

## **GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday, 30 November 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor John Eagle (Chair)  
Councillor(s): S Ronchetti, J Wallace, D Bradford, L Caffrey, P Foy, T Graham, S Green, M Hall and J Simpson

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): D Duggan, J McClurey, R Mullen, I Patterson, J Raine and K Wood

#### **CR34 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

#### **CR35 DELIVERING THRIVE - APPROACH TO A NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Committee received a report and presentation on the proposals to develop a new Performance Management Framework. The Council's current performance framework has been in place for several years and has evolved over time, however, there is a need to develop a new framework which better reflects the priorities of the Council and which enables it to manage performance and demonstrates delivery against Thrive priorities.

Any new framework also now needs to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 and the future shape and role of the Council. While it is clear a new approach is needed, some elements of the existing approach that work and are valued could evolve within the new framework.

A new framework would have a range of underpinning features and also have a greater focus on impact and:

- Is shaped around the characteristics needed to enable people to thrive
- Is simple, responsive, timely and meaningful indicators
- Empowers employees to drive improvement
- Incorporates qualitative and quantitative approaches
- Recognises locality-based approaches, population and community level interventions to improve
- Considers partnerships, communities and aligned to key policies and strategies such a Health and Well-being Strategy, schools, housing outcomes
- Is intelligence led, using evidence to learn and improve
- Considers how to incorporate a wider range of data, for example linking to a 'Data Hub' approach

- Measures the health of the organisation (balanced scorecard approach)
- Enables members to scrutinise performance and see the impact of decision making

The Committee were presented with some examples of what other authorities are doing. The Committee were advised that further engagement will take place across the Council with both elected members and services and that this is seen to be crucial to the development of a fit for purpose framework.

The Committee were asked to consider the following questions and their comments would be used towards the development of the framework, the Committee were also advised that further consultation would take place with Councillors in the coming months.

The Committee suggested that it was important that everyone has a shared understanding of what Thrive is meant to be about and that our staff see how what they do fits into the Thrive.

It was suggested that it is easier for Councillors to grasp how they contribute to thrive. It was also noted that it is not just about quantity of outputs it is about quality of outputs. We need to think about how do we know what we are going makes a difference.

It was noted that with regards to the notion of management and improvement plans and reduced resources we need to make sure that we concentrate resources where we can and that a management and improvement plan is focussed on what we can do. It was suggested that we look at it in three elements which can be put in a simple way to it can be reported effectively.

It was suggested that we need to look at this in a way that is statistical but that it also qualitative, for example when we talk about employee absenteeism in percentages it can end up putting more pressure on.

It was noted that there had been a very positive discussion and at this point we really don't know what is going to happen with the budget, it was suggested that it would be good to put teams together with different specialisms in order to become more effective so that council departments aren't working in silos. It was also suggested that whatever process is agreed should be tested and that if possible staff should have some involvement in the process / consultation and it was felt that it was important to have IT involved.

It was suggested that there should be a timeframe on how long the system should work for.

It was noted that if we have a performance management framework that highlights areas where performance is not doing so well, then it is at this point scrutiny can come in and ask questions about why and what could be done to improve e.g. service changes, posts etc.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That any further comments can be submitted to officers over the coming months; and
  - (ii) That councillors can contact officers if they wish to be further involved in the development of the framework

## **CR36 IMPACT OF COVID 19**

The Committee received a presentation and report on the Impact of Covid-19 in Gateshead and the work the Council had undertaken to mitigate some of the impact. The Council is currently still in the response phase but is looking at the recovery phase and lessons learned.

At the beginning of the pandemic the Council undertook both household and business surveys in order to gather real time information but also to engage with local communities.

