risk of rent arrears, risk of eviction, effects of sanctions, increased hardship / debt/fuel and food insecurity, embarrassment and shame, cumulative impact of welfare reform, deteriorating mental and physical health, anxiety, stress and stigma, relationships with family and friends, social isolation, increased demands on wider LAVCS services, staff burnout.

A comment which came through the research with regards to the pressure on the NHS, for example a sanction saves DWP £1000, is there potential to cost the NHS £10,000 as the sanction leads to a hospital admission.

Staff feel like there is no compassion, no mercy, nothing, staff also feel like they are punishing people and it is as if you are benefits you don't deserve a quality of life. It also seems that people telling staff that they want to kill themselves will have an impact on the staff's mental health and wellbeing.

Recommendations within the report were highlighted as follows:

- Halt Universal Credit roll out
- Monitor and review effects before managed migration
- Update equality impact assessment
- Implement recommendations from VCS/UN
- Monitor wider costs / impact on public spending
- Develop and integrated poverty reduction strategy

- Challenge stigma and discrimination
- Build local partnerships
- Support the VCS
- Lobby for change / adequate resources
- Use learning

It was queried if the research show that where Universal Credit has been rolled out that there is an increase in the use of foodbanks. It was noted that there has been an increase in the use of foodbanks in Gateshead.

It was noted that it had been calculated that a person applying for Universal Credit would need £1000 in savings to get through the minimum of 5 weeks it takes to have their application considered, it was noted that most people would not have £1000 of savings.

It was queried about how open staff were when it came to talking about the impact on their own mental health and whether we are seeing staff suffering. It was noted that staff did talk about how difficult it was for them seeing the suffering Universal Credit was causing is emotional. It was also noted that staff working part time with young children may also be impacted upon.

RESOLVED – That the information contained within the report and presentation be noted.

CR26 REVIEW ON HELPING TO INCREASE SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR - EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION 4

The Committee were reminded of the sessions which had taken place so far, session 1 provided the Committee with a summary of the Gateshead VCS infrastructure and the Council support still available to the sector. The Committee also heard from Dr Jo Price, Chair of Trustees at the Comfrey Project who offered an insight into the work of her charity in Gateshead and how working with the Council is making a difference to the lives of Gateshead's refugees and asylum seekers.

The second evidence gathering session included presentations from Brighten Ryton and Dunston Activity Centre, highlighting the excellent work that both organisations undertake in their respective localities and the Committee discussed how the organisations could work better with the Council and other partners.

In the third session the Committee heard from three key local funders, Community Foundation, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, The Ballinger Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Today's Committee would hear from Basis@Gateshead.

David Smith, Chief Executive Officer and Phil Conn, Head of Crisis Services presented to the Committee on the current position. Oasis Community Housing is a housing and homeless charity with a Christian ethos and was set up in Gateshead in

1984. The real focus of the charity is about the cause and consequence of homelessness, the work includes supported accommodation, crisis services, employability and domestic abuse support.

Basis is a broad and integrated, direct access offer for anyone in crisis in Gateshead. There is a commitment to replicate the model across the region and have a similar service in Sunderland. The most developed service though is Basis@Gateshead which has been running for 8 years. Basis is a direct access offer therefore anyone who arrives can receive a range of support which is focussed around them, including:

- Tea, toast
- Shower and laundry
- Benefits advice and advocacy, key workers
- Help to rent scheme
- Emergency accommodation, Housing First – Basis Beds
- Employability support and IT suite
- Domestic abuse support groups
- Clinical space opening in the next month
- Links to other services

Over the 8 years the service has been running a lot of lessons have been learnt, a psychologically informed environment has been created, a place where people feel welcome, a captive audience with brief window of opportunity to provide services to someone who may not just have one issue.

The model which has been created is innovative and offers a single service approach. A multi-disciplinary team is in place and whatever issues a person presents with they get the same offer, it is important that people are not being buffered about between different services and a consistent approach is also offered.

Current partners include Housing Options, GP Federation, Mental Health Services, Drug and Alcohol services and other third sector organisations. The service has buy in from Commissions, the Police, Job Centre Plus and it is hoped that this model can be replicated across the North East.

Basis is a great example of how the VCS can collaborate and integrate with public services to reach the most vulnerable in our communities in a more efficient and effective way. The organisation strongly believes that the project supports the Thrive agenda. Many of the individuals supported through the service hub will have multiple and complex needs such as poor physical health, mental illness, drug and alcohol addictions and will have spent time in the care system, prison system or both. Trust has been built within the homeless community over the years and Basis@Gateshead is now considered their safe space. Plans are to continue to work with cross sector partners to bring a range of services together under one roof for this community.

The service already has experience of working with other agencies such as the Gateshead Housing Company, Gateshead College, local churches and schools,

charities such as changing lives, North East Counselling Service and others.

The service has succeeded in getting grant from Gateshead Innovation Fund to co-ordinate all of the work and pull everything together.

It is important that the voluntary sector and the Council find new innovative ways to work together to solve problems. It is important to continue magnetising good will to attract partners, businesses, churches and community groups, all who want to support those struggling in the Borough.

RESOLVED - That the information presented be noted.

CR27

CONTRACT MONITORING: INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN GATESHEAD

The Committee received a presentation from Giovanni Spatuzzi, Manager of the Gateshead Infrastructure Team for the contract awarded to Newcastle CVS for support to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.

Giovanni advised that the team are now in place for Gateshead, Mark Shilcock is the Our Gateshead Officer and Emma Warden and Barbara Hind are the Infrastructure Officers. Emma will be looking after the Central, East and South areas and Barbara will look after the West and Inner West.

The roles of the team are generic rather than specific and they will help out community and voluntary sector groups with a range of issues. They are a strong team and have a strong knowledge of the voluntary and community sector.

Between August 2018 and January 2019 the following events and activities have taken place:

- 9 networking events have been delivered
- 53 individual organisations supported
- 5 training sessions have been delivered
- 7 organisations supported to submit £789,000 of funding applications, with £690,000 of funding secured
- 1095 groups are listed on the Our Gateshead website with 65,000 visits to the site recorded.

A clear service offer has been developed and recently Chopwell Community Association has been assisted with its governance arrangements and supported Gateshead Access Panel to dissolve and close.

The team have supported Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Company in their recent move to Pelaw, and have also supported Leam Lane Community Association and Birtley Community Partnership.

The training sessions included sessions around fundraising for beginners and GDPR.

At the NAVCA Awards, Newcastle CVS won the leadership award and embracing digital for the Our Gateshead website. Newcastle CVS were also nominated in the Collaboration and Partnership Working and Campaigning and Advocacy Categories.

The service are currently going through a rebranding process and will advise of the new name in due course.

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

CR28 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT

RESOLVED - That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

CR29 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW AND FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received a report highlighting the work of the Committee during 2018-19. The report presented the Committee with a draft work programme for 2019-20. It was noted that changes can be made to the work programme if required during the course of the year. It was noted that it may be necessary that updates with regards to Brexit may need to be moved depending on the position at the time of the scheduled meeting.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) that the information contained within the annual review be noted.
 - (ii) that the provisional work programme for 2019-20 be endorsed by this Committee and referred to Council on 23 May 2019.
 - (iii) that it be noted, further reports will be brought to the Committee to identify additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Chair.....

TITLE OF REPORT: Role and Remit

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

Summary

The report sets out the remit and terms of reference of the Committee as previously agreed by the Cabinet and the Council.

Background

1. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution sets out the aims and objectives of the scrutiny function in Gateshead Council. In particular it should be an integral part of the Council's framework and a constructive process which works alongside other parts of the Council's structure, contributing towards policy development. Importantly it will enhance rather than duplicate activity and it will look to broader issues affecting local people rather than just internal Council issues.

Remit/ Terms of Reference

2. Within the above principles, all Overview and Scrutiny Committees will
 - Review decisions, holding decision makers to account
 - Call - in executive decisions in accordance with the procedure set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee rules
 - Contribute to the policy making process through:-
 - Policy reviews agreed as part of the service planning cycle
 - Advice given to the Cabinet as part of the Council's performance management system
 - Scrutinising and developing the Council's Improvement Programme
 - Examining Issues in the Schedule of Decisions
 - Ensure other agencies, public and private, play their part in achieving a better quality of life for Gateshead residents.
3. This Committee has specific responsibility for performing the overview and scrutiny role in relation to:-
 - Management of resources
 - Supporting democracy and involving local people
 - Social Inclusion

- Equalities and diversity
- Efficiency, VFM and procurement
- Community capacity building, volunteering and resilience

Recommendation

4. The Committee is asked to note its remit and terms of reference.

Contact: Angela Frisby

Ext: 2138

1 April 2019

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Report – Freedom of Information Act
Procedure 2019

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

Summary

This report details the number of requests for information received by the Council under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018. The report provides a background to the Act highlights the number of requests received and provides information resulting from analyses of the requests.

Background

1. This is the 13th annual report relating to requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and covers the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018. The request handling procedure was developed in response to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which placed legal obligations on public authorities to deal with written requests for information held by them, in recorded form at the time a request is made.

Procedure

2. The procedure has three steps, the first of which is ‘providing the information’ requested within the statutory timescale of 20 working days. There is an electronic tracking system in which to log requests. This tracking system provides a full audit trail of how the request has been handled and provides template response letters, which fulfil the statutory requirements of the Act.
3. The first stage relies on quickly providing the information requested, subject to the application of any exemption and payment of any necessary fee. The second stage requires the Council to have an internal review process so that, if a requester is dissatisfied, they have an avenue of complaint, which is separate from the corporate complaints process. The review stage involves the requester writing to the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance within 40 days of receiving a response, to request an independent review of the matter.
4. The third stage gives the requester a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner if he/she is still dissatisfied, following the internal review.
5. Over the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018 the number of requests received was 1332, which represents a 17.63% decrease on requests received in the previous year and a 549.76% increase since the implementation of the Act in 2005.

6. Of the requests received 90.54% were dealt with within the 20-day timescale. This represents an increase of 0.06% in performance on the 2017 figure of 90.48% but is still high among other councils. Sunderland 98%, Newcastle 84.10 % and Redcar and Cleveland 85.82%, with only Sunderland performing better.
7. Five were subject to internal review. The original decision maker's decision was upheld in all cases.
8. Five requesters have exercised the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner upheld our decision to treat one applicant as vexatious. The applicant has now appealed to the First Tier Tribunal. The other four relate to treating the requester as vexatious. We are awaiting a decision from the Information Commissioner
9. The table below details how many requests have been received by Gateshead Council and its neighbouring authorities in 2017/18: -

Local Authority	2016/ 17	2017/18
Gateshead	1617	1332
Redcar & Cleveland	1092	1157
North Tyneside	1255	
Northumberland	1309	
South Tyneside	1234	1383
Sunderland		1571

10. Most requests come in by email now, 1328 by email 4 by letter.
11. Requests for information vary considerably and are difficult to categorise. We receive a lot about Brexit preparedness, lots from campaigners, some asking for policies and information about how decisions have been made. Many requests are becoming increasingly more complex with requesters asking for a lot of cross cutting information as part of a single request.
12. Requests have varied. A lot of requests have sought information about council contracts, policies about car parking, staff sickness levels, what contingencies we have in case of no deal Brexit.
13. In 2018 requests appeared to be mainly from the press, particularly from junior reporters. However, it is not always possible to identify the source of a request as the requester need only give a name and return address.
14. Because of reducing resources and in an effort to continue to improve the timeliness of responses and minimise the impact of any increase in requests the following measures have been taken: -
 - (a) Services are now proactively publishing more information online, as information published online is exempt from disclosure under the Act as it is 'information easily accessible by other means', all staff have to do is send the requester a link to where they can obtain the information. An example of where this has diminished the number of FOI requests is in finance where

they now publish data about outstanding business rates on a monthly basis, we also publish information about public health funerals.

- (b) Published data as required by the 'Transparency Agenda'.

- (c) Trained more information champions in November 2018 to replace staff who have left, another session is booked in in April 2019.

Recommendation

The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report and assure themselves that FOI is operating effectively.

CONTACT: Tanya Rossington

extension: 2192

This page is intentionally left blank

TITLE OF REPORT: Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives – year end 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

SUMMARY

This report provides the year end assessment of performance and delivery for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 in relation to the Council's Thrive agenda.

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 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. Committee were advised at the meeting in December 2018, that a review of the strategic indicators has been undertaken to ensure their appropriateness in measuring performance relating to the Thrive agenda.

