

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday, 13 June 2022**

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

Councillor(s): S Green, J Wallace, D Bradford, C Buckley,  
D Burnett, L Caffrey, W Dick, D Duggan, T Graham,  
J Green, M Hall, I Patterson and J Turner

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor(s):

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): R Beadle and J Simpson

**CR68 CONSTITUTION**

RESOLVED - That the constitution of the Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal year be noted.

**CR69 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2022 be approved as a correct record.

**CR70 ROLE AND REMIT**

RESOLVED - That the Role and Remit of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

**CR71 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK - YEAR END PERFORMANCE**

The Committee received a report and presentation for the year end performance reporting from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 against each of the 6 policy objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard.

The views of the OSCs which were reported to Cabinet following the 6 monthly position included:

- Prioritisation and Thrive Policy – clearer priorities to achieve Thrive, focus resources to achieve the biggest impact and emphasis on early intervention and reducing longer term demand - LloN data to be refreshed end 2022 / early 2023 to understand changes post pandemic; Budget approach priority-based transformation review of Thrive and early intervention activity.
- Locality based working – ensuring that the right approach is taken with councillor and community involvement from the outset and recognising that different approaches may be needed in different areas of Gateshead –

approach to locality working being developed in collaboration.

- Housing repairs and maintenance – Housing Improvement Plan and timescales for tackling the issues and backlog to meet housing requirements and standards – Review in place to address challenges in delivery impacting on customers.
- Place and Environment – importance of a clean, safe attractive environment to support the health and wellbeing of local people – part of budget approach.
- Climate Change – Clarity on actions and progress the Council is making towards its Climate Change ambition with greater communications with local people – extensive engagement taking place.
- Employees and Workforce – Improvements to employee morale and address recruitment and retention – proposals being developed •
- Other comments also being incorporated into the PMIF i.e. use of dates, new measures, digital/ online presentation being developed, specific areas of focus such as Community Wealth Building, social care, jobs and employment

Some emerging issues which the performance data is telling us is that Covid 19 is having an impact across the Borough in terms of widening inequalities. There is also an impact on the Health and Wellbeing of Residents.

Recruitment and retention issues have been recognised and being addressed it is anticipated that this will improve as the strategy is implemented. The move to digital has continued to accelerate following the pandemic, however it is also recognised that is important to support access for all.

The Committee heard from Alison Dunn who provided an update on Locality Working. The Committee heard that the core elements of Locality Working are about:

- Focussing on the person in need
- How analysis can reveal how other people are affected and influence an individuals predicament
- Creating bespoke solutions
- Communication being key with everyone
- The development of an infrastructure being required to create an area network
- How individual situations can challenge existing services
- A partnership approach
- Working arrangements becoming more flexible
- Tackling barriers being imperative

The Committee heard from the Birtley Hub Manager who presented a case study of someone they helped who probably would not have sought help from Council services direct but using the hub as a “middle man” helped him to get back on his feet and get into shared housing with other issues also sorted for him.

At the moment it is intended that there will be 4 strategic localities roughly mirroring the 4 PCN boundaries. Each locality will have a strategic lead and be responsible for creating a plan in that area. They will understand the area and the issues and

will work with the community, community organisations and councillors to develop the plan. It is considered that grass roots organisations can access people better than the council can. It was noted that this will require a different way of working and it will be about localities working it out for themselves. In order for the infrastructure to be in place Council services will need to decide how they want to use their resources.

It is anticipated that this way of working will enable communities to be resilient and that people will take pride in their communities with the voluntary sector providing a buffer between official services. Interviews will be taking place for the Strategic Lead and anchor buildings have been identified for the first area which will be Birtley. The anchor buildings will be Birtley Library, Birtley Hub and Wrekenton Community Centre.

The second area will be piloted will be Chopwell.

The Committee heard from Debbie Worrall on the Workforce Strategy, the strategy has been developed, pulling in from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Thrive agenda. The key themes the strategy will be looking at are Recruitment and Retention of Staff, Lifelong Learning and Development, Well-being, engagement and inclusion, Leadership Behaviours and Performance and Workforce Design. It has been recognised that some of the traditional ways of attracting talent no longer work.

It has also been recognised that with regards to recruitment of trades they are unlikely to go onto North East Jobs.

The Council offers some great benefits already which can be built on. It is about recognising one size doesn't fit all and at different times in our lives we have different priorities, we have a range of benefits that employees can tap into, including our pension.

