



# *HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA*

**Monday, 29 January 2024 at 1.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre**

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From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

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Item	Business
1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b> (Pages 3 - 10)
3	<b>Community Safety Board - Strategic Priorities 2023/24 (Update)</b> (Pages 11 - 18)  Report of the Director of Public Health
4	<b>Street Lighting Update</b> (Pages 19 - 24)  Joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities
5	<b>Update on the Council's Allotment Service</b> (Pages 25 - 28)  Report of the Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities
6	<b>Building Safety and Compliance</b> (Pages 29 - 32)  Report of the Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities
7	<b>Work Programme</b> (Pages 33 - 36)  Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Governance

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## GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 4 December 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Clelland (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, D Burnett, H Weatherley, H Kelly,  
J Turnbull, V Anderson, A Wintcher, S Gallagher, P Burns,  
K Walker and L Brand

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): A Geddes, F Geddes, K Dodds, S Dickie,  
P Maughan and D Welsh

#### **CPL88 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **CPL89 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK – SIX MONTH UPDATE – 2023-24**

The Committee received a report on the Council's Performance Management & Improvement Framework, reporting performance on the delivery of Council priorities for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023. An overview was given of performance relevant to the role and remit of Housing, Environment & Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The framework has been put together to support Gateshead Council's THRIVE strategy. It was noted that some metrics included in the report are annual measures which are reporting figures at a six-month mark.

The data identifying key areas already, those being;

- Budget pressures continue to provide a significant challenge.
- Continuing demand pressures being face by services, which are compounded by the ongoing recruitment and retention issues.
- The cost-of-living and high interest rates are impacting the financial challenges facing many residents.
- The economic climate continues to make things difficult for many businesses in the borough.

A presentation was also given to the Committee on making data accessible for scrutiny, including a demonstration of Power BI and how this can be used to track data for the Office for Local Government.

The Committee noted that a more visual view of the data would support better public and scrutiny understanding of the presented content.

The Committee were advised measures are being continuously reviewed to understand where changes may be needed to ensure PMIF remains robust and relevant.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. Comment on the 6-month report at Appendix 1 and identify any areas for further scrutiny.
- ii. The OSC recommended the performance report to Cabinet for consideration in January 2024.

**CPL90 HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q2**

The Committee received a report to update members on the Housing performance results at the end of quarter 2, 2023/24.

The Performance Management Information Framework has been developed to ensure the council achieve their Thrive outcomes, in addition a separate suite of performance measures have been developed for the Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities directorate. The performance measures were developed to underpin the delivery of the council's strategy across all tenures and not just limit to Council Housing.

The performance results set out in appendix 1 for the committee are comparing current performance against the 2023/24 targets. Green – Achieving target, Red – Not achieving target and Amber – not yet reported.

Quarter 2 shows there are 43 KPI's which are reported on;

- Five indicators are green, this shows we have achieved the annual target.
- Four indicators are amber, this shows we have not met the target set but performance has increased on the previous year.
- 13 indicators are red, this means we have not yet met the target set and the performance has decreased compared to the previous year.
- 21 indicators are not measurable. Of these indicators:
  - 13 are Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) and will be reported traffic lighted when the survey results are reported in quarter 4 2023/24.
  - Two indicators are measured and will be traffic lighted at year-end.
  - Two indicators are new for 2023/24, reported quarterly and is set with a baseline target. Data collected in 2023/24 will be used to set targets for 2024/25.
  - Of the remaining four indicators all reported quarterly with annual targets set for 2023/24. The KPI's are measured via a numeric count and will be traffic lighted at year-end.

Quarter 2 performance indicates 9 out of 12 measurable performance indicators can be traffic lighted as on target or improving, which relates to 41%

of measurable indicators.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted their views on the Key Performance Indicator results.

## **CPL91 HOUSING COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report seeking their views on Gateshead Council's complaints performance for the first six months of 2023/24.

Complaints and Compliments:

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) Complaint Handling Code (CHC) sets out its expectations that social landlords develop a positive complaint handling culture, and that accountability and transparency are key elements.