Delivery and Performance

4. This report has been aligned to the Council's Pledges and provides an overview of performance and achievements for the last six months of 2018/19 and identifies key actions that are expected to be taken forward during April to September 2019.
5. Section B provides an update on actions from the previous performance report.
6. A total of 15 strategic indicators are monitored by this Committee with performance shown in Section C.
7. Appendix 1 provides Committee with a summary of the current position relating to the implementation of budget proposals that required monitoring due to the potential disproportionate impact in terms of equalities.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Corporate Resources OSC consider:

- (i) whether the activities undertaken during October 2018 to March 2019 are supporting the delivery of the Thrive agenda;
- (ii) any areas they feel they require more detail on or require further scrutiny;
- (iii) no longer monitoring four out of six budget proposals for equality impact, having been satisfied there has been no disproportionate impact following implementation (identified in Appendix 1); and
- (iv) note that Cabinet will consider a composite performance report at their meeting on 16 July 2019.

Contact: Marisa Jobling

Ext: 2099

Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives – Year-end Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2018/19

17 June 2019

Portfolio:	Leader
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Martin Gannon
OSC Chair:	Councillor John Eagle
Lead Officers:	Andrea Tickner, Service Director, Corporate Commissioning and Procurement Marisa Jobling, Service Director, Policy, Performance & Communications John Jopling, Service Director, Customer and Financial Services

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report relates to how well the Council is achieving against the strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives and the Council Pledges:

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

1.2 Progress and achievements of strategic indicators, in line with the committee's remit, are provided along with areas of future focus.

1.3 Tables highlighting an update to the six-month performance and the performance of the strategic indicators are provided in section's B and C.

1.4 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the current position relating to the implementation of budget proposals that have previously been highlighted as potentially having a disproportionate impact in relation to equalities.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The committee is asked to consider:

- (i) whether the activities undertaken during October 2018 to March 2019 are supporting delivery of the Thrive agenda;
- (ii) any areas they feel they require more detail on or require further scrutiny;
- (iii) no longer monitoring four out of six budget proposals for equality impact having been satisfied there has been no disproportionate impact following implementation (identified in Appendix 1); and
- (iv) note that Cabinet will consider a composite performance report at their meeting on 16 July 2019.

Section A

3.0 Performance Overview

3.1 The committee receives performance data relating to 15 strategic indicators. Of these, 7 are new indicators to capture performance due to transactional digital improvements, and trading and commercialisation activities. Of the 15 indicators, 10 are reportable at year end with 8 indicators showing improved performance and 2 underperforming. There are 5 indicators that will be establishing a baseline during 2019/20.

4.0 Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do

Performance

4.1 We have identified two strategic indicators linked to the Council pledge of putting people and families at the heart of everything we do:

- Performance relating to the speed of processing housing benefit claims has shown further improvement at 6.2 days, compared to the previous year's performance of 7.5 days. This has primarily been due to the volume of new claims reducing following the full service roll out of Universal Credit and improvements in the use of IT.
- To support the Council's role as corporate parents to children and young people who are looked after, the Council has a strategic indicator to achieve a year on year increase in the number of young people leaving care who are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship. The year-end figure for 2018/19 has reduced from 4 apprenticeships to 2.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

Achievements, Challenges and Actions

4.2 Research commissioned by Gateshead Council to understand the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) in Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne was published in November 2018. The study concluded claimants found the experience overwhelmingly negative. Amongst vulnerable people claiming, research discovered high levels of anxiety and depression, as well as physical problems and social isolation exacerbated by hunger and destitution, undermining efforts to prevent ill-health in two of the UK's most deprived areas.

4.3 To support and manage better the implementation of UC, the Council agreed a Delivery Partnership Agreement with DWP up to 31 March 2019, to provide Universal Support, which mainly included assisted digital support and personal budgeting support. As part of this agreement the Council together with Gateshead Housing Company provided a range of services offering support and advice to claimants.

4.4 The migration of existing Housing Benefit claimants to Universal Credit is now scheduled to be completed by June 2024. To provide support with this, from April 2019, Citizens Advice has become responsible and is funded by DWP for "Help to Claim" support, which is to assist applicants with their online claim to the first payment

stage. Both the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company continue to work with Citizens Advice Gateshead to optimise the use of resources to provide the necessary support to claimants.

- 4.5 There is the intention to recruit a further 2 LAC apprentices to be based in the Office of the Chief Executive and Care, Wellbeing and Learning directorates. Additionally, the process of recruiting an Apprenticeship Co-ordinator is underway and part of their role will be to explore apprenticeships for LAC and care leavers.

5.0 Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance

Performance

- 5.1 This committee does not monitor strategic indicators relating to this Council pledge.

Achievements, Challenges and Actions

- 5.2 The purpose of gender pay reporting is to show the difference between the average earnings of men and women. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, we have a legal duty to report on gender pay. The regulations require us to publish key information based on an agreed methodology.
- 5.3 The mean hourly rate of pay for all male full-pay relevant employees is £13.94. The mean hourly rate of pay for all female full-pay relevant employees is £12.59. The mean gender pay gap equates to 9.68% which is an increase from 8.47% in 2017. The median hourly rate of pay for all male full-pay relevant employees is £12.52. The median hourly rate of pay for all female full-pay relevant employees is £11.01. The median gender pay gap therefore equates to 12.06% which is an increase from 11.53% on 2017.

	Number of males	% of males	Number of females	% of females
Lower quartile	182	18.4	805	81.6
Lower middle quartile	379	38.4	609	61.6
Upper middle quartile	345	34.9	643	65.1
Upper quartile	443	44.9	544	55.1

For the purposes of this data (as specified in the regulations) a pay period of one month equates to 30.44 days. The calculations are based on 'full-pay relevant employees'.

- 5.4 Future action to address the gender pay gap includes a focus on learning and development at all levels within the organisation. The implementation of a revised Appraisal & Development (A&D) scheme and a new toolkit for maximising employee potential have been designed to enable every employee to have the opportunity to maximise their potential and progress within the organisation. Although recent financial challenges have impacted on recruitment and promotion opportunities, discussions about career aspirations are providing scope to develop employees for potential future roles that support succession planning and retains talent within the organisation.

- 5.5 Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Diversity Forum has met once in the last six months, out of a possible three occasions. The forum received a presentation by the Regional Counter Terrorism Security Advisor and information was shared on the Council's preparedness for when the UK withdraws from the European Union.
- 5.6 During 2018/19, the Council provided a wide range of equality and diversity training for employees and partner organisations. Courses ranged from Hate/Mate Crime to Honour Based Violence to training on cultural awareness. During 2018/19, 211 council employees attended one or more of these courses.
- 5.7 Appendix 1 summarises the assessments provided by services of the equality impact of budget proposals following implementation. Four of the six proposals currently monitored by this committee are being recommended by services that they no longer require monitoring, and are identified below:
- Sport and Physical Activity
 - Recommissioning Learning Disability Care Packages
 - Reduction in funding for NHS Health Checks
 - LiveWell Gateshead Programme
- 5.8 This means two of the proposals will still need to be monitored along with new budget proposals agreed for the 2019/20 Budget. The Committee will receive an update on the proposals agreed in the Budget for 2019/20 at six-month report stage in December 2019.

6.0 Support our communities to support themselves and each other

Performance

- 6.1 New strategic indicators relating to the Council's Digital Programme and the Council pledge to support our communities to support themselves and each other, can be reported as follows:
- Percentage increases in online transactions have improved on the previous year. Online payments saw an increase of 18.7% in income and the amount of garden waste subscriptions paid for online increased by 3.86%.
 - 2018/19 will be a baseline year for three indicators relating to fly tip reports, registrars' appointments and adult social care forms.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

Achievements, Challenges and Actions

- 6.2 There are three workstreams which define the Digital Programme. These workstreams are:
- **Digital Customer** - making it easy for customers to report, book, pay, be paid, attend and to get a decision online.
 - **Digital Ways of Working** - making it easy for employees and Councillors to work mobile, collaboratively, to simplify our policies and processes, to merge and optimise frontline mobile processes, to develop key systems and make them easy to use, to support employees to use digital solutions and work together to solve problems creatively.

- **Digital Skills** - We aim to engage, enthuse, empower and enable residents, employees and councillors to make best use of, and benefit from, technology and digitally supported services.
- 6.3 We aim to increase the number of online transactions so that those residents who can, are able use online solutions to serve themselves. In doing so, this releases capacity for employees to provide services to residents who require more support or to those who need to access services in a different way.
- 6.4 As part of the ongoing work with the Council's digital inclusion project, officers are engaging with a range of residents and carry out activities to priority groups who are least likely to have competent ICT skills. The Library Digital Team will work to improve digital skills amongst Gateshead residents to enable them to benefit from positive outcomes including financial savings, reduced isolation, better employment prospects and improved health and well-being. The Council's digital engagement programme also enables residents to access new technologies and build new skills including coding. Activities like these are aimed primarily at children and families.
- 6.5 We are supporting our employees to work in an agile way using technology. We aim to optimise frontline services enabling employees to carry out their day to day role regardless of location. In doing so, this allows employees to have the relevant tools to provide services to residents from any location.
- 6.6 We are supporting our employees to work in a collaborative way using technology. We aim to optimise collaboration working with our partners, in doing so, enables employees and partners to work together digitally to support residents.
- 6.7 The www.gateshead.gov.uk website received 4,186,349 views over the past 6 months of which 49% were viewed on a smartphone, 13% on a tablet and 28% on a computer.
- 6.8 Demographics - 24.5% of the website's audience are aged between 25-34 with 11.2% of the audience aged over 65. Statistics show that 53.1% of the people accessing the Council's website are female.
- 6.9 In 2018-19, the Council received £18.48m in income from online payments which is a 18.7% increase from the previous year. This figure is expected to rise as work continues to increase the number of payments that can be made via our websites at a rate of 5-10% per annum. In the past 6 months we have introduced online payments for car park permits, fixed penalty charge notices and leisure centre bookings.
- 6.10 In continuation of support in the delivery of the digital strategy we will look to deliver the following new digital services within the next 6 months;
- A consolidated online system for both Corporate Complaints and Members enquiries
 - New website for Business Gateshead to be delivered by June.
 - Online forms to support Landlord licensing by July.
 - Pest control booking and payments
 - A new Gateshead Housing Company website
 - Continue to increase the number of online payments

- A location-based reporting tool that builds on the success of the report fly tipping service- work has already started on the project but will be ongoing throughout the year.
- Improved digital services for Waste and Recycling - work has already started on the project but will be ongoing throughout the year.
- Launch a new self-service room booking system.
- Implement intranet authentication for employees so they only sign in once to use intranet services.
- Progress the next stages of ASC Front Door programme.
- M365 Collaborative Working - Continue the migration programme and launch MS Teams and SharePoint Online tools council wide
- Continue to provide support to the adoption of Microsoft 365 products
- Continue to support our employees to be able to work remotely;
- Continue to deliver ongoing projects in this workstream.
- Implement MS365 bring your own device project
- Implement Contact centre Home working project
- Discovery piece of work on MS365 unified communications to include telephony
- Continue to support the review of individual services to transform how they can be delivered digitally to provide savings and efficiencies, income generation and contribute to an improved customer experience.
- Continue to invest in our employees by accessing training and improving upon their skillset.
- Continue to work with our residents to build their digital skills so digital services are accessible to them.