It was queried with regards to Locality Working, where does the situation with Housing set in, there are constantly daily queries and people need somewhere to go to when they aren't getting anywhere. It was queried how people will know about this and when is it going to be up and running.

It was noted that in terms of locality working there will be a lead for repairs and maintenance in each locality. They won't have to take it to the centre. For the South the recruitment will start in June, it is likely to be September at the earliest. It is anticipate that it will take 12 months to roll out across the borough.

It was suggested that one of the reasons we can't get tradespeople is that from the 80s apprenticeships for trades when down hill.

In terms of locality working it was queried why we are going back to what we had when it didn't work? It was noted that the difference is that everyone is looking to work this way now. It was queried whether we found out what the flaws were. It was noted that it was a very expensive way of working and all local authorities moved to a centralised model and whilst this did save money it left communities

exposed and fractures started to show. It was noted that is the plan to have specialist people as well as volunteers.

It was suggested that this time the work needs to be from the ground up and there is a concern that this is not implemented with a top down approach. It was noted that the locality plans will be from the ground up. The Strategic lead will work with Councillors, Local Community Groups and anyone in the community to develop the locality plan.

It was queried if we could have a breakdown of the 293 staff who have left and whether it was in particular areas. It was also queried if it was possible to pull together a briefing note on sickness levels.

It was noted that the values are important, but we have problems recruiting carers and they don't see any career progressions. We tend to also have a lot of silo thinking and during the pandemic there were people moved to the hubs who loved it and now have been moved back to their silos. It was noted that one of the things we are trying to pull together is showcasing progression. It was noted that from a trade point of view there is a clear progression, someone came in as an apprentice and is now a service manager. It was noted that the Council are also working with Gateshead College and the QE Foundation Trust.

It was noted that as Councillors the Committee need to know the statistics and identify where the issues are and what the issues are. It was suggested that we even start to talk to primary schools about potential careers.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) that a briefing note be provided on the undertaking with the Housing Regulator.
  - (ii) that a briefing note be provided on recruitment and retention, sickness absence and issues re vacancies.
  - (iii) that the comments of the Committee be noted in relation to the Performance Report.
  - (iv) that the Performance report be recommended to Cabinet for consideration in July 2022.

## **CR72 RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a report to provide an update on the Council's Resilience and Emergency Planning activities for 2021/22.

Gateshead Council along with other Local Authorities are defined as a Category 1 Responder – an organisation likely to be at the core of most emergencies. Other Category 1 Responders include Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, North East Ambulance Service and NHS England. Category 1 Responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties which requires them to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;

- put in place emergency plans;
- put in place business continuity management arrangements;
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency;
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only).

The Councils Emergency Response Team is led by the Service Director for Transformation, System Resilience and EPRR and the Resilience & Emergency Planning Coordinator during the In-Hours period.

During the Out of Hours period, a rota is in place which is covered by Executive Directors/Service Directors (who are contractually obliged to undertake this role) and a Duty Officer. Should an incident be declared, the Director would assume the role of Incident Director and provide strategic leadership and commit resources as appropriate whilst the Duty Officer would gather information about the incident, advise the Incident Director on the appropriate strategy/response as well as coordinate Council assets to assist in the management of the incident.

The Emergency Response Team has responded to the following incidents during 2021 and up to the present date:

- **February 2020 to present – COVID-19:**
- **15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – Care Call System Loss:**
- **28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – Campground Fire:**
- **5<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – Police Operation Blencathra:**
- **31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 – Eslington Court Flooding:**
- **9<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – Operation Forth Bridge:**
- **5<sup>th</sup> June 2021 – Redheugh Court Fire:**
- **26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Storm Arwen:**
- **24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – Ouseburn Farm Avian Influenza Outbreak:**
- **29<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – Storm Malik**
- **7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – Shee Recycling Centre Fire:**
- **16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 – Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin:**
- **21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 - Rowlands Gill Avian Influenza Outbreak:**
- **23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 – Present – Ukraine Situation:**
- **31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 – Civic Centre Lightning Strike:**
- **5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – Angel Court Fire Safety:**

## **2021/22 Storm Responses and Debriefs**

The Northeast was subjected to some significant storms between late November 2021 and late February 2022. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the

Council's response to each of these storms, the major learning points and the development work that has since been undertaken to strengthen future responses.

An official debrief is undertaken following each incident or exercise that the Council's Emergency Response Team has been involved in. Issues are noted and recorded as they occur and also via debrief questionnaires that are issued to all Council officers that have undertaken a role in the response. As part of the Storm Arwen debrief questionnaires were also issued to councillors and community volunteers, due to their involvement in the incident.