The code states that governing bodies of social landlords should receive regular updates on complaint performance to allow for scrutiny. It has therefore been agreed with the Chair of HEHC OSC that officers will present a housing complaint's update to OSC on a six-monthly basis. In addition, a complaints update will also be taken to HEHC Portfolio on a six-monthly basis.

In July 2023 to be compliant with the HO the Council adopted a two-stage process for handling complaints. Stage 1 complaints will be responded to in 10 working days, and stage 2 will be responded within 20 working days.

In the first six-months of 2023/24 there was 115 stage 1 complaints compared to 2022/23 where there were 46 complaints. Whilst Stage 2 showed 29 complaints in 2023/24 compared to the 11 in 2022/23. Even though the number of complaints has increased this should be seen as a positive improvement.

The council achieved 53% response rate of responding to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days. Of the 29 complaints escalated to stage 2, 83% were responded to within the target of 20 working days.

It has been challenging changing the process to response to a two-stage review process. A complaints dashboard has been developed that provides data on all open complaints. The complaints dashboard also provide insight into common complaint trends and recurring issues. Furthermore, the Regulator of Social Housing requires social landlords collect and report a set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) from 2023/24.

- Complaints relative to the size of the landlord.
- Complaints responded to within Handling Code timescales.
- Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints.

A review of the stage 1 complaints identified the following;

- 77 complaints received were related to Repairs and Maintenance, the key

themes being;

- o Time taken to complete the repair.
  - o Poor communication
  - o Failing to keep appointments.
- 22 complaints from Neighbourhood Services, the key themes being;
    - o Anti-Social Behaviour – handling of cases
    - o Damage to property
    - o Service Charges
    - o Condition of estate/external areas

These themes continued into stage 2 with majority of the complaints being repairs and Maintenance and Neighbourhood Services. Tenants were requesting a review of their stage 1 complaint as they were dissatisfied with their stage 1 outcome.

The team have been encouraging employees to report when they receive a compliment about a colleague or a service. This has been providing valuable insight into what the tenants think are going well and what they appreciate but also how we can continue to improve the service. Recording compliments allows to boost morale within the team. During the first six months 48 complaints had been registered: 24 for Neighbourhood Housing Service and 19 for Repairs and Maintenance. Further compliments had been registered for Lettings, Neighbourhood Relations Team, and Planned Investment.

Housing Ombudsman Annual Report 2022/23:

The housing ombudsman produce an annual report to summaries the key themes and figures from the previous year.

The 2022/23 report identified;

- An increase of 27% in complaints received compared to previous year.
- Over 6,500 orders and recommendations made to landlords.
- £1.1 million in compensation awarded.
- An increase in maladministration findings, where service requests or complaints are not handled reasonably.
- A decrease in findings of no fault, over half found in the tenant's favour.
- 323% increase in the number of severe maladministration findings from 31 to 131. Of these 112 related to landlords with over 10,00 homes.

The report also provides social landlord with their own Annual Performance report.

- Four determinations (the number of cases decided upon by the Ombudsman).
- Four maladministration findings in two of the determinations.
- No cases of severe maladministration.
- £1,100 awarded in compensation.

Gateshead Council's maladministration rate of 50% was below the national average of 55% for all social landlords with over 10,000 properties. It is also the national average of 62% for local authorities and ALMO of a similar size.

For the first six months of 2023/24 the housing ombudsman accepted three complaints to investigate, one of the complaints resulted in no maladministration was found, the further two complaints are awaiting an outcome. 21 further complaints had been referred through the complaints process. These complaints went straight to the housing ombudsman before reaching out to the council.

One severe maladministration determination relating to a case dating back to 2018 relating to damp and mould. A review has now taken place in how the Council handle and record issues relating to damp and mould, with a new process being agreed and implemented. The new process also includes a best practice identified from the housing ombudsman spotlight report. This new process has been communicated across all tenants.

Complaint handling code:

Social landlords are required to complete a self-assessment to ensure they are fully compliant with the code. Officers have worked with a focus group of tenants to complete the 2023/24 assessment. This has been published online.