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

Performance

- 7.1 There are 6 strategic indicators identified for this Committee to monitor in support of the Council pledge of investing in our economy:
- Performance relating to council tax collection is slightly down at 95.7% compared to the previous year of 95.9%.
 - For 2018/19 the indicator relating to business rates collection achieved 98%, which is 1% above the 2020 target, however this is slightly down on the previous year's performance which ended at 98.6%.
 - There has been significant improvement in the Council's performance regarding the percentage of undisputed invoices paid on time, up from 78.9% in 2017/18 to 87.7%.
 - The direction of travel continues to be positive in improving Superfast Broadband connectivity, which now stands at 97.5% (up more than 1% from the previous year).
 - Two new strategic indicators relating to Trading, will establish a baseline year in respect of:
 - The amount of traded income achieved
 - £ increase in new Services to Schools business generated.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

Achievements, Challenges and Actions

- 7.2 Committee will be aware that due to the Council's own budgetary pressures the Council Tax payable by householders has been increasing over recent years. This has led to some residents finding it more challenging to pay their council tax as well as other household bills.
- 7.3 Performance around Council Tax collection has also been impacted on by the rollout of Universal Credit (UC), which has resulted in UC claimants not fully maximising support while delays in payments to UC claimants from DWP has reduced disposable income to claimants and affected collection rates. Within the borough there are just under 10,000 households claiming UC. Some of those households are experiencing periods of time when they have little or no income due to the way that UC is assessed and paid.
- 7.5 Promotion of help and advice to residents is offered via council correspondence. Some residents are also unaware of the need to claim Council Tax Support in addition to UC. This is an ongoing area of work to maximise the take-up of Council Tax Support.
- 7.6 To support and assist our customers to pay their Council Tax, employees are encouraged to work with customers, always show empathy and understanding and arrange payment schedules with residents that are affordable. Although challenges remain, customer satisfaction is high with continued receipt of positive feedback from residents who have received and appreciated how we have been able to support them. In the future, the use of new technology will help improve our performance and service to our residents with the introduction of online forms and SMS texting will improve how we communicate with residents.
- 7.7 The progress made with superfast broadband connectivity is welcome and it is it now intended to amend the reporting of the measure with an intention to increase annually rather than set a specific target beyond 2020.
- 7.8 Committee received the corporate asset management annual delivery and performance report in December 2018. This report provides an update on the progress made against the Council's Corporate Asset Strategy & Management Plan and the year on year performance of the property portfolio.
- 7.9 The Council's Tenanted Non-Residential Portfolio (TNRP) transferred to PSP LLP, the limited liability partnership jointly owned by the Council and Public Sector plc. Three property staff have been seconded to the partnership and are based within the Civic Centre. The official start date was 1st April 2019, albeit the agreement was reached prior to this.
- 7.10 Around £2.4m of capital receipts has been secured from the disposal of surplus assets with £2.75M of net revenue income received from the TNRP (unaudited figure). The Council continues to invest in the stock, to address disrepair and improve energy efficiency measures.
- 7.11 Websites were established for the disposal of Gateshead Quays, Baltic Quarter & the Rigs, speculative office block and several properties were acquired to support service aims and provision and housing growth including:
- Longside House, Blaydon;

- Kent & Langford House;
- Autotrader House; and
- Derwent St, Chopwell & Teams Medical Centre.

- 7.12 The major works to the Civic Centre, as part of the Workspace Strategy, is currently focused on the remaining areas on the ground floor and the public spaces and reception areas. The work in the Registrars area and facilities available for wedding ceremonies has recently been upgraded. Cemeteries and Crematories, IT Business Support and Occupational Health and Health and Safety are currently being upgraded with completion date targeted within the next six-months.
- 7.13 The ongoing review has highlighted the opportunity for the Council to develop the Civic Centre as a public sector hub, whereby vacant office accommodation can be offered to other public sector/partner organisations. This 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 and cross-organisational working.
- 7.14 Lettings to external partner organisations in the Civic Centre have continued funded, in part, from monies from the One Public Estate (OPE). This has generated income for the Council and contributed to increasing synergies between partners and internal council services. New tenants include North East Combined Authority, Unison, Northumbria Police and Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust who are delivering the Growing Healthy Gateshead 0-19 service.
- 7.15 Additionally, work has continued with the Community Asset Transfer programme and Assets of Community Value. To date, approximately 22 former community centres have been transferred to charitable incorporated organisations or sports clubs.

8.0 Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead -

Performance

- 8.1 There are two strategic indicators identified that support the Council pledge to work together, as follows:
- As reported at the six-month stage, the 2018 staff survey saw an increase in council employees feeling that the Council is a good place to work, with responses showing a rise from 64% in 2016 to 73% in 2018.
 - The 2018-19 year-end performance for the strategic indicator reporting on the number of days staff sickness absence per FTE (excluding school staff) has been recorded as 11.4, which is an improvement on the previous year's figure of 12.75 days.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

Achievements, Challenges and Actions

- 8.2 Following on from the 2018 Employee Survey, Service Directors have been analysing the results and developing actions plans where appropriate. Examples of some of the actions being instigated by senior managers with their service are set out in Section B of this report. A further employee survey is scheduled for the 2019/20 period which

will begin to shape data sets on whether the measures undertaken are beginning to have a positive impact.

- 8.3 Several challenges remain on further reducing staff absence. One of the key areas is around development and application of any management action across the Council in a consistent and fair manner.
- 8.4 The Tackling Poverty in Gateshead Board meets bi-monthly and has strategic oversight of approaches to tackling poverty in Gateshead, which include:
- development of a year-long fuel poverty and switching campaign, aimed at maximising household income;
 - the 'Red Box Project', launched as a response to period poverty in young adults;
 - working with NEFirst Credit Union to grow its presence/reach in Gateshead, particularly in the west of the borough, where there is currently no presence;
 - working alongside the Blaydon Methodist Church to launch a 'Poverty Truth Commission' in Gateshead; and a
 - second poverty conference will be hosted on 15 July 2019, with a themed focus on food & fuel.
- 8.5 A key deliverable over the next six-month period is a review of advice, information, guidance and advocacy to include the services which the Council and The Gateshead Housing Company deliver, as well as those they commission.
- 8.6 In addition, other key pieces of work that are ongoing within the Council will be considering how to alleviate poverty and improve health and wellbeing, these include:
- refresh of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy;
 - creation of a new Mental Health Partnership Strategy;
 - creation of a new Advice Strategy for Gateshead;
 - a fuel poverty campaign;
 - Poverty Fund guidance to target this resource to priority need (alleviation of poverty);
 - leadership development programme; and
 - customer experience.
- 8.7 On 21 February 2019, Council agreed the Budget and Council Tax Levy for 2019/20. The Budget in 2019/20 included £13.113m of savings and income growth, which closes the funding gap for the year, in response to Government funding reductions and increased service demand pressures. The Budget outturn will be finalised in the Spring with a report to Cabinet in June 2019.
- 8.8 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was updated and agreed by Cabinet in July 2018. It is based on a financial forecast over a rolling five-year timeframe to 2023/24. The MTFS sets the financial context for the Council's resource allocation process and budget setting. The MTFS will be fully reviewed in late summer 2019.
- 8.9 The hugely challenging financial context is predicted to continue over the medium term and the high levels of uncertainty around future funding reforms and the economy likely to add to the potential for financial volatility and risk.
- 8.10 Providing mechanisms for the involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council is a core aim. To facilitate these conversations the Council undertakes various consultation exercises each year, including the

annual public consultation on the Council's Budget which received a high level of interest compared to previous years, for instance:

- Council budget webpage views totalled 33,361. The Bowling Green's web page was viewed 5,145 times, Gateshead Fund 1,262 times and Pest Control 1,085 times.
- Gateshead Now email featured the budget consultation on three occasions, with a total of 2,296 clicks.
- Council Budget video viewed on YouTube 1,092 times.
- Three Twitter posts received 2,500 impressions and 65 engagements
- Five Facebook posts achieved a reach of 43,030 people (9,746 liked, commented or shared the posts).
- 370 people accessed the budget quiz with over 79% indicating they were more informed of the financial challenges facing the Council.
- There were 950 respondents to the question regarding Council Tax. 53% said they would support an increase in Council Tax (Council's element) to assist in the funding of services next year with 47% saying they would not.
- There were 1,118 responses received via the consultation portal.
- A petition relating to the proposal affecting Mental Health Matters was received by the Council on 11 February 2019.
- Written responses from a range of the Council's partners and stakeholders.

8.12 There were a further 12 public consultations completed between 1st Oct 2018 and 31st Mar 2019, attracting 4,735 responses. A survey about the current and future use of Gateshead Town Centre attracted the largest single response (3,204). Four further consultations were completed with specifically targeted groups of service users/customers, attracting 528 responses, and 13 local traffic schemes were consulted on, attracting 139 responses.

8.13 Over the previous six months the corporate employee forum received presentations on the outcomes of the Employee Survey, Residents Survey and an update on the new room booking system and corporate warning alerts from the Digital Project. Additionally, forum members have had the opportunity to input into the development of the new Gateshead Leadership Development Programme.

8.14 Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates on the Council's resilience and emergency planning. An update was provided on 3 December 2018. Highlights from the remainder of 2018/2019 include:

- Extensive monitoring of the potential local impact of EU Exit planning, considering the implications for Gateshead and assessing the Council's readiness to respond until a final outcome is known. This has included:
 - The Council's Corporate Risk and Resilience Group identifying any relevant mitigations and controls using existing Business Continuity; Resilience and Emergency Planning; Financial plans and processes; and the management of concurrent risks
 - Nationally participating in Government teleconferences and exit planning workshops, coordinated by MHCLG, alongside the LGA (Local Government Association), SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives), Core Cities, Key Cities, the County Councils Network and SIGOMA (Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities) to influence contingency planning and post Brexit policy making.
 - Regionally engaging with a network of Chief Executives throughout the region to share information on preparations to support an orderly exit

- Locally liaising closely with neighbouring local authorities on our approach and co-ordinating joint collaborative action where necessary, including taking a lead role within the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum
- Undertaking a specific EU Exit Members Seminar in January 2019
- Presenting an update report on EU Exit Preparations to Cabinet in March 2019
- Consideration of longer-term outcomes within the Council and working with regional partners to understand the future requirements and plan for these potential impacts.
- The implications of EU Exit potentially affecting the availability of Council's resources to deliver services which may impact on communities.
- Understanding the implications for Gateshead response arrangements from the findings of the *Kerslake Report*, following the Manchester bombings.
- Increased scrutiny of event plans to ensure compliance with both resilience and Crowded Places Guidance.

8.15 Over the immediate short term there will a focus on:

- Mitigating the local impacts of EU Exit and ensuring the Council is prepared for all eventualities strengthening resilience and develop any necessary contingency plans.
- Developing greater coordination of emergency responses to incidents and issues.
- Coordination of pre-planned operations led by the emergency services on a broad range of subjects including modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation issues.
- Further development of arrangements for sharing/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 now needs to be translated and implemented to a Gateshead approach.
- Reviewing the Council's approach in relation to the revised CONTEST guidance and continue to assess risk of terrorism occurring.
- Reviewing our humanitarian assistance arrangements and continuing to develop relationships with voluntary organisations and community facilities, utilising the national Human Aspects Guidance.
- Developing a further Strategic Emergency Response Table Top Exercise.

8.16 As reported at the six-month stage, trading and income generation activities will be included within the 2019/20 reporting cycle. This reflects the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy objective to generate income which can be used to deliver priorities that make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. Indicators for traded income and activities are being developed with baseline data and targets to be reported at the six-month stage, along with an overview of how this area is performing.

Section B: Update on actions from previous report

Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Employee Engagement	Work Together	Policy, Performance & Communications	<p>2018 Employee Survey: Service Directors have been identifying actions from the survey where they feel they can make improvements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service managers attending other team meetings to raise the profile and promote their teams work; • Introduction of regular 6:1 meeting's with strategic director and employees from across the group; • Ensuring Achievement & Development discussions are complete • Training plan included as part of service business planning, along with succession planning. • Regularly emailing the whole service providing regular updates and information. • Locating teams together where possible/feasible. • Developing and rolling-out a Gateshead Leadership Development Programme. • Regularly reviewing flexible working practices • Encouraging employees to identify new ideas/ways of working that will enhance work-life balance and encourage managers to consider new ways of working which support employees work life balance.
Workforce Plan	Work Together	Human Resources & Workforce Development	<p>Workforce Plan Refresh –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with Service Directors and their management teams will take place over the next reporting period, to ascertain the needs of each group and their workforce requirements. This information will inform the content of a refreshed workforce plan. • The 2019 pay award was implemented on 1st April. In partnership with trade unions, the Council intends to consider its pay and grading structure to ensure it remains fit for purpose, equality proofed and affordable. • The uptake of apprenticeships remains low in comparison with the Council's apprenticeship levy. A modest temporary resource has been allocated to enable the Council to focus on apprenticeships, including working with colleges, other local authorities and external partners, and to consider the procurement implications with a view to streamlining the offer available to managers. • Good progress has been made on developing a Leadership Development Programme. Some 'all manager' modules are currently being piloted and draft Leadership Team modules are in an advanced stage of development. The programme is scheduled to be rolled out during 2019. • Employee salary sacrifice schemes and a financial wellbeing resource have been reviewed over the past months. Due to the nature of changes in relation to vehicle emissions and taxable benefits, the Council has concluded that car leasing through a salary sacrifice scheme would not be beneficial to employees, however, other options to acquire vehicles are available through schemes adopted by the Council. A financial wellbeing resource is being progressed and should be implemented later this year. • The Ways of Working Board has supported further consideration of agile working across the Council, with emphasis being on business cases, which support agile working principles and provide benefits to the Council. Leadership Team will be working together over the coming months to develop further this concept.

