

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

Monday, 27 January 2020

PRESENT: Councillor(s): T Graham, V Anderson, D Burnett, B Clelland, S Dickie, P Diston, S Hawkins, H Kelly, P Maughan, J Reay, J Turnbull, R Waugh and A Wheeler

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): K Dodds, A Geddes, F Geddes and M Hood

CPL63 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on 9 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record.
- (ii) The Committee held a minute of silence for Councillor Neil Weatherley.

CPL64 NORTHUMBRIA POLICE OPERATING MODEL / 101 REPORT

The Committee received a report providing an overview of Northumbria Police's Operating Model in addition to a briefing note on 101 non-emergency call performance.

It was reported that part one of Northumbria Police Force's Operating model went live in November 2019. It was noted that this part of the new model saw the traditional approach of an Officer In Charge style of policing being replaced by a model which has created a dedicated 'Response Policing Team' and a 'Secondary Investigation Unit'.

The Committee were advised that since the introduction of new shift patterns, part 1 of the Police Force Operating Model has seen a number of requests to Neighbourhood Policing Teams to backfill for response teams fall significantly. It was highlighted that as a result of this police teams are able to spend more time within communities dealing with core objectives such as protecting the vulnerable.

An overview of the Police Force's Operating Model part 2 was provided. It was reported that this phase saw the restructuring of several teams and changes to shift patterns to better manage demand.

The report also provided a summary on the future uplift in Police numbers across all forces. It was stated that Northumbria Police are likely to see an increase of over 600 new officers over the next three years.

A question was asked as to whether there would be increases in local neighbourhood policing within Gateshead. It was noted that a new cohort of officers

are due to commence in March 2020 with additional officers being recruited via a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship.

The Committee also requested the contact details of PCSOs/police staff in their wards who could be contacted with queries. It was advised this would be possible and that the details of neighbourhood inspectors would be passed on to Councillors in the near future.

The Committee then received the report providing an update on 101 non-emergency call performance.

From the report, an overview of the 101-telephone number was provided since its introduction in 2014. The cost of calls was also reported, it was highlighted that 101 calls from mobiles and landlines cost 15p regardless of the length of time on the call or the time of day.

A table of call performance figures was summarised, it was stated that the answer rate for 1010 calls in 2019/20 was 90%. It was asked what happened with the remaining 10% of calls. Alan Pitchford advised he would investigate this and provide feedback following the meeting.

The Committee also requested information on 101 call performance on neighbouring authorities for comparison to Northumbria Police figures. Alan Pitchford advised that he would source this information and feedback in due course.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the reports.

CPL65 DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS

The Committee received the report and presentation providing an overview of the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process along with key findings and recommendations arising from previous DHRs that have occurred in Gateshead.

From the presentation the Committee were provided with a summary of domestic abuse in Gateshead. It was reported that in 2018/19 there were over 5,400 incidents of domestic abuse reported. It was also highlighted that this equates to a 10% increase in domestic abuse reports compared to the previous year. It was also noted that the cost to Gateshead is estimated at around £106million based on the figures.

The Committee were advised that it is a statutory responsibility for all Community Safety Partnerships to commission Domestic Homicide Reviews. It was so noted that the definition of a domestic homicide was expanded in December 2016 to include those where a victim has taken their own life and the circumstances give rise to concern in relation to potential domestic abuse (i.e. coercive controlling behaviour).

An overview of involved agencies was presented, this included the Police, Local Authorities, Health Services and Providers of the Probation Service. The purpose of Domestic Homicide Reviews was also reported noting that their primary purpose is

to establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work to safeguard victims. It was also highlighted that DHRs aim to help prevent future domestic abuse and homicide.

From the presentation, the Committee were provided with an overview of the main characteristics of a domestic homicide based on the findings of DHRs carried out nationally. Several case studies and examples were then provided to the Committee for information. The case of Alice Ruggles was also reported, this highlighted key findings and outcomes from the now published DHR for this case.

A discussion took place on Gateshead Council's role in domestic homicide reviews; an overview of the role was provided that highlighted that Adam Lindridge's team act as coordinators amongst partners in the completion of a review.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

CPL66 THE WORK OF THE TACKLING POVERTY IN GATESHEAD BOARD

The Committee received a report and presentation providing an update on the work of the Tackling Poverty in Gateshead Board. It was reported that the work identified and influenced by the Board seeks to mitigate the impact of poverty across Gateshead by encouraging place based and partnership approaches to delivering interventions across Gateshead and its communities.

It was reported that following the first Gateshead Poverty Conference in February 2018 steps were taken to create a strategic board made up of senior figures from within the Council and its partners from the private and third sectors. The board is chaired by Deputy Leader Councillor Catherine Donovan with Alison Dunn, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Gateshead in the role of Vice Chair.

The Committee were advised that to date in February 2018 and July 2019 two very well support poverty conferences have taken place with over 300 delegates in attendance and 15 speakers who are leaders in their field. It was highlighted that these conferences led to the creation of the board and the identification of 7 key themes of work:

- Food Poverty
- Fuel Poverty
- Child Poverty
- Housing
- Financial Inclusion
- Financial Education
- Employment Skills and Wages

It was noted that since the initial conference in February 2018 a great deal of intervention has taken place to tackle many of the injustices associated with poverty and in particular the key themes identified; further detail of the interventions was provided within the report.

It was stated that the Board have agreed that the following areas of work are priorities for 2020 and will run alongside the work already ongoing:

- Financial Inclusion
- Financial Education and Poverty Proofing Schools
- Employment Skills and Wages

It was further noted that the Board also seeks to align its work to the six priorities in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, particularly the pledges around ‘fair employment and good work for all’ and ‘ensure a healthy standard of living for all’.

The Board is also considering hosting a further major poverty event for 2020 following the success of both conferences in 2018 and 2019. The Board will also be responsive to need and will direct and allocate priority and/or resources as and when it is deemed appropriate.

A comment was made noting that there does not seem to be enough publicity for the Credit Union in Gateshead. It was acknowledged that there have been challenges in raising the profile of the Credit Union but that internal personnel changes have contributed to this. It was however noted that the Credit Union will relocate to a more prominent premises on Jackson Street in Gateshead.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and presentation.

CPL67 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the report setting out the provisional Work Programme for the municipal year 2019/20.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the Work Programme.
- (ii) The Committee agreed that the Work Programme be brought back to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Chair.....