Officer Support and Training:

In April 2023 employees were issued with a team brief for an updated complaints process, this was followed up in November 2023 with the Council's performance. Over 100 employees have completed training on the new complaint handling process with further training to come.

The Committee had discussed the new system will be beneficial for the tenants but would like a series of reports and illustrations for further background information.

RESOLVED

- i) The Committee noted its view on performance for complaints and compliments for the period April 2023 – September 2023.

## **CPL92 COUNCIL VOIDS UPDATE (PRESENTATION)**

The Committee were presented with a presentation on the number of empty properties in Gateshead.

The Council sets a budget in accordance with the business plan. The budget looks at the rent coming in, the main source of its income, and the expenditure what we spend the money on. Gateshead have over 18,000 properties, when the budget is set the Council need to take into consideration how many have tenants in and have an ideal number of voids.

The current challenges the Council are facing:

March 2021

November 2023

<b>No of empty properties</b>	642	626
<b>Loss (excluding Ctax)</b>	£3.3m (£1.9m at begin of Nov 2020)	£2.05m at begin of Nov 2
<b>Process of being let</b>	156	162
<b>Held for demolition</b>	18	4
<b>Other reasons</b>	8	56
<b>Undergoing works</b>	436	388
<b>Empty for 6 months</b>	17%	17%
	April - Oct 2022	April – Oct 2023
<b>Properties made ready to let</b>	628	724

The age and condition of the properties returned increases the level of work needed. The service has undergone a review of the repairs process and identified key areas of improvement. Many of the employees have been upskilled in trades to reduce standstill time on properties. A planner has been recruited to look at the void process to navigate various works taking place at the same time.

Other challenges are the change in the housing market:

- Longer stays in bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation.
- Pressures on single persons accommodation and family housing
- Some properties reserved for tenants aged 50+ more difficult to let.
- Two-bedroom flats unaffordable to many applicants
- A much larger housing register
  - 13,637 applications for housing in Oct 2023, compared to 6,793 in April 2020
- More applicants with critical or urgent need
- Fewer council properties let each year.
- Greater pressures in terms of the private sector landlords ending/threatening to end tenancies.

The Council are aiming to make further improvements to the service, the team have analysed the current position in detail which has been reviewed by senior management. An implementation plan has been created and agreed. A project team will be working on addressing the challenges around empty homes by the end of March 2024. Workshops are underway to identify specific actions required, with directors overseeing the delivery plan along with a subject expert Campbell Tickell. NEC void management module has already been mapped out with updates to follow to reflect new process. This will be completed in house with the aim of April 2024.

## **CPL93 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report which provided details on development of the work programme for OSC's and the provisional work programme for Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC for the municipal year 2023/24.

The Committee agreed to defer the update on street lighting in relation to community safety to the January 2024 meeting.



**Chair.....**

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**TITLE OF REPORT:           Community Safety Board – Strategic Priorities 2023/24**

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**1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report provides Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of some of the key activities that have been co-ordinated on behalf of Gateshead Community Safety Board since September 2023 to tackle the strategic priorities outlined within Partnership Plan 2023/24.

1.2 The purpose of the report is to seek the views of the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC and for members to identify any key issues/areas they wish to scrutinise in detail at a future meeting.

**2. Background**

2.1 As a reminder, the Community Safety Board is a standalone statutory partnership made up of representatives from Responsible Authorities (including police, local authority, fire and rescue, health, and probation service). These agencies work together to protect local communities from crime and disorder and help people feel safe. The Board’s core statutory functions are to:

- address crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour and behaviour which adversely affects the environment).
- combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances.
- reduce re-offending.
- tackle serious violence.

2.2 The Board also has a statutory duty under Crime and Disorder Act to produce an annual intelligence-led Strategic Assessment (an assessment of need based on data) along with a Partnership Plan (which sets out the priorities and activity that will be undertaken by the Board to address its core statutory functions). A copy of the Partnership Plan 2023/24 has previously been presented to Committee.