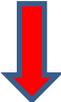
Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Equality Impact Monitoring	Tackle Inequality	Policy, Performance & Communications	<p>Equality Impact Budget proposals</p> <p>Assessments of the budget proposals impact on equality characteristics have been made, with four out of six budget proposals currently monitored by this committee now being recommended by services to no longer require monitoring. The remaining two proposals still need to be monitored along with the identified 2019/20 Budget proposals highlighted in Appendix 1. Committee will receive an update in the six-month performance report 2019/20.</p>
Tackling Poverty	Tackle Inequality	Poverty & Inequality	<p>Tackling Poverty</p> <p>The Tackling Poverty in Gateshead Board continues to sit bi-monthly and take strategic oversight of approaches to tackling poverty in Gateshead. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A closed Facebook group has been created giving all partners a full 24 hour, all year-round communication channel to announce, share or support efforts to circulate much needed food across all areas of Gateshead. • secured £204K from the DfE to fund the summer 2019 holiday activities and food programme (fill the gap - holiday hunger). • The Board is developing a year-long fuel poverty and switching campaign, aimed at maximising household income. • Launched the 'Red Box Project' as a response to period poverty. Schools reported that girls would regularly miss school because they couldn't afford sanitary products. • Work is ongoing with NEFirst Credit Union to grow its presence and reach in Gateshead, particularly in the west of the borough where there is currently no presence. • Working in partnership with Newcastle Building Society to bring the delivery of financial education into Gateshead Primary Schools. • Working alongside the Blaydon Methodist Church to launch a 'Poverty Truth Commission' in Gateshead. • Second poverty conference will be hosted on 15 July 2019, with a themed focus on Food & Fuel.
Digital Programme	Work Together	<p>Corporate Programme:</p> <p>Policy, Performance & Communications</p> <p>IT Services</p> <p>Exchequer Services</p>	<p>Digital Customer Indicators</p> <p>As proposed in our report of December 2018, we have provided specific measurable data linked to the increasing number of online transactions. We do not hold a full year of comparable data for all five indicators, but we have provided an analysis of the current data we have available in section C.</p> <p>Gateshead.gov.uk website received 4,186,349 views over the past 6 months, of which, 49% were viewed on a smartphone, 13% on a tablet and 28% on a computer. 24.5% of the website's audience are aged between 25-34, with 11.2% of the audience aged over 65. Statistics show that 53.1% of the people accessing our site are female.</p> <p>Local Digital Declaration</p> <p>The Council signed up to the Local Digital Declaration in October 2018 to support Local Government to design and build good digital public services. Through the Local Digital Fund, the Council (working collaboratively with Northumberland Council and Sunderland City Council) were successful in their bid for funding of £75,865 to carry out a research project to look for an online solution for Taxi Licensing application processes. You can view outputs from the project here.</p>

Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Digital Programme	Work Together	Corporate Programme: Policy, Performance & Communications IT Services Exchequer Services	Digital Gateshead Work Programme Over the last 6 months the following projects have been delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduced online processes for car park permits, fixed penalty charge notice payments and leisure centre booking online payments. • a new appointment booking system for the Registrars Service and the promotion of weddings in Gateshead. • Adult Social Care front door working group – including online forms for social care requests that aim to reduce call level volumes for Adult Social Care Direct. • Supporting Independence Service Review – reviewing customer contact. • Gateshead Now – an online news and events service. • My Gateshead customer account – a customer account so residents can log in to view payment history, track progress of completed forms, appointment bookings etc • The launch of a new room booking system for the Civic Centre with the outlook to make this self-service currently scheduled for June 2019. • New collaborative meeting room presentation equipment - standardised presentation equipment has been put into a further 31 rooms. • Launch of a new Corporate Warning Alert system. • The adoption of Microsoft 365 products. • Encouraging collaborative working using M365 SharePoint online & Teams • Supporting our employees to work remotely; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voice to Text Project. ▪ Digital Signatures. ▪ Direct access to CareFirst. ▪ One number dial – OSMO solution. ▪ Deployment of mobile working for Domiciliary Care service (implementation of new mobile system for work allocation and rotas. Personalised training provided).
Trading	Work Together	Trading and Commercialisation	Services to Schools A key area that will be included is the work being undertaken to improve the delivery of services to schools. The Council's approach has been reviewed with several improvements being made. This includes introducing new technology and an online ordering system which has been well received by schools both in Gateshead and beyond, as they can now purchase services, book training and access on-line resources through this new system.

Section C: Performance Overview

Indicator	Thrive pledge	Service Director Lead	Target 2020	Most recent performance Year End 2018/19	Direction of Travel	Comments and Actions
% of Council Tax collected that was due to be paid	Invest in our economy	J Jopling	96.6%	95.7%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the year 2018/19, council tax collection of 95.7% is slightly below the previous year's performance of 95.9%. Performance has been impacted on by the roll out of Universal Credit, which has increased customer demands on Revenues, resulted in UC claimants not fully maximising council tax support and, delays in payments to UC claimants from DWP, has reduced disposable income to claimants affecting council tax collection rates. To assist customers, staff are encouraged to make realistic, flexible and affordable payment arrangements and the use of technology continues to be reviewed to improve collection rates.
% of Business Rates collected	Invest in our economy	J Jopling	97%	98%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the year 2018/19 business rates collection of 98% was slightly below the previous year's performance of 98.6% but above the in-year collection target of 97.4%. Collection and recovery processes are continually reviewed to further improve collection and address rates avoidance.
% of undisputed invoices paid on time	Invest in our economy	J Jopling	95%	87.7%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the year 2018/19 there has been a significant improvement from the previous year's performance of 78.9% which has largely been achieved from the further roll out of purchase cards and the review of business processes to allow speedier payment of invoices.
Speed of housing benefits claims (processing) – average time to process new claims & changes in circumstances	People and families	J Jopling	7.5 days	6.2 days		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance for 2018/19 again shows further improvement compared to previous year's performance of 7.7 days. Following Universal Credit full service roll out, the volume of new claims has reduced allowing for quicker processing times. IT improvements have also been introduced to allow further automation of changes of circumstances and customer self-service.
Employee engagement e.g. a good place to work	Work together	M Jobling/ J Barclay	70%	73%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2018 staff survey saw an increase in council employees feeling Gateshead is a good place to work from 64% in 2016's survey to 73% this year and surpassing the target for 2020.

Indicator	Thrive pledge	Service Director Lead	Target 2020	Most recent performance Year End 2018/19	Direction of Travel	Comments and Actions
Staff sickness (excluding school staff) per FTE Page 34	Work together	J Barclay	8.0 days	11.4 days		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average sickness days per FTE for the period 2017-18 was 12.75 meaning a reduction has been seen for 2018-19. • Corporate Management Team previously received a report focussing on how sickness is managed. A review of the management of sickness absence was initiated across Care Wellbeing and Learning. This review included consideration of how individual managers are being held to account for management of absence within their own teams. As a result: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HR will continue to provide performance dashboards and detailed data to services and provide advice/support, so managers can take appropriate action. ○ The review of the Council's Sickness Policy & Procedure will be progressed with suggestions for improvements being discussed with Trade Union partners. ○ As part of the North East Better Health at Work Award the task and finish groups established continue to develop and take forward wellbeing initiatives around priority areas identified by employees. ○ Strategic Directors & Service Directors will continue to monitor and address absence.
Improve Superfast Broadband connectivity-increase coverage in Gateshead to 98.9%	Invest in our economy	R Sheehan	98.9%	97.5%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direction of travel continues to remain positive with a further increase in coverage of over 1% made during the year. Superfast broadband is now available to 97.5% of premises in Gateshead which compares favourably against the UK average figure of 96%. • Progress is good however, it seems unlikely that the stretch target of 98.9% will be reached when the current phase of the project ends in June 2019 as stated in the indicator. However, each new project phase is about to commence to increase superfast broadband coverage further in Gateshead and it is therefore proposed to retain the indicator but to amend the wording to remove the fixed timescale, so that it becomes "Increase the coverage of superfast broadband connectivity."

Indicator	Thrive pledge	Service Director Lead	Target 2020	Most recent performance Year End 2018/19	Direction of Travel	Comments and Actions
Ensure young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship	People and families	Janice Barclay/ Elaine Devaney	Year on year increase	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the year 2017/18 there were 4 Care Leavers in a council apprenticeship. This number has reduced to 2. (1 left after 3 months for personal reasons therefore did not complete their apprenticeship; 1 completed in-year and has secured further employment with the Council; and 2 are due to complete their apprenticeship and of those, 1 has secured further employment with the Council. The other apprentice is leaving to pursue a different career path). The Council is looking to recruit a further 2 LAC apprenticeships to the Office of the Chief Executive and Care Wellbeing and Learning directorate. Additionally, there is an intention to recruit an Apprenticeship Co-ordinator. Part of their role will be to explore apprenticeships for LAC and care leavers.
Amount of traded income achieved	Invest in our economy	Lindsay Murray	New	Baseline year	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As reported at the six-month stage, trading and income generation activities will be included within the 2019/20 reporting cycle with a baseline set.
Increase in new services to Schools business generated	Invest in our economy	Lindsay Murray	New	Baseline year	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As reported at the six-month stage, trading and income generation activities will be included within the 2019/20 reporting cycle with a baseline set.
Percentage increase in online transactions: a) Online payments	Supporting our communities	Marisa Jobling	New	18.2%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018-19, we received £18.48m in income from online payments which is a 18.7% increase from the previous year. We expect this figure to rise substantially as we continue to increase the number of payments that can be made on our websites at a rate of 5-10% per annum.
Percentage increase in online transactions: b) Fly-tipping reports				Baseline year		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,003 fly tips reported by the public in 2018/19, 57.4% reported online and 42.65% recorded over the telephone.
Percentage increase in online transactions c) Garden Waste subscriptions				3.86%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16,275 garden waste subscriptions paid for online in 2018/19, compared to 15,793 in 2017/18.

Indicator	Thrive pledge	Service Director Lead	Target 2020	Most recent performance Year End 2018/19	Direction of Travel	Comments and Actions
Percentage increase in online transactions d) Registrars appointments	Supporting our communities	Marisa Jobling	New	Baseline year		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online Registrars birth and death appointments were launched on 13 March 2019. Up until 26 April 2019, out of 479 appointments 48% were online and 52% over the telephone. As the service continues to be promoted we anticipate the online figure to increase.
Percentage increase in online transactions e) Adult social care forms				Baseline year		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the Adult Social Care online forms were launched in November 2018 we have received 1,891 online contacts and enquiries made up of 546 initial care assessments; 450 care and support reviews, 544 adult safeguarding reports and 351 general enquiries.

1.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.1 The Council's strategic approach of making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives identifies a commitment to reduce the levels of inequality that are apparent within the borough.
- 1.2 To achieve a balanced budget in 2019/20, the Council reviewed all areas of spend which, in some instances, resulted in budget proposals that reduced service provision that directly supports the protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The Council's role is to mitigate the levels of disproportionate impact identified in the equality impact assessments, wherever possible, following implementation of proposals.

2.0 Monitoring the impact of budget proposals

- 2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and foster good relations between people from different groups.
- 2.2 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on the individual budget proposals identifies any disproportionate impact in relation to the protected characteristics as described within the Equality Act 2010. The assessments also identify mitigation where applicable.
- 2.3 Several budget proposals were considered as having a positive or neutral impact. However, the following proposals where potential disproportionate impact was highlighted, along with possible mitigation, are set out below:

2014/15 – Sport and Physical Activity

- 2.4 Following a review in 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).
- 2.5 The service now provides more commercially focused activity to generate income, whilst continuing to grow activity aimed to the Council's Thrive Agenda. The measures contained in the proposal and implemented are considered to have had no detrimental effect on equality characteristics. It is recommended that continued monitoring is no longer required.

2016/17 - Reduction in funding for NHS Health Checks

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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, the current uptake is 50%.
- 2.8 In 2018/19 the NHS Health Check Programme service specification included changes to reflect national best practice guidance, the introduction of a standardised invitation and results letter, and a new data collection approach. The specification includes guidance for providers on targeting invitations and offering NHS Health Checks in keeping with the

Equality Act 2010. There was a further reduction in funding in 2018/19, which was achieved by the reduced demand for health checks, which is a trend also seen nationally. A Gateshead Council internal audit on the health checks programme was completed in 2018/19, with recommendations made and completed with none relating specifically to equalities.

2.9 The NHS Health Check programme uptake is monitored quarterly by Public Health with annual monitoring of uptake by age, gender and ethnicity. This is reported to the NHS Health Check Implementation Group. It is recommended that no further monitoring is required.

2017/18 - LiveWell Programme

2.10 Following the decommissioning of the LiveWell integrated lifestyle service, funding was allocated to establish a Making Every Contact Count (MECC) programme. The aim was to provide a sustainable approach in Gateshead and support the delivery of consistent healthy lifestyle information and enabling individuals to engage in conversations about their health, at scale, across organisations in Gateshead. In 2017, Council agreed temporary mitigation funding, initially until 31 March 2019, which was later extended to 30th September 2019.

