

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 30 January 2023

PRESENT: Councillor B Clelland (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, A Geddes, D Burnett, F Geddes,
H Weatherley, H Kelly, J Reay, J Turnbull, R Waugh,
P Maughan, A Wintcher, S Gallagher, P Burns and D Welsh

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): K Dodds, S Dickie and V Anderson

CPL51 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

A comment was made regarding support for local businesses; it was queried as to whether the support the Council can offer is being advertised effectively. Kevin Scarlett advised the Committee he would make contact with the relevant team within Economy, Innovation and Growth so that assurances can be provided to Councillors.

The Chair updated the Committee advising that the car crime figures that were previously requested had been received from the Community Safety Team.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on 5 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

CPL52 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR REVIEW

The Committee received a report seeking views on the progress of the Anti-social behaviour (ASB) review.

It was reported that a major review of ASB services in Gateshead is underway, commissioned by the Community Safety Board (CSB). The Committee were advised that the impact of ASB is consistently evidenced in public consultation exercises, with action to tackle ASB being one of the top priorities for Gateshead residents. It was noted that tackling ASB is a complex issue with expertise, responsibilities and powers shared between different agencies that take different approaches, use different definitions, thresholds, and with a variety of resources and priorities.

An overview with details of the review goals was provided as follows:

- Goal 1 - To better understand together how we tackle ASB in Gateshead.
- Goal 2 - To agree a shared purpose between services involved in tackling ASB, supporting victims and in helping perpetrators to change their behaviour.
- Goal 3 - To set up and test new ways of working that achieve that purpose

- and make best use of resources.
- Goal 4 - From the learning, make informed decisions about permanently changing the way work is designed and managed.

It was highlighted that when each type of ASB demand has been tested, it will then be necessary to work out how to make the redesigned method 'everyday business' to allow for continued learning and further improvement. It was also noted that it is important to "hardwire in" the measures that will ensure the work continues to achieve its purpose.

It was also reported that the review has focused to date on the ASB that results in the greatest number of reports and demand on services. This has centred around behaviour by adults that cause harassment, alarm or distress such as noise, threatening behaviour, neighbour disputes and poor waste management. The Committee were advised that further work is required to investigate the extent, underlying causes, services and solutions to youth related and wider types of environmental anti-social behaviour.

The Committee expressed their support for aims of the review and noted that continued strong working relationships with partners such as Northumbria Police are important. A comment was also made that ASB causes havoc in communities and can have serious detrimental impacts to the health and wellbeing of victims.

A question was asked regarding support for staff who deal with ASB; it was also asked what framework was to be put in place so staff are aware of certain triggers for action against ASB. Officers advised that teams will work to a 20 day resolution on ASB reports, it was also noted that there are plans for the Council to have a single point of contact for ASB reporting to streamline the existing process.

The Committee discussed environmental ASB, particularly in relation to fly tipping. The Committee expressed frustration at the prevalence of fly tipping across Gateshead and noted that the current 'reactive' method of enforcement was not efficient. Officers advised that as part of the review, more preventative measures to reduce fly tipping were being explored; it was acknowledged that as part of the review new ways of working and measures would be developed on a case-by-case basis.

The Committee asked whether there is ward level data in relation to ASB that can be shared; it was agreed that this information would be circulated outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

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

CPL53 PRIVATE LANDLORD REGISTRATION SCHEME - UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an update on the progress of Selective Landlord Licensing (SLL) and the potential proposals from Government to introduce compulsory landlord registration.

It was reported that Gateshead has been at the forefront of tackling poor standards in the private rented sector. It was stated that in September 2007 the Council introduced one of the first Selective Landlord Licensing schemes in the country.

It was noted that the successful implementation of licensing schemes in Gateshead has been proven to improve landlord management and to reduce or stabilise problems such as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime, and to have a beneficial impact on other indicators of low housing demand. It was also reported that this has included a reduction in the requirement for tenants to have cause for complaint about their homes, reduction in turnover of residents, and a reduction in the number of empty properties.

The Committee were advised that since the first scheme, a further seven schemes have been introduced (each lasting five years) at Chopwell River Streets in 2010, Central Bensham Phase 1 in 2012, Swalwell in 2013, Central Bensham Redesignated Area in 2018, Avenues Phase 1 in 2018, Avenues Phase 2 in 2019 and Avenues Phase 3 in 2020. It was highlighted that there are four current schemes in place, covering approximately 1,500 homes.