2.3 The strategic themes/priorities agreed by Community Safety Board for 2023/24:

STRATEGIC THEME 1: Tackling Serious Violence	STRATEGIC THEME 2: Thriving Communities	STRATEGIC THEME 3: Protecting People from Harm
Serious Violence & Knife Crime Domestic Abuse & VAWG Serious & Organised Crime	Anti-Social Behaviour Locality Working Reducing Re-offending	Hate Crime & Tensions Preventing Radicalisation Combatting Drugs
<b>STRATEGIC THEME 4: Strengthening Governance &amp; Accountability Arrangements</b>		
Community Safety Review	Strategic Assessment	Information Sharing

### 3 Crime Performance

3.1 The table below shows crime and disorder performance in Gateshead from April through to December 2023:

Offence Type	Current (Apr-Dec23)	Previous (Apr-Dec22)	Change (Vol)	Change (%)
All Crime	14,724	14,129	+595	+4%
Violence against the person - Without injury	3,870	3,521	+349	+10%
Violence against the person - With injury	1,713	1,693	+20	+1%
Violence – Other	125	104	+21	+20%
Sexual offences	517	444	+73	+16%
Theft and handling	2,749	2,629	+120	+5%
Criminal damage	1,990	1,972	+18	+1%
Public disorder	1,457	1,419	+38	+3%
Vehicle crime	965	1,137	-172	-15%
Burglary	765	746	+19	+3%
Drug crime	280	254	+26	+10%
Other	293	210	+83	+40%
Adult-related ASB	3,217	3,111	+106	+3%
Youth-related ASB	1,002	860	+142	+17%
Total ASB	4,219	3,971	+248	+6%
Deliberate Secondary Fires	462	621	-159	-26%

Source: Local Authority LALO Report provided by Northumbria Police Corporate Development Department (Apr-Dec23)

3.2 Recorded crime in Gateshead has increased by 4% (+595 crimes) which is lower than 5% increase experienced across Northumbria. Violent offences continue to account for the highest proportion of crime in Gateshead and increased by 7% on last year. Increases were recorded in most major crime types during this period, with reductions only achieved in vehicle crime. There has been an 26% fall in the number of deliberate secondary fires reported in Gateshead. ASB has risen by 6% (three-quarters of all reported ASB is committed by adults). Youth-related ASB increasing by 17% (+142 incidents).

3.3 The Safer Communities Survey is used to help capture resident perceptions and feelings of safety across Northumbria in relation to crime and disorder. The latest results (covering Apr-Sep23) shows that Gateshead experiences low/poor results for several of the recorded measures compared to Force average – including:

#### Perception of Neighborhood (Ghd vs (Force))

- 40% (30%) feel their neighbourhood has got worse in the last 12 months.
- 32% (25%) think ASB is a very or fairly big problem in their neighbourhood.
- 30% (35%) think the Police presence in their area is about right.
- 91% (94%) feel very or fairly safe living in their neighbourhood.

#### Perceptions of Police and Council (Ghd vs (Force))

- 75% (81%) are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 67% (70%) agree Police can be relied on to sort out problems.
- 62% (69%) think Police do a good or excellent job in their neighbourhood.
- 30% (40%) think Council do a good or excellent job in their neighbourhood.

#### 4 Progress to date

- 4.1 Each identified priority was allocated a Strategic Lead by Gateshead Community Safety Board to provide strategic oversight and direction and to deliver improved outcomes within their respective priority area. The Strategic Leads have provided the following snapshot of the activities undertaken since the last Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities update in September 2023:

### STRATEGIC THEME 1: Tackling Serious Violence

#### **Serious Violence** (*Strategic Lead: Steven Hume – Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit*)

- A serious violence needs assessment has been drafted to highlight trends in serious violence over the last three years. A number of recommendations have been put forward to tackle serious violence in Gateshead and will feed into Gateshead's serious violence action plan.
- A serious violence workshop and consultation event was held with Community Safety partners to assist in the drafting of a local serious violence action plan. The action plan has now been drafted and will be submitted to the Home Office for approval.
- Northumbria Police have revised their GRIP hotspots. GRIP hotspots are areas that have been identified as having higher levels of violent crime *outside* of the home, from lower-level Section 39 common assault to serious violence, including murder. There are two areas identified in Gateshead, and these areas are subject to high visibility patrols and problem solving activity to try and reduce levels of violent crime.
- Planning is underway in preparation for a possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) relating to serious youth violence, led by colleagues in Children's Services.