The household survey found that:

- Significantly more people from deprived ward are worried about Covid-19
- There is an overall upward trend towards increased car use
- There has been a 40% increase in online shopping across all age ranges and more people reported shopping with local businesses or at least the same as before the outbreak
- In the most deprived wards, a greater proportion of respondents are furloughed
- More than a third have no savings or investments irrespective of whether people are in full or part time work, this could be the result of low pay or higher living costs/debt
- There is a heightened anxiety, particularly amongst young people and those of working age
- There is an increase in proportion working from home, particularly younger people
- Many expect to work more from home in future leading to a potential reduction in demand for office space and therefore a reduction in developer contributions and business rates

The business survey found that:

- There was a steep decline in turnover in quarters 1 and 2
- 1 in 3 businesses struggled to obtain materials, good and services during lockdown and sourced alternative suppliers or solutions
- Businesses are reluctant to pass increased costs onto customers, which is affecting profitability and may impact on future viability
- Ongoing uncertainty is weighing heavily on confidence and investment decisions
- Some businesses perceive there are not enough people with the skills they are looking for – 40% have reported shortages
- Other businesses need help to navigate the recruitment process

The Council has seen an increased demand on resources from local people and businesses, It is expected that the council wide financial impact will be around £50m, this includes additional expenditure for support to the adult social care and the purchase of PPE, there has also been a loss of income / reduced income due to the closure of leisure facilities and catering services being reduced. The figure is also based on a projected loss of council tax and business rates.

Staff have been mobilised to work from home safely and effectively, staff shortages have had to be managed some due to self-isolation and shortage of staff trained to cover key services.

Public Health have led the response with support from the emergency and resilience team. The response has included the creation of shielding hub and responding to increase demand for services. The approach has been prioritised using information from Business Impact Assessment and Business Continuity Plans and re-directing resources where they were needed.

Buildings have been made Covid Safe by reducing the numbers allowed and enhanced cleaning. IT have increased systems capacity through additional licences and servers with over 700 office phones diverted to officers' own phones. Committee and other meetings are being held virtually and making sure the public has the ability to access remotely. Procurement have been making sure there is a continuity of supplies and where possible extending contract arrangements in order to support local businesses, the Council and TGHC now has 12 weeks stock of key items.

Over 6000 requests for support were received and were managed via the community hubs, 300 individuals and 50 corporate groups have applied to offer support to the Council's response, 70% of volunteers supported Age UK with telephone befriending, shopping for and delivery essential items and delivering hot meals and food.

The Council has managed the business grant fund of nearly £40m issuing 3608 grants. A 12 month business rates holiday has been granted to over 1000 businesses. There are a number of examples of joint working across the council. Over £22m has been provided in council tax support dealing with over 22,000 claims. The Council is also managing the £500 self-isolation grants, there has been over 15000 applications since October, however, a significant number of people are not eligible but may need support. 89,000 telephone enquiries have been received between April and September including 6700 to the telephone hotline. The Answer rate is 93%. 21,000 plus general enquiries emails with an average turnaround of 1.5 days. There has been an increase in online payments, fly-tipping reports, garden waste subscriptions etc. A case management system has been developed and used successfully for the hubs along with other digital solutions and online systems for grant applications, pavement licences to support pubs and restaurants and compliance for business.

The Council has recognised that the pandemic has had an impact on employees in different ways and there has been a fantastic response from employees throughout. Most employees are working from home if they can. Work is continuing with trade

unions to make sure workplaces are Covid-safe in accordance with government guidance. Every clinically extremely vulnerable employee has had an individual risk assessment to ensure their needs are being properly managed. Suitable work has also been identified wherever possible for those in areas that have needed to be closed.

In recognition of the impact on staff on line support sessions have been set up which are open to all and bespoke sessions have been delivered to those working in care settings. An FAQ has been set up for employees with signposting and guidance on managing physical and mental health. Regular communications have been circulated, including messages from the Leader and the Chief Executive.

Planning ahead an 'individual employee personal discussion' template has been developed and an employee health and wellbeing needs assessment survey 2020 is being developed.

Work is ongoing across the Council to identify future needs, with a ways of working of focus, service reviews will be undertaken which will focus resources on priorities. Community Wealth building planning principles will be building ins areas such as procurement including the importance of local supply chains and local economic growth.

RESOLVED - That further update report will be submitted to the Committee in March 2021.

### **CR37 DEVELOPMENT OF OSC WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Committee received a report on the current position with regards to the OSC Work Programme for 2020/21 and proposals for the 2021/22 work programme development. The Committee were advised that further consultation would take place with members of the OSC in March 2021 for the 2021/22 Work Programme.

RESOLVED - (i) That the position with regards to the 2020/21 Work Programme be noted.  
(ii) That the proposals for the 2021/22 Work Programme be agreed.

**Chair.....**