2.11 Development of the programme included appointment of four team members to develop and deliver a MECC training offer and to allocate grant funding for capacity building for the approach in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The programme is due to close at the end of September 2019, and an exit strategy is in the process of being actioned.

2.12 The MECC team of three MECC development leads plus a resource and information assistant have been in post since early 2017, taking forward a programme of work with a wide range of VCS providers as part of the grant funding, as well as supporting the embedding of MECC within two council services; Adult Social Care (Domiciliary Care) and Library Services, as well as The Gateshead Housing Company.

2.13 The MECC development leads have responsibilities for delivery and development in the areas of; substance misuse, lifestyle advice (healthy weight, nutrition and physical activity) and public mental health. A comprehensive MECC training programme on health and wellbeing topics has been developed and is being delivered to VCS organisations in Gateshead to support further skills development. They are working closely with the 19 VCS grant organisations to help them further embed MECC principles within their organisational policies, thereby sustaining the approach into the future. Work has also been undertaken to identify additional groups and communities who have been identified as a priority but have not yet accessed MECC training and information. These included the Jewish community, LGBTQ groups, veterans and Grandparents Plus.

2.14 MECC is currently being developed at a regional level as part of the Integrated Care System (ICS) arrangements and because of the success of the programme in Gateshead, the local MECC Team are heavily involved in the development and delivery of the programme across the region. Work includes the development of a 'Train the Trainer' programme, development of resources and training programmes and input into social media developments. The regional programme will help increase the sustainability of the approach in Gateshead with all areas benefitting from regional leadership on the

programme. It is likely that some of the current team will move over at the end of their contract to regional roles.

- 2.15 The Council will also benefit and contribute to the sustainability of the programme with a team member returning to their substantive post at the end of the contract, in a position to continue the delivery of the model in this substantive role.
- 2.16 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 is being undertaken by Northumbria University with findings published later in 2019. The findings from the evaluation and the progress of the regional model will be taken to the Care, Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration. It is therefore recommended that monitoring is no longer required by this committee.

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

- 2.17 Since the new SAILS - supported and independent living services for young people Housing pathway for people aged 16 to 25 years commenced in July 2018, the following outputs up to the 18th February 2019 include:
- a total of 113 young people accessed the service, covering 119 total referrals;
 - 18 young people were successfully referred to the High Needs, Clinical intervention, Shared Living Service;
 - 2 young people were successfully referred to the Medium Needs, Semi Independent Living Service;
 - 14 young people were successfully referred to the Taster Flats Service;
 - a young person was referred to the Supported Lodgings Service;
 - of 119 referrals, 53 young people have moved outside the pathway, i.e. not homeless or in custody;
 - of 119 referrals, a total of 8 young people returned home; and a
 - total of 14 young people have been evicted for a variety of reasons, including arson and threats to staff. Though evicted, work with these young people is continuing.
- 2.18 All 6 services that constitute the SAILS Pathway are under ongoing review and scrutiny via KPI returns, Outcomes Scoring Data, the functioning of the multi-disciplinary panel, individual contact with care management, Psychologically Informed Environments/ Psychologically Informed Practice self-assessment reviews, and quality assurance visits by a dedicated contract management officer.
- 2.19 The Council is working with Durham University to prepare an outline proposal for further funding - via Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme - to enable a comprehensive practice evaluation of the services. As key elements of the services include on-site or mobile psychological interventions, a proposal has been submitted to Economic & Social Research Council for further research funding linked to wellness. It is recommended that continued monitoring remains necessary.

2018/19 Recommissioning Learning Disability Care Packages

- 2.20 As part of the project to review commissioning arrangements for people with learning disabilities, a small multi-disciplinary team (Achieving Change Together team) was established under the service manager for Adult Social Care. Specifically designed to fit

in with the Thrive Agenda of ensuring people reach their full potential ensuring packages are appropriate to need and assists in helping service users maximise opportunities to fulfil their potential.

2.21 The ACT team is focusing on:

- Revisiting the depth of assessment and review - staff to assess individual needs.
- Looking at process/procedures, why things are done can they be done better.
- Focus on Independent Supported Living (ISLs) - developing clear pathways from residential into and out of ISL-reablement officers to go into ISL's and observe to build up an in-depth knowledge of service users to improve assessment.
- Work with providers on maximising the development of independence, particularly to the extent that support needs may be reduced by opportunities for example in paid employment, volunteering and independence.
- Re-commissioning (including decommissioning where appropriate) of specialist learning disabilities health resources.
- Challenging providers by using the additional time allocated to get to know the case history of the service user to better understand, observe and ensure care charged for by providers is needed and being provided.

2.22 By the end of the financial year 2018-19, 132 cases (including 25 placed out of borough) have been or are in the process of being reviewed. Case studies of improved outcomes are being compiled and savings identified in partnership with service users, families and providers. A second cohort is in the process of being selected. It is recommended that continued monitoring is no longer required by this committee.

2018/19 – Review of Carers Services

2.23 The carers contracts have been awarded and a mobilisation period is currently underway. The two organisations awarded the contracts are working together to migrate staff where TUPE applies as well as carers who are transferring between the outgoing and incoming service provisions. The new services will commence on 1 May 2019 as follows:

- Carers Trust Tyne and Wear will be responsible for delivering services and support to Young Carers aged up to 18 years. They will also offer carers some time away from their caring role by providing personal and emotional support to any adults aged 18 years and over who they care for.
- Gateshead Carers Association will be responsible for delivering services and support to Adult Carers aged 18 years and over.

2.24 All services will be monitored by Commissioning to ensure service provision meets the quality requirements set out in the relevant Quality Service Review frameworks. Within the initial first year of the contract the services will receive a light touch review at three and six months and then a full review up to 12 months. Reviews will include action plans where necessary. Providers will also be submitting quarterly performance monitoring information. As the contract has only recently been awarded, continued monitoring is recommended.

2019/20 Budget Proposals

2.25 The budget proposals identified as potentially affecting protected characteristics as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process will be reported in the next six-month performance report to this OSC later in the year.

- Deletion of posts in the Early Help Service.

- Deletion of posts in the Children and Families Service.
- No longer providing maintenance for bowling greens and football pitches
- New or increased charges for adult social care services:
 - Day services; and
 - Meals in day centres and promoting independence centres.
- New accommodation charge for aftercare post discharge from hospital.
- New charge for Guidepost drop-in service.
- Reduction in the standard allowance of Disability Related Expenditure.
- Removal of contribution to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

This page is intentionally left blank



TITLE OF REPORT: **Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce – Annual Update**

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 interim update report which was considered on 3rd December 2018, and to consider actions moving forward.

Background

1. 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 and improving the health of the workforce.
2. Regular updates have been provided to the Committee since 2005 which have provided statistical information, actions implemented in the relevant reporting period and any notable outcomes, and a focus on actions proposed for the future.

Statistical Information

3. As in previous reports, and as requested by the Committee, this report contains information relating to the causes of sickness absence and sickness absence total days lost, with a focus on initiatives undertaken during the reporting period and future initiatives. The statistics quoted in this report relate to the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Some additional information is provided to allow a comparison from the previous year, however, the Committee may wish to refer to previous reports for full details.
4. Average sickness days per FTE for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 was 11.38, compared with 12.75 for the period April 2017 to March 2018. Presented as a quarterly average, and comparing with 2017-18, sickness days per FTE are as follows:

Quarter	2017- 2018 Average sick days per quarter, per FTE	2018-2019 Average sick days per quarter, per FTE
April to June	3.36	3.60
July to September	3.43	2.94
October to December	3.50	2.76
January to March	2.39	2.08

Sickness Absence Causes – Appendix 1

5. Appendix 1 details the causes of sickness absence in percentage terms for the Council. Across the Council as a whole, stress, depression and mental ill health accounts for 31.5% of all sickness and remains the largest cause of sickness absence. Post-op recovery/hospital treatment makes up 17.5% (down from 18.5% in the previous year), and other musculoskeletal conditions account for 17.5% (up from 14% from the previous year) of all sickness. These three categories remain the main causes of sickness absence. Note that the chart in appendix 3 may not appear to reflect these movements e.g. post-op recovery days lost has increased, however, the apparent misalignment is due to appendix 3 detailing **days lost per category**, whereas appendix 1 details causes as a **percentage of all days lost**.

Sickness Absence Days Lost – Appendices 2 - 4

6. The table below shows the total number of sick days lost per Group and the average sick days lost per FTE per Group. It should be noted that following the restructure of Groups in August 2017 a number of employees were transferred from Communities and Environment to Corporate Resources, and, as statistics are considered as an average of staff numbers at the start and the end of the reporting period, the comparisons appear skewed.

	2017-18	2017-18	2018-19	2018-19
Group	Total days lost	Days per FTE within the Group	Total days lost	Days per FTE within the Group
Care, Wellbeing and Learning	20638	16.77	16831	14.09
Communities and Environment	10518	9.26	8600	10.51
Corporate Resources	8248	12.16	9819	9.94
Corporate Services and Governance	1337	9.21	958	6.39
Office of the Chief Executive	372	9.49	45	1.32

7. Appendix 2 shows the split between the number of days lost for short-term and long-term sickness absence by Group. Appendix 3 is a comparison of sickness absence over the last three years in the main categories of sickness. This shows that absence relating to stress, depression and mental ill health has decreased during this reporting period, as have absences attributed to musculoskeletal problems.

8. As in the last report, appendix 4 details the average sickness days per FTE by age band. The information in this appendix needs to be considered in conjunction with the table below which provides context in relation to the number of staff within each age group and the number of days absence. The data can only show **the probability** of sickness absences in age ranges.

Age	FTE average within the age band	Total sickness absence days	FTE Days lost	2017-18 Comparator data. FTE Days lost
19 and under	33.61	285.31	8.49	4.63
20-24	86.59	885.23	10.22	7.61
25-29	121.96	1212.25	9.94	7.51
30-34	231.37	2356.76	10.19	10.04
35-39	332.97	2877.05	8.64	8.76
40-44	304.94	2558.67	8.39	11.71
45-49	468.72	5130.62	10.95	13.45
50-54	654.17	6887.7	10.53	12.89
55-59	588.17	8559.36	14.55	17.02
60-64	292.18	4652.16	15.92	18.91
65-69	54.69	793.03	14.5	21.77
70+	5.37	57.32	10.67	18.87

Sickness Absence Days Lost Due to Stress

9. Stress, depression and mental ill health issues remain the largest cause of absence. The average for the whole Council is 3.61 (down from 4.15) days per FTE for the 12-month period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Sickness Absence in the Public Sector

10. The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey Report 2019 found that, on average, public sector

employees had 8.4 days of absence in 2018 (8.5 in 2017), showing only a very minor change from the findings in the 2018 survey. A summary of findings is detailed in appendix 6 (note this is not specific to the public sector – it is an amalgamation of public and private sector responses).

11. The survey noted that most public sector organisations use a wide range of methods to manage absence compared with their counterparts in the private and non-profit sectors. They are more likely to use methods to review and deter absence (such as trigger mechanisms to review attendance, and sickness management procedures for unacceptable absence); provide support to employees through employee assistance programmes; use risk assessments to aid return to work; involve occupational health; and, offer rehabilitation programmes.
12. Employers are also taking steps to reduce stress, with mixed levels of effectiveness. The most common steps taken by the public sector to reduce and identify stress are: flexible working options and improved work-life balance; risk assessments and stress audits; and, employee assistance programmes. Just under two-thirds (63%) of the public sector conduct staff surveys and/or focus groups to identify the causes of stress and 60% provide training aimed at building personal resilience. Just half (52%) provide training for line managers to manage stress. The report notes that despite their best efforts, many organisations report that they have not seen any measurable outcomes from their activity
13. The Council's actions mirror those of other public sectors and are in line with HSE guidance and CIPD best practice. Actions include actively managing absence, management training, personal resilience courses offered to all staff, wellness initiatives, stress management training, stress risk assessments, and many work-life balance initiatives and policies. It should be noted that like most others, actual outcomes are difficult to measure and articulate. Outcomes may not manifest over the short-term, however, this should not deter the Council from continuing to act to tackle sickness absence and improve health and wellbeing. Whilst the actual impact cannot be scientifically measured, appendix 5 provides the Committee with some feedback received from an employee in relation to their referral to the Occupational Health Unit during their absence from work. This employee notes that not only did their physical health improve, but the intervention impacted on their mental wellbeing, and hopefully a timely return to work.
14. One emerging area within the survey was financial wellbeing. The survey found that only a minority of organisations take a strategic approach to employee financial wellbeing. Respondents to the survey believe that poor financial wellbeing is a significant cause of employee stress in their organisations. The Council has a well embedded staff benefits scheme (through Vectis and other organisations), however, a specific employee financial wellbeing initiative is planned to be launched in the very near future.