#### **Domestic Abuse** (*Strategic Lead: Jill Lax – Northeast and Cumbria Integrated Care Board*)

- Gateshead Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (chaired by Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey) and Gateshead Domestic Abuse Strategy Delivery Group (chaired by ICB Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults, Jill Lax) have been re-established to progress statutory work required as part of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Strategic Housing, with support from Community Safety, have developed a commissioning and procurement plan for domestic abuse supported accommodation, in line with the Safe Accommodation duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Community Safety are due to commission another two Domestic Homicide Reviews in early 2024 and will be working with the Coordinators/Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Reviews and Drug-Related Death panels on joint learning and recommendations.
- Gateshead Council continue to support the VRU with Northumbria-wide learning from DHRs and will be part of the Northumbria OPCC pilot site for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism, along with Newcastle, Sunderland, Northumberland and North Tyneside.
- Gateshead Council continue to offer an in-house Domestic Abuse Service, providing specialist support to victim/survivors of any gender, and their children. Gateshead Domestic Abuse Service also deliver a Behaviour Change Service which provides 1:1 intervention with perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Gateshead Council commissioned a six-month strategic review of domestic abuse, which is currently in its final consultation stage with key Strategic Directors. The final

report and options appraisal will go to the Gateshead Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for decision making on 9 February 2024.

- The priority for the Gateshead Domestic Abuse Partnership over the next 6 months is to review the domestic abuse needs assessment, produce a Gateshead Domestic Abuse Strategy, and deliver on the recommissioning of Safe Accommodation for victim/survivors of domestic abuse.

### **Serious and Organised Crime** *(Strategic Lead: Superintendent Pitt – Northumbria Police)*

- Operation Redrock was established in response to the high number of drug-related deaths in Central Gateshead and aims to help partners understand the intelligence picture. This operation allows for a quick response to any high harm drugs intelligence. As part of this operation, a lot of disruption activity has been ongoing and has resulted in the seizure of cash, weapons, drugs and vehicles.
- Disruption of serious and organised crime activity continues. In the last six months partners have worked together to target the illegal tobacco trade through the use of closure orders and the seizure of illegal tobacco, vapes and cash. A number of warrants have also been executed at residential addresses linked to drug supply.

## **STRATEGIC THEME 2: Thriving Communities**

### **Anti-Social Behaviour** *(Strategic Lead: Paul Thompson – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service)*

- A review of the ASB Case Review (Community Triggers) process took place following the ASB Strategic Board in late 2023, resulting in region wide task and finish group being established (inc all 6 local authorities & Northumbria police), looking at recommendations taken from an independent review that was carried out in 2023 by Resolve. The aim of the task and finish group is to identify a standardised structure and pathway, that allows for better informed decision making, robust thresholds and less punitive time lines for partners to work towards.
- Community Safety has secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund that will provide a significant uplift to current youth outreach offer. Applications were received from 14 agencies, seven of which have been awarded funding to deliver a range of youth provision over the next 12 months, across several areas of Gateshead. Provision will run from February 2024 – March 2025. There has been an additional post funded by Public Health, to support with this provision, the post will manage the monitoring and reporting in line with UKSPF requirements as well as support providers in finding funding to continue the delivery post 2025.
- Completed the review of job profiles, roles and responsibilities for the new ASB investigation unit. It is hoped that a comprehensive team will be in place by April 2024.
- Operation Impact, was carried out in Gateshead which resulted in a multi-agency response to addressing key community safety and anti-social behaviour concerns within Central Gateshead. This included numerous arrests, seizure of weapons, drugs and counterfeit goods – as well as visits to over 1,000 properties, and engagement with residents and local businesses.

### **Locality Working (Gateshead Council – Lead: Neil Bouch)**

- A Localities Project Manager has been appointed and is now in post to support the implementation of locality working and embedding the approach across the Borough.