The Protect Duty is a planned legislation that will require organisations with publicly accessible spaces to formally assess the potential risks and mitigations required to protect the public against terrorist attacks. The proposals within the duty have been driven by terrorist attacks in recent years both at home and abroad, but with a particular focus on 'Martyn's Law' and the Manchester Arena bombing.

In 2021 the Government launched a public consultation on the proposed Protect Duty to gauge opinion on the potential physical locations and organisations to be included in the legislation, how this would be administered and what support would be required from Government.

The Resilience and Emergency Planning Team and other Council service representatives has since attended several workshops and briefing sessions, which have been hosted by the Regional Counter Terrorism Team for the North. This has been in preparation for the initial Pilot stage of the proposed Protect Duty, which is the Publicly Accessible Locations (PALs) Pilot, which began on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and will continue to be developed throughout the remainder of the current financial year. PALs is being piloted in the North and is being undertaken by the 33 local authorities in the Counter Terrorism Team for the North's area.

The focus of the PALs Pilot will be to identify publicly accessible 'Zones' within the Gateshead borough, prioritise them based on perceived risks and local intelligence and then identify current security gaps and develop plans for mitigation based on a Government framework. The initial definition of a 'zone' is currently ambiguous and could range from large geographical areas to smaller areas such as parks or business and industrial areas. This definition will be updated nationally as the pilot develops and identifies areas of good practice over the course of the year. It was suggested that this was being claimed to be a once in a century event, however, it was felt that we need to be ready for events such as these happening every year.

It was noted with regards to Avian flu we should have this as part of an annual programme with something on the Council's website giving advice about building cages now.

It was suggested we could look at having a voluntary register of equipment. It was noted that this was something which could be looked at but might prove difficult due to the insurance and other legal issues.

It was suggested that we might need to have a drought plan in place as we have had

an incredibly dry winter.

It was noted that officers should be congratulated, residents of Eslington Court had nothing but good things to say about the way the flooding was handled.

RESOLVED - (i) That the comments of the Committee be noted.  
(ii) that the Committee has indicated it is satisfied with the work undertaken.  
(iii) that a further progress report be presented in six months.

### **CR73 RESULTS OF COVID 19 SURVEY**

RESOLVED - That this item be deferred to a future meeting.

### **CR74 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING - SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee received the scoping report to seek its views on the proposed plans for the review of Community Wealth Building.

Gateshead Council have already been working with CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) to progress Community Wealth Building (CWB) across Gateshead for some time now with a major focus on further developing our approach to social value.

Community Wealth Building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy.

Work has commenced across the Council to undertake various work strands and the review will focus on the following areas:

- Make Community Wealth Building central to Gateshead strategic direction through a CWB strategy
- E-learning modules to be developed on CWB which will be available via the intranet for all staff across the Council
- Review spend analysis of top 100 suppliers to identify where contracts could be delivered locally, addressing gaps in the local supply chain and those opportunities offered to local suppliers
- Explore the development of social enterprises through the work of Economic Development
- Improve SME's access to contract opportunities through improving our internet pages and having more of a social media presence
- Support the development of a more inclusive economy by working with other organisations to embed CWB through the Community Practice meetings and discussions at Anchor institute meetings

The intention is to work with colleagues, partners and anchor institutions over the next 10 months in order to drive the CWB agenda forward. Corporate Commissioning and Procurement will hold an Evidence Gathering Session in October 2022 where CLES will talk about our CWB work to date and we will review the spend analysis. In January 2023 a further Evidence Gathering Session with

colleagues from Economic Development, HR and Procurement to discuss their work around employment and skills, the development of the local economy and the CWB outcomes achieved through procurements. An interim report will be brought to the Committee in March with the final report in April 2023.

RESOLVED - that the scope, process and timescale for the review be agreed.

**CR75 WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023**

The Work Programme report was presented to the Committee. The Committee have previously been consulted on the proposed work programme for 2022/23. Following this consultation further consultation was undertaken with partners. The Committee were advised that following consultation with partners, no further areas for the work programme were suggested by partners.

The Committee asked that it be considered that some work be undertaken on local food supplies and also on the impact of inflation on communities and households in Gateshead.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) that the 2022/23 work programme be noted and the comments of the Committee in relation to the work programme be noted.
  - (ii) that the provisional work programme for 2022/23 be endorsed by the Committee and referred to Council on 21 July 2022 for agreement.
  - (iii) that it be noted that further reports will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

**Chair.....**