Actions and outcomes since the last OSC report

15. **Health and Wellbeing** - as part of the North East Better Health at Work Award (NEBHAWA) and the employee Health Needs Assessment survey, three task and finish groups were set up. The groups considered weight management; reducing

stress levels; increasing physical activity; improving sleep; getting a better worklife balance and reducing back pain. The groups facilitated several health campaigns such as the 'step challenge', Nordic walking, and Bewicks healthy eating options which were promoted in the employee bulletin. There are further activities planned, such as taster exercise sessions for domiciliary care staff. There have also been some local success stories where small teams have participated in weight loss and exercise programmes, with very successful outcomes.

15. **Work-related stress** - the Council participated in a joint project with UNISON, the objective being to reduce work-related stress; to improve wellbeing; and, to reduce levels of stress-related sickness absence. As part of the project the HSE management standards survey tool was used to seek information in mainly within the Care, Wellbeing and Learning Group. The key areas of concern include the demands placed on employees; the support provided by managers; lack of clarity in respect of individual roles and responsibilities leading to lack of control; and, the negative impact of organisational change. Action plans continue to be monitored to ensure the agreed timescales are met.
16. **Physical health** - the last OSC report advised that Leisure Services and Occupational Health were working together to explore the introduction of a medical referral service to the Council's leisure services. This would be on the basis that where Occupational Health identify that an employee may benefit from an exercise programme, they may be offered an introductory 12 weeks free, or discounted, GO membership to access leisure facilities. This programme has been implemented and to date 40 employees have been referred through the programme. 32 employees took up the offer, 12 of whom have completed the 3-month programme, the remaining 20 are still within their first 3 months. One example of the positive outcomes of this initiative is from employee JT. JT was referred into the service following a back injury and was on sick leave. She attended the gym reluctantly and was cautious about what she would be able to do. Following her initial induction, she continued to attend the gym and swims on a regular basis. She has reported that attendance at the gym lifted her mood and increased her confidence, and she believes this helped her to return to work sooner than if she had not had this opportunity. JT has since gone on to purchase a membership and continues to be active on a regular basis.
17. **Training for managers** – the last report also referred to the roll-out of sickness absence management training. 90% of managers have attended the training. An e-learning module will be available as a refresher for current managers and for newly appointed managers.
18. **Counselling and physiotherapy services** - during 2018/19 there has been c360 referrals to the Council's counselling service which is an increase from 218 in the previous reporting year. Referrals relate to various issues, including work related stress, difficult working relationships, personal issues and bereavement. A large proportion of the employees referred are still at work at the point of referral, although many report that they are at 'tipping point'. As a result of counselling services, many do remain at work and learn techniques to help manage their stressors and the personal circumstances in which they find themselves.

19. **Mental Health** - in October 2017 the Council signed the Time to Change pledge, a national campaign that aims to improve attitudes and behaviour towards people suffering with mental health problems, which remains the largest cause of sickness absence within the Council. The pledge action plan was updated in June 2018. Mental health awareness week 2018 had stress as a central theme. The Council delivered training events including 'mental health first aid lite' and an interactive 'beat stress' session. The Council's stress toolkit and the Time to Change campaign were also promoted during the week. The mental health first aider scheme is still used and promoted within the Council; there are currently twelve active mental health first aiders.
20. **Making Every Contact Count (MECC)** – this is a public health initiative which aims to maximise health and wellbeing amongst employees, families, service users and carers. As part of the MECC approach the libraries team has undertaken training in MECC; alcohol brief intervention; smoking brief intervention; drugs brief intervention; motivational interviewing; behaviour change; and, '5 ways to wellbeing'. They have become more involved in health promotion and health campaigns as a result. The domiciliary care team has also undertaken MECC and '5 ways to wellbeing' training.

What will we do next?

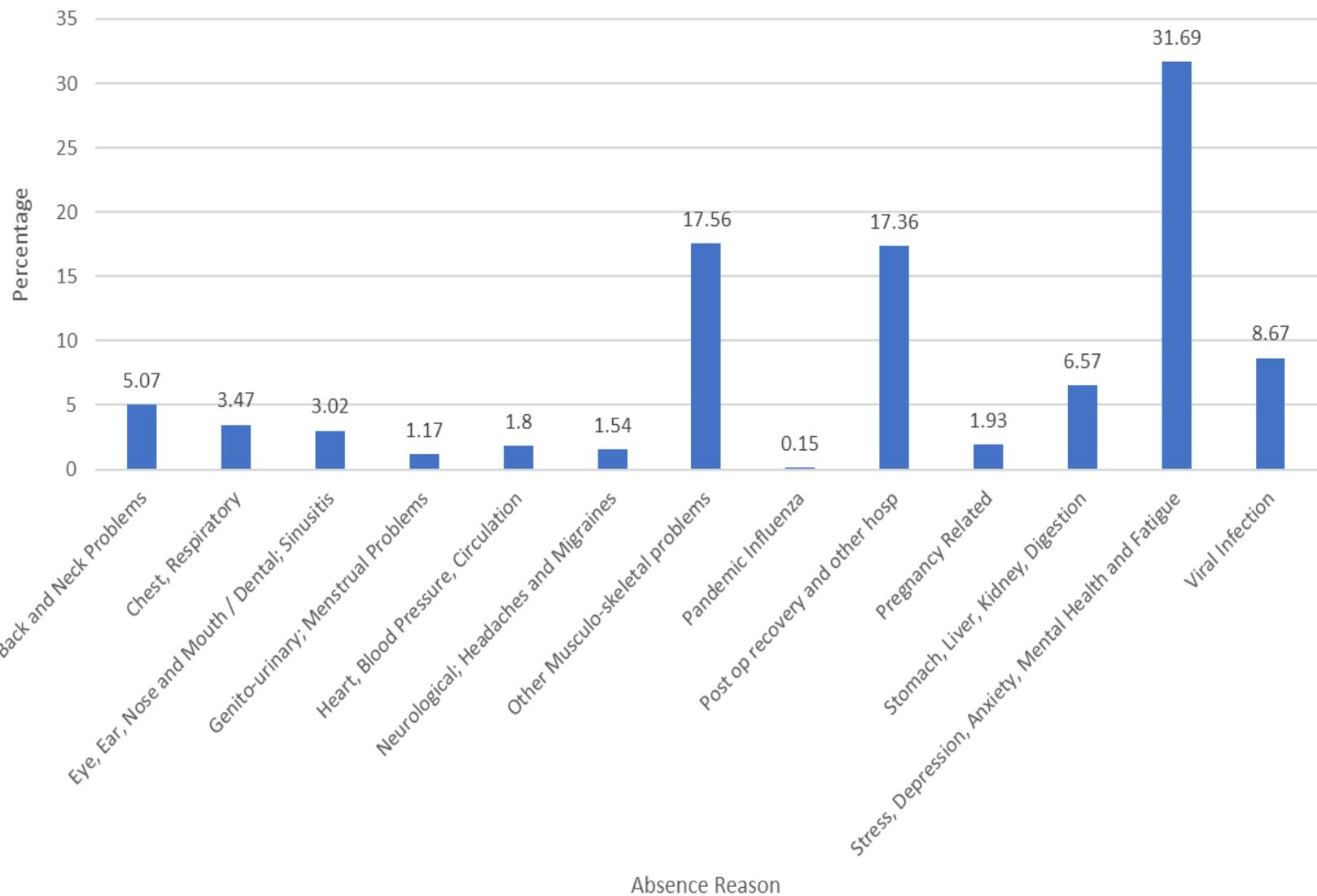
21. The sickness absence management policy & procedure is currently being reviewed. A revised policy for schools is undergoing formal consultation with trade unions. The Council's policy will be circulated for trade union consultation in the near future.
22. The HR team will continue to provide data and dashboard information to services and provide advice and support, so managers can take appropriate action to address sickness absence effectively and consistently.
23. The Council will continue to implement the action plan in relation to the Time to Change Pledge to reduce the stigma around mental health issues and enable employees to access appropriate support, hopefully before they feel a need to take sick leave.
24. Managing the menopause is a new theme where the Council is working in partnership with Unison to develop support, information and advice for women who suffer from menopausal symptoms, and for managers and other staff (male and female) with a view to mainstreaming this topic. It is important that employees are supported by the Council when they are managing their symptoms; equally important is being able to speak about the menopause as a normal medical issue without embarrassment. It is proposed that information is cascaded through a number of channels including posters, intranet etc. Work will be undertaken in consultation with public health colleagues to align with the public health agenda. Occupational health referrals will also be available to provide individualised medical advice and support as required.
25. An employee financial wellbeing scheme will be launched to compliment the other staff benefits schemes already in place.

Recommendation

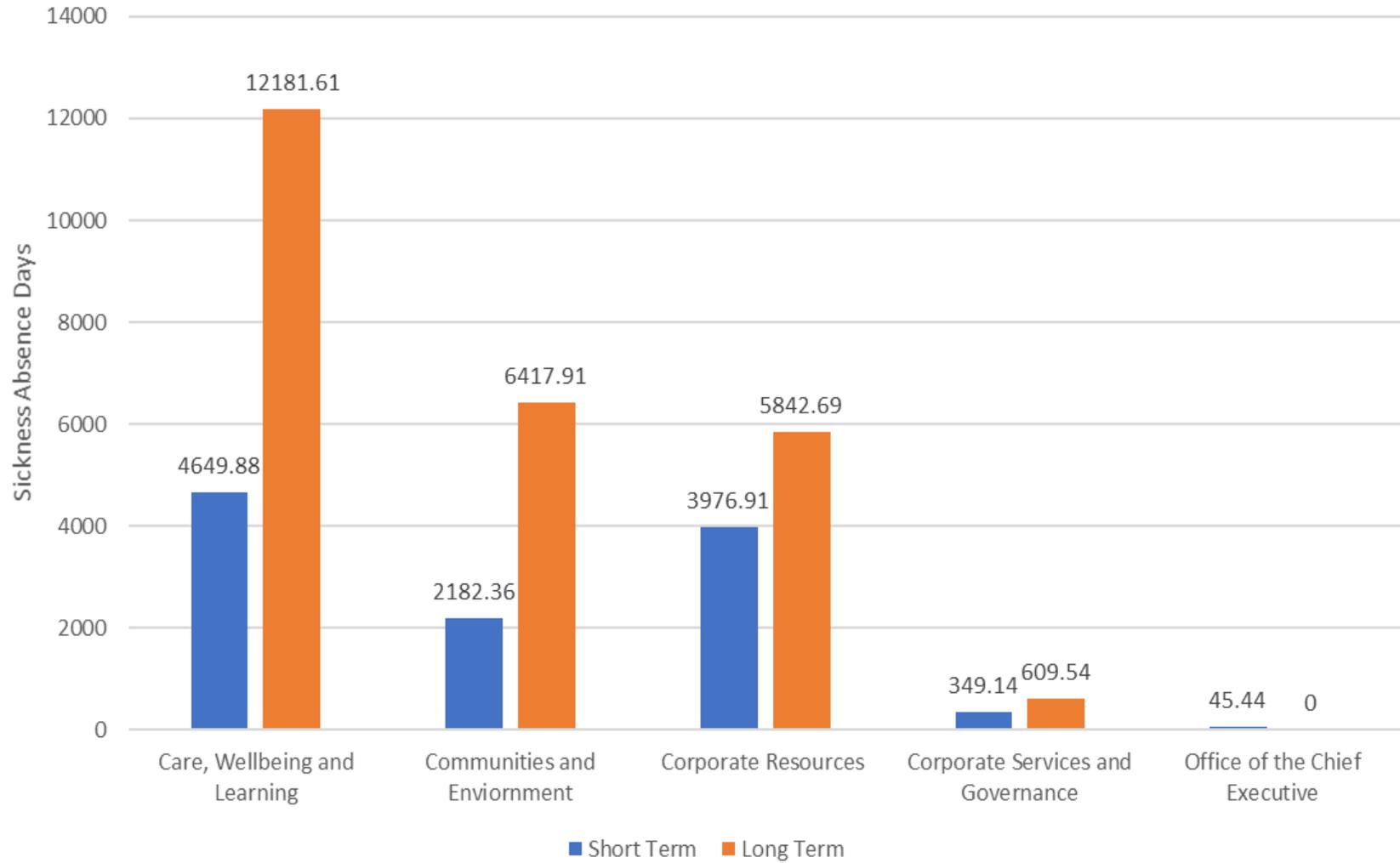
26. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought on:
- i) whether the Committee is satisfied that the work undertaken in the last reporting period, and the proposed actions for 2019/20, are a balance of support for employees against positive management action in tackling high absence levels, with the aim of reducing sickness absence and maintaining good health of the workforce.