It was noted that in line with the Council's Thrive agenda, the proactive engagement with residents within SLL areas has brought to light other issues including social, economic, health and wellbeing concerns that would not have been identified without SLL. The Committee were also advised that the financial contribution that schemes make from landlord licence fees has allowed intensive work with residents within these areas improving outcomes for them and improving confidence in their neighbourhood.

The Committee noted that the Council's Cabinet approved the following in October 2022:

- A proposal for an evidence led assessment of potential areas of the borough that would benefit from Selective Landlord Licensing. A consultant has since been appointed to progress this, and we are taking steps to gain up to date information on stock condition to support this work.
- The proposal to consider at a future Cabinet meeting, details of the proposed areas and to receive and consider at that time a proposed programme of SLL scheme implementation, subject to statutory public consultation.

The Committee were advised that staff in the Private Sector Housing team will take forward the tasks and milestones agreed by Cabinet and will bring a further report to OSC on progress later in the year.

The Committee questioned what happens to a SLL once the five years has lapsed; officers advised that this can be extended in some circumstances and that a feasibility study to assess their effectiveness is underway.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the report.
- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive a further update at a future meeting as plans progress.

CPL54 HIGH STREET SOUTH UPDATE (PRESENTATION)

The Committee received a presentation providing an update on developments at High Street South.

From the presentation, the Committee were provided with a timeline of progress for the development as follows:

- **November 2019** – Cabinet agreed to assembly of High Street South using Capital Programme. Owners and tenants informed and invited to engagement event.
- **November 2019 to March 2020** – Open door to those willing to sell properties to the Council and negotiations proceed. Some limited properties acquired.
- **March 2020** - Council pauses negotiations to understand implications of Covid on budgets.
- **February 2021** – Cabinet agrees to High Street South being a ‘delayed project’ – same goals and aspirations but with reduced budget and longer timescales to enable funding to be funnelled to COVID priorities.
- **February 2022** – Cabinet agrees increased capital programme for acquisition and demolition of more focused High Street South red line.
- **Summer 2022** - Appointment of new Programme Manager and new Housing Workstream lead.
- **Summer/Autumn 2022** – Consultation on refreshed Exemplar Neighbourhood SPD, and review of acquisition strategy, project boundary and business plan.

A summary of the Exemplar Neighbourhood context and progress was also provided in addition to an update on progress to decant residents of Warwick Court. It was highlighted that throughout the next 12 months there will be continue acquisition of properties by negotiation at the site as well as demolition works where appropriate.

The Committee commented that residents wanted more from the town centre than housing; it was noted that there is a lack of leisure facilities for residents and that walking and cycling routes needed to be improved.

It was agreed that a seminar would be arranged for further detail and discussion to take place on the High Street South developments. All Councillors will be invited.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the update.

CPL55 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2022/27 (PRESENTATION)

The Committee received a presentation providing an update on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022/27.

Following the update, the Committee were advised that over the next 12 months there will be a focus on the following:

- Further development of the Homelessness Forum and Charter
- Commissioning of supported accommodation – Domestic Abuse, Multiple/Complex Needs and Young People
- A Temporary Accommodation Review
- The design and implement of a Homelessness ‘Gateway’ to accommodation and support
- Implementation of the new Supported Accommodation Improvement Team
- Bids for funding from Supported Housing Accommodation Programme
- Progress on joint working protocols

The Committee welcomed the work being done as part of the Strategy. It was suggested that the support available could be advertised better and not limited to Gateshead, it was noted that a lot of Gateshead residents use the People’s Kitchen in Newcastle and that this could be a good venue to promote Gateshead’s services.

The Committee discussed the impact of the Council’s severe weather protocol; it was noted that the Council are proactive in their approach to tackling homelessness and providing support as needed. It was acknowledged that there cannot be a blanket approach to the services delivered and that each case would be dealt with based on the individual’s needs.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the update.

CPL56 HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2022-2027 (FOR INFORMATION)

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the document for information.

CPL57 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the annual work programme report for 2022/23. The Committee were also advised that the consultation for the 2023/24 Work Programme is underway.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the information in the report and endorsed the provisional work programme.
- (i) The Committee noted that further reports would be brought to the meeting to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.