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

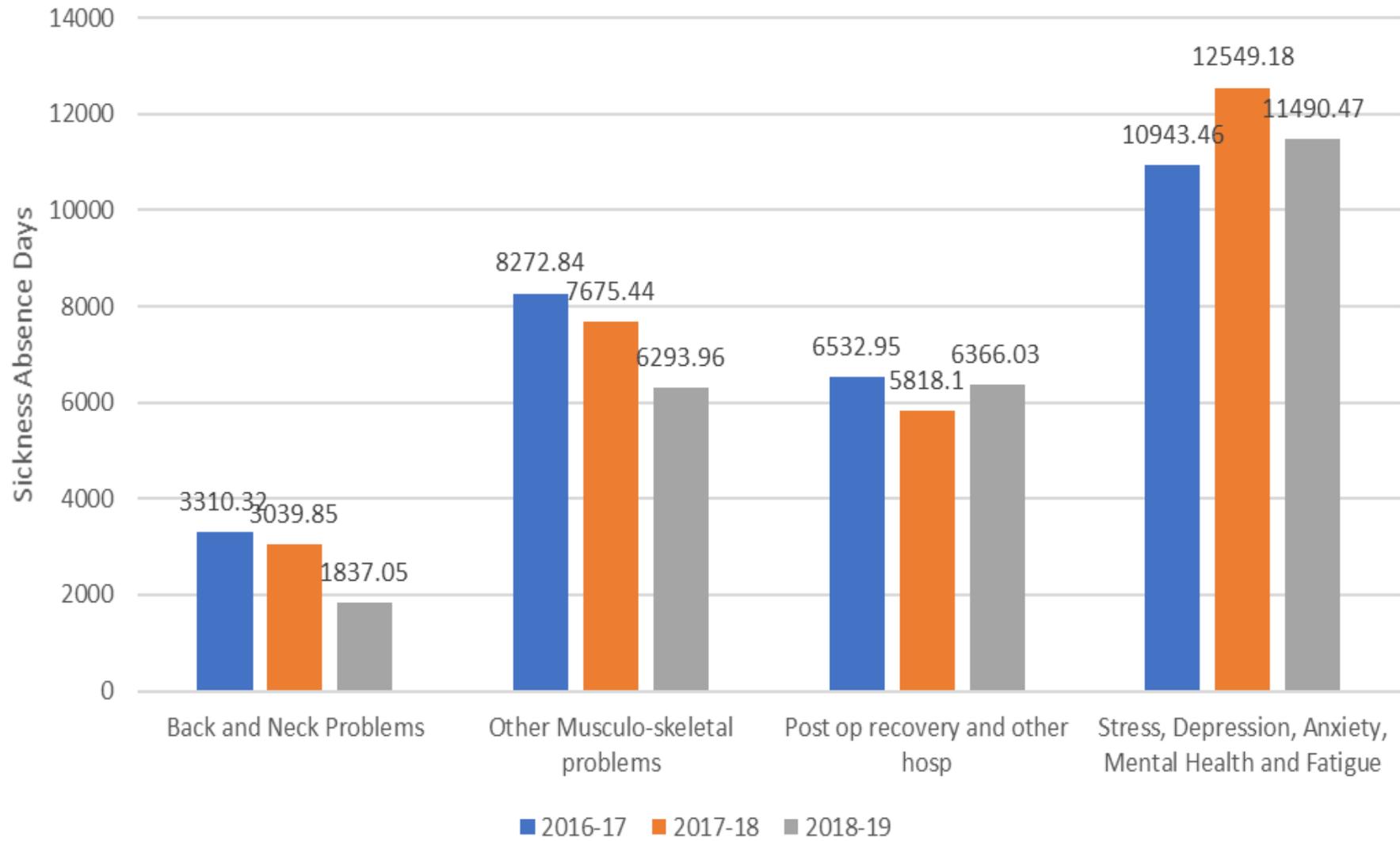
Causes of Sickness Absence 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019



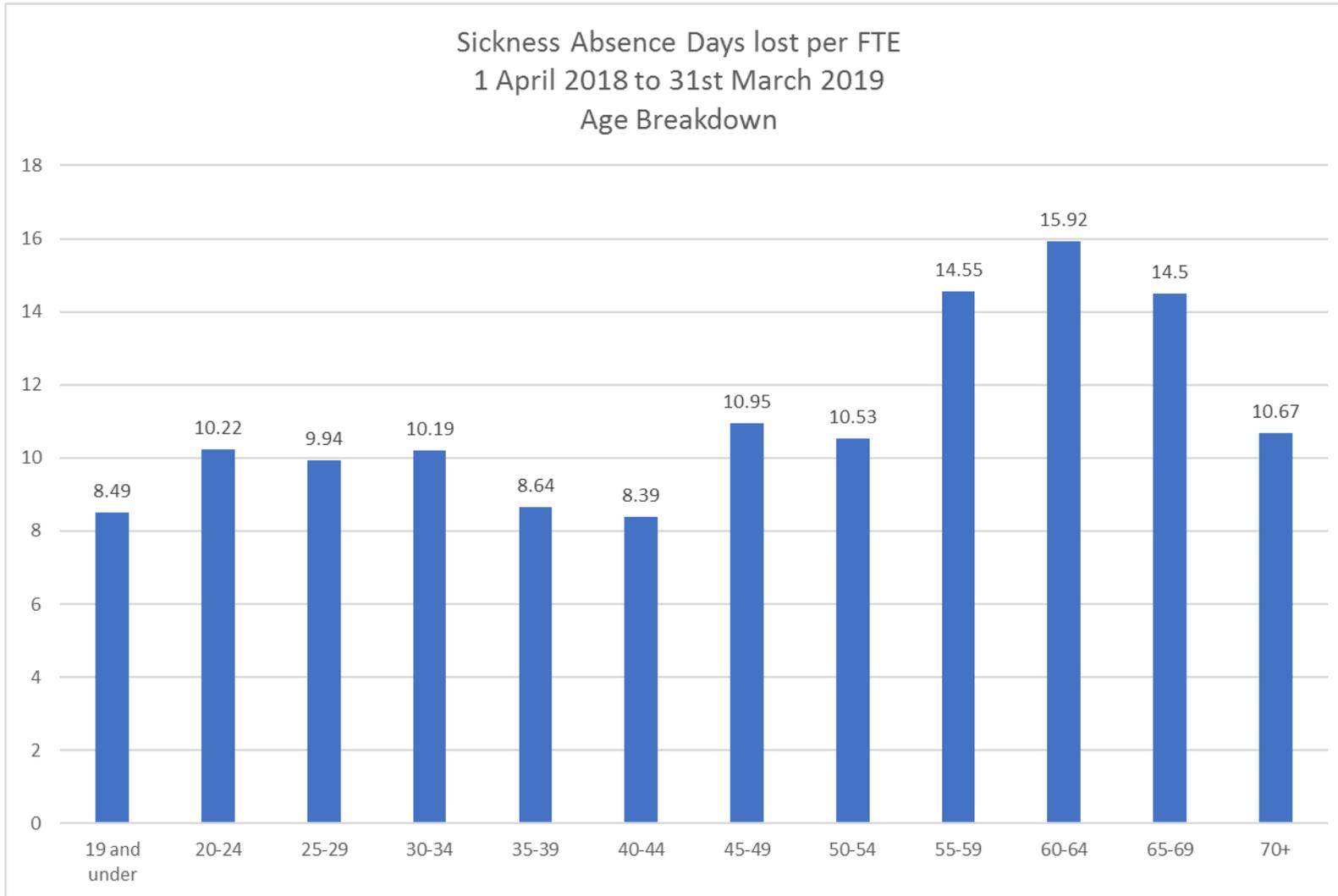
Short Term/ Long Term Sickness 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019



Sickness Comparison



Appendix 4



Feedback from an Employee Referred to the Occupational Health Unit

This is just a quick email to thank you and your team for the service/support that I have received over the last couple of weeks.

A little background; on the 28th of March I had [REDACTED] following the surgery I discovered that I had a trapped/irritated nerve. I reported this to my GP and I made a self-referral to the Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Service (TIMS), which included an online self-assessment. It then took TIMS two weeks before they got in touch and they then conducted the same assessment over the phone. Five days later they sent me some information regarding some exercises. I was still in discomfort and was very disappointed with the response.

I had a meeting with my line manager and a member of the HR team on 3rd May. They got in touch with Occupational Health when I left the meeting. The following day (Saturday) I received an appointment date for the 9th of May.

When I met [REDACTED] he carried out, what I felt was, a thorough assessment despite my late arrival. He then demonstrated a number of exercises that I have found invaluable. More importantly he changed my mental outlook and he began to make me think more positively about my recovery.

I visited Occupational Health again on the 16th May, [REDACTED] was impressed with my progress, as I was. He told me to continue my exercises and watched me doing the exercises to ensure that I was doing them correctly. He then gave me a little massage around my neck, which was so relaxing (and relived my pain) that I almost fell asleep!

After this he asked if I had any questions or concerns and suggested that I ask for a work station assessment when I returned to work. I left the session feeling rejuvenated and refreshed and had the best sleep that I have had for a long time.

I am emailing to hope that this record of my positive experience can be acknowledged in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] next appraisals/supervisions.

Many thanks and if you could forward my thanks to the three aforementioned members of staff I would be very grateful. They are an absolute credit to your team.



Health and Well-being at Work Survey 2019



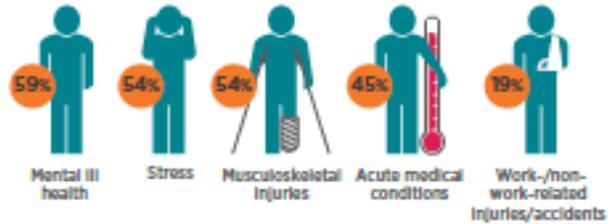
Absence and attendance



Absence is at an all-time low (5.9 days per employee per year), but...

- 83% of respondents say people work when unwell
- 63% say people use their holidays to work, or work when off sick
- 37% report an increase in stress-related absence

The top causes of long-term absence are:



Stress at work

Top three causes of stress-related absence:



Workloads/volume of work



Management style



Relationships at work

Line management

- 50% say managers have been trained to manage stress
- Half (50%) think managers have bought into the importance of well-being



Mental health



40% of organisations have trained managers to support staff with mental ill health, but...

- 30% say managers are confident to have sensitive discussions/signpost staff to expert help



- 18% of people professionals say managers are confident and competent to spot the early warning signs of mental ill health.



Financial well-being

- 24% say poor financial well-being is a significant cause of employee stress



- 24% say employees have the knowledge/skills to make the right reward and benefit choices to meet their financial needs



To read the full report visit cipd.co.uk/healthandwellbeing

17 June 2019**TITLE OF REPORT: Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector: Final Report****REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Acting Strategic Director Communities and Environment**

Summary

This final report sets out the findings and recommendations of Corporate Resources review of ways to help increase the support and capacity within the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Gateshead.

The views of the Committee are being sought on this report and suggested recommendations.

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 The review is facilitated through a series of Evidence Gathering sessions.

2. Review Methodology

2.1 The review comprised four evidence gathering sessions. Evidence was sought from the internal council services, including Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering, Economic Development Service, Care, Wellbeing and Learning Service, Comfrey Project Brighten Ryton Environmental Group, Dunston Family Church, Tyne and Wear Community Foundation, The Ballinger Trust and National Lottery Community Fund and Oasis Community Housing.

2.2 All of the sessions included a presentation by each of the groups / organisations listed followed by a Q and A session.

3. A summary of the Evidence Gathering Sessions

- 3.1 Session 1 (held 3 December 2018) provided Committee with a summary of Gateshead VCS infrastructure and the Council support still available to the sector. The information provided highlighted the estimated number of charities (876 registered with the Charity Commission) and other similar organisations (750-1000 other VCS organisations) operating in Gateshead's communities. It outlined the Council's significant financial support available for organisations through grants, contracts and commissions and Non-Domestic Rate relief. It also highlighted the Services offering Information, Support and Guidance and the Council's role in promoting, co-ordinating and brokering over 8,000 volunteer roles and volunteers.
- 3.2 Dr Jo Price, Chair of Trustees at the Comfrey Project, also presented to Committee offering 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 Gateshead's refugees and asylum seekers.
- 3.3 Session 2 (held 21 January 2019) included presentations from Brighten Ryton and Dunston Activity Centre highlighting the excellent work that both organisations undertake in their respective localities. Committee discussed how the organisations could work better with the Council and other partners.
- 3.4 Aiden Lawson, Chair of Brighten Ryton, informed Committee of its role in supporting the Council to improve the local environment in Ryton, highlighting examples of work in local cemeteries, parks and improvements for some local heritage sites. The Group has provided almost 9,000 volunteer hours and fund raised more than £30,000 in its first two years of operation. It aims to expand its scope and increase its impact in future years and highlighted some areas where its efficiency could be enhanced through an improved interface with the Council.
- 3.5 Ed Nicholls, Chair of Dunston Family Church, talked about the Church's steep learning curve after taking on the responsibility for Dunston Activity Centre (and volunteer library) following a recent Asset Transfer from the Council. The Church through its volunteers and employees aims to improve the well-being of the local community through local activities and the provision of community space. Ed talked about how the organisation has had to learn about Governance, due diligence, health and safety, financial and business planning, developing capacity and operating a community café. Whilst the Centre is doing well, financial sustainability remains a challenge as the Church always looks to offer services at lower cost or free.
- 3.6 Session 3 (held 4 March 2019) included presentations from three key local funders (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, The Ballinger Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund). The funders covered:
- What they do and the opportunities they provide
 - How they currently support the sector
 - What outcomes/priorities they would like to see
 - How Gateshead compares regionally/nationally regarding their funding programmes
 - How could their impact in Gateshead be increased?
 - What can partners (like the Council) do to maximize take up/increase effectiveness of their resources in Gateshead

- What can/should VCS organisations do themselves/collectively to increase take up/effectiveness – highlighting any common failings that restrict local take up.
- 3.7 The presentations were followed by a short discussion covering some of the collective learning and recommendations to maximize the combined potential for working with Gateshead’s communities.
- 3.8 Some of the key feedback and top tips from the session included:
- Always read the guidance thoroughly before applying – if in doubt get in touch.
 - Ensure the organisation and the project are eligible.
 - Have all information required ready at the time of submission.
 - Ensure accounts/bank statements are timely and accurate and unrestricted reserves are beneath any eligibility threshold.
 - Use data, local intelligence and consultation to demonstrate community needs (avoid duplication).
 - Wherever possible try to get other funding to support your project.
- 3.9 A Members’ Seminar is being organised for early July to offer all ward councillors a further opportunity to hear about some of the financial assistance available to Gateshead’s Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 3.10 Session 4 (held 1 April 2019) Since 2011 Basis@Gateshead (Basis) has welcomed more than 750 people annually. The individuals that Basis supports are in need of information, advice, guidance, advocacy and practical support. They also need a safe space to work out what’s causing their problems and how best to set about trying to tackle them.
- 3.11 Now located at Progress House, Warwick Street, Gateshead. Basis has become the place where people with multiple, complex and overlapping needs go to begin their journey into housing, recovery and wellness. Basis is the only service in Gateshead offering day provision for people sleeping rough as well as assistance around accessing and maintaining housing.
- 3.12 As Basis is the only service in Gateshead providing day provision for rough sleepers the charity is in a unique position. Clients visit Basis because they want to, it is a safe space and a place of community for them. Over the last seven years staff have built up trust and a relationship with individuals who are considered hard to reach. This relationship enables help and support to be built around the individual rather than refer out and run the risk of traumatising them further or losing them as they fall through service gaps. This service is one example of the targeted collaborative provision required as part of the Council’s Thrive agenda.
- 3.13 In October 2018, the charity moved into brand new premises in central Gateshead. The new premises, formerly the probation service office, aptly named ‘Progress House’ gives the space to be able to carry out all of the services residents need and enables partner services to be able to work from the same location thereby creating a joint service to those facing homelessness and multiple needs. The service hub/homelessness proto-type approach:

- Brings in a system-wide perspective with the individual at the centre
- Rather than passing the (often traumatised) person around the system, accumulating support workers, we draw in partners and services to a place that the person feels comfortable
- This includes Housing Options, GP Federation, Mental Health services, Drug and Alcohol services, and other third sector orgs
- It's co-ordinated by a Link worker, part funded via the Gateshead Innovation Fund
- We will be adding services involved in the multi-disciplinary team over the next 12 months
- We track individual service user stories using our database InForm, and we will be doing an evaluation and learning framework with partner agencies over the next three months
- Present learning at the end of year one and two

3.14 Many of the individuals supported through the service hub will have multiple and complex needs such as poor physical health, mental illness, drug and alcohol addictions and will have spent time in the care system or prison system or both. This means targeting precisely the kind of people the council would consider vulnerable and most in need, and who a significant proportion of council time and money is currently spent on.

4. Findings, issues and challenges arising from the review

- The review reaffirmed the need for a vibrant community and voluntary sector in Gateshead that is support and capable of meeting the challenges facing Gateshead's residents in the future.
- There is a need to ensure longer term support is available from the Council which cultivates relationships and reassures community and voluntary sector organisation that they can rely on the Council for advice and help.
- The community asset transfer programme has seen significant success in helping community organisations operate community facilities to deliver services for local residents.
- Need for dedicated interface/contacts within the Council – including key front-line services (particularly where the interface is integral to the work of the Group – for example some Street Scene Services/planning and highways?). This is required to ensure decisions can be made by the relevant service, relatively quickly – it also helps to build a positive working relationship.
- Annual plan or similar to be agreed and endorsed by the Council – including assigned responsible officers for specific activities, as above, (to agree any adjustments/amendments, etc) – would help with timetabling key decisions/permissions – allowing the Group to have more accurate plans. This will also help the Council to plan its work if done effectively.
- Annual plan would facilitate greater synergy and timetabling of partnership approach – would maximize windows of opportunity for works to be undertaken (summer months, avoiding nesting season, etc)
- When Council and community efforts combine the synergy and impact can be fantastic (for example, coinciding cutting and strimming in cemetery)
- Speed/responsiveness of the Council – frustration with the time taken/delay in getting permissions/agreement to undertake works – sometimes legitimate due to legal process, sometimes multiple service involvement and sometimes staff sickness (as well as other things) – but could we be better?

- Perception of overbearing bureaucracy – particularly around Conservation and Licencing issues experienced – legalities, consultation periods, permissions, etc. Can this be mitigated with better information up front re realistic timescales (for both parties)?
- The Council's relationship/interface with (ethos towards) voluntary organisations needs to reflect a partnership arrangement (to maximize joint efficiency/shared resources and available skills, knowledge and capacity). Volunteers should be seen more as partners not as contractors or a threat to employment.
- Is there need to train/brief Council staff (particularly those in key interface positions) about how a better more productive relationship can be achieved? Remove any stigma, perceptions of job insecurity, etc) as above
- Review how the Council's Insurance arrangements work for/with volunteer activities – could this become more inclusive/less risk averse – redesigned to accommodate such work not respond to request for the work (turn it around completely).
- Organisation/rigour of the Group and its monitoring of activity was praised (and may be exclusive to Brighten Ryton currently) – whilst not necessarily required to the level of Brighten Ryton it is food for thought for other community organisations to become more organised and planned in approach
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers was still an issue for a number of community groups across Gateshead, especially where specific skills are required.
- Securing funding is becoming an increasing challenge for many community groups and charities across Gateshead.
- Specialist advice is required for a number of groups across the borough, in particular governance, legal advice, business and financial planning, health and safety to name some areas.
- Co-ordination between NCVS and Gateshead Council needs to continue to be managed to ensure the skills and expertise of the team compliments the work of the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team and other support services
- This service hub approach is a central part of our future sustainability plans for Basis@Gateshead – and we also see this model as being potentially replicable across the NE: we are committed to it.
- This Basis model is helping us build the evidence base needed to show external partners that delivering out of Basis@Gateshead is a more successful and cost effective way of reaching those facing housing crisis either at their crisis point, or in many cases before things get too bad.
- Basis is a great example of how the VCS can collaborate and integrate with public services to reach the most vulnerable in our communities in a more efficient and effective way.
- As staff from partners will be based at Basis@Gateshead we anticipate they will save costs of being based in their own premises, and less money and time will be wasted signposting vulnerable people to different services, locations and experts.

5. Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Commit to provide clear single points of contacts to community organisations, and explore providing the autonomy to provide advice, support and definitive decisions as required.

Recommendation 2 – Encourage community organisations that the Council is supporting to provide an annual plan, particularly relevant with Friends of or environmental groups.

Recommendation 3 – Be clear and more transparent regarding Council fees and charges, so community organisations understand the costs and the reasons why the fees exist.

Recommendation 4 – Explore ways to improve the relationships that exist between the Council and the community and voluntary sector to encourage greater collaboration / joint working, addressing common challenges faced by residents, avoid duplication or competition and enable the Council to consider where best to invest its community development and financial resources.

Recommendation 5 – Seek ways to encourage community groups to work together, support each other and share resources and ideas.

Recommendation 6 – Develop further the Council's Volunteers Plan – Helping Out - to ensure there is clarity about the roles of volunteers, the relationships with volunteers and paid employees.

Recommendation 7 – Assess the support required by volunteers to enable them to help out effectively, safely and with the knowledge, training, advice and relevant permissions – primarily aimed at volunteers that directly support activities delivered with the Council and on Council property.

Recommendation 8 – Review the Council's insurance arrangements to ensure volunteer groups are adequately covered for the activities they are participating in and the system to obtaining cover is as efficient as possible.

Recommendation 9 – Consider ways to increase capacity across the community and voluntary sector to better secure funds from a range of sources rather than be dependent on the various forms of Council funding.

Recommendation 10 – Ensure the Council's resources to support Gateshead's communities are targeted in a way that ensures the activity delivered as a result of the funding will support Thrive.

Recommendation 11 – The Council should continue to proactively liaise with external funding partners, to maximise opportunities to invest in Gateshead.

Recommendation 12 – Monitor the delivery of the contract to support the Community and Voluntary Sector (currently held by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service) to ensure it continues to provide the advice, support and networking required by the sector in partnership with the Council

Recommendation 13 – Within the current contract to support the Community and Voluntary Sector, continue to support the development of OurGateshead to ensure it provides the service required by Gateshead residents and the community organisations represented on the website.

Recommendation 14 – Review the Gateshead Offer – which provides guidance on where to seek support for community and voluntary organisations in

Gateshead and define its commitment to find the most effective way to define its relationship and support to the sector to deliver Thrive.

Recommendation 15 – Increase publicity and communications through all means possible to raise awareness, share and celebrate the fantastic range of activities that take place across Gateshead.

Recommendation 16 – In line with the Council's Public Service Reform work, consider further place based / community hub opportunities for collaborative work between the Council, its partners and the community and voluntary sector.

Recommendation 17 – Consider increasing the capacity building resource within the Council to ensure the community and voluntary sector is adequately supported to meet the demands of Gateshead's communities in the future.

6. Recommendation

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Consider and comment on the information provided in the report and the findings and recommendations.
- Agree the final report be presented to Cabinet for consideration

Contact: Colin Huntington ext. 3880

This page is intentionally left blank

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Work Programme

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

Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 1 April 2019 and Councillors have agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes/additions to this programme.
2. Appendix 1 sets out the work programme as it currently stands. Any changes proposed to the programme will be set out in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Recommendations

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

Contact: Angela Frisby

Extension: 2138

This page is intentionally left blank

Corporate Resources OSC 2019/2020	
17 June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution/role/remit (to note) • Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives – Year End Assessment and Performance Delivery 2018-19 • Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce - Annual Update • Brexit – Progress Update – agreed to be slotted in to work programme as appropriate • Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector – Interim Report (Findings) • Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2018 • OSC Work Programme
9 Sept 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector – Final Report (Recommendations) • Gateshead Fund - Annual Update • Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework – six monthly progress update • Implementation of Workforce Strategy – Annual Update • OSC Work Programme
14 Oct 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Gateshead Volunteers Plan – Annual Report • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – six monthly progress update • OSC Work Programme
2 Dec 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives – Six Monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2019-20 (Including Thrive) • Corporate Asset Management – Delivery and Performance Report • PSP Performance Monitoring • Brexit Update / Lessons Learned • OSC Work Programme
20 Jan 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Health and Safety Performance Report • Corporate Complaints Procedure - Annual Report 2018-19 • Work of Poverty Board – Annual Update • OSC Work Programme
2 March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance Report – Annual Update • Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework – six monthly progress update • Welfare Reform / Universal Credit • OSC Work Programme
30 March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2019 • Impact on place shaping partnership work as a result of establishment of two Combined Authorities in NE • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – six monthly progress update • OSC Work Programme Review

Issues to Slot in
Brexit

This page is intentionally left blank