- The funding received from Safer Streets Round 4 for a multi-agency co-located hub in Birtley and Lamesley wards has now ended. Analysis shows that there was a 34% reduction in anti-social behaviour reported (while across Gateshead as a whole anti-social behaviour increased by 5%)
- Four key workstreams have been developed: Connected Communities; Connected Partners; Data, Evaluation and Learning; Governance and Communications.
- Colocation of services is now underway in other localities in the borough, including Leam Lane and Blaydon Libraries/facilities, as well as collocating alongside partners at Teams Life Centre and St Chad's. Work is also underway to develop the offer at Wrekenton Hub, linking in with the family hub that will be based there.
- The Neighbourhood Management team is now transitioning to locality contracts; this should be complete by 5th February. The team will then move from five operational areas to four localities, in line with partners and the strategy.
- The Early Help service has realigned its operational geography and cases are now being allocated based upon four locality geographies. Early Help managers are engaging with Locality Coordinators in each area to develop working relationships.
- Proposals to focus on four broad localities aligned with current ward boundaries are in development, linked to LloN data and need, and in line with partners and alignment with the Early Help team and housing teams.
- Work is continuing with a wide range of internal and external partners to further develop the partnership / team around the community approach across the borough.
- A work programme is underway to assist the roll out of the locality model boroughwide.
- Regular meetings between Elected Members and Locality Coordinators are in diaries and designed to ensure that stakeholders are fully sighted on local activity and issues.
- Locality plans have been developed covering the whole of the borough and these, as with the south, reflect a wide range of activity designed to address Thrive outcomes.
- Working procedures and learning that demonstrate the impact of locality working through a range of case studies involving numerous partners have been implemented.

### **Reducing Re-offending** *(Strategic Lead – Jo Dixon – Probation Service North East)*

- Gateshead's Youth Justice Service was inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in February 2023. The service was rated "Good" overall, with "Outstanding" implementation and delivery. There were a total of seven recommendations made by the Inspectorate, which have been incorporated into a development plan and into the Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan.
- The Youth Justice Service has been awarded the Digital Transformation in Social Work award at the National Social Worker of the Year Awards 2023.
- Youth Justice Service have produced a Digital Me video with Digital Voice, a co-produced animated film capturing their experiences of how they became involved in offending behaviours, their experiences of youth justice services and what worked for them to stop offending. The video can be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/tnoyL3OhF5A>
- Gateshead Youth Justice Service was allocated funding to deliver the Turnaround Programme. "Turnaround was developed by the Ministry of Justice, is based on similar principles to those underlying the Supporting Families programme, including the view that children on the cusp of offending often have complex needs.

Turnaround funding will support YOTs, and their local strategic partners, to expand best practice in early intervention” MOJ. The delivery model adopted in Gateshead is through our Early Help Service.

- Divert from Charge is used to prevent children and young people being charged by police unless in extreme cases, such as offences that could lead to a remand and instead, cases are referred through to a panel process before a final decision is reached. As a result of the Divert from Charge arrangement, young people are not to be labelled as offenders, this helps to prevent young people from forming deviant or delinquent identities that may impact on their development. The process avoids unnecessary disproportionality in the criminal justice system and enables tailored diversionary interventions which are therapeutic, targeted, and appropriate whilst avoiding the stigma of conviction.

### **STRATEGIC THEME 3: Protecting People from Harm**

#### **Hate Crime and Tension Monitoring (Northumbria Police – Lead: Jamie Pitt)**

- Gateshead Council’s 2024-26 Hate Crime strategy and action plan is being developed by members of our Hate Crime Tensions and Monitoring group. Key areas include raising public awareness of hate crime reporting, increasing the level of hate crime reporting to police and promoting hate crime education.
- As a response to the Israel – Hamas conflict, we are working with Northumbria police on partnership capability and the development of a region wide collaborative response at a strategic, tactical and operational level following a number of hate crime related incidents in relation to Op Tarlac (National operation relating to the Israel and Palestine conflict).
- Ongoing relationship development with key community and sporting groups in Gateshead to increase confidence in Police and hate crime reporting. Ongoing work with Durham and Northumberland Football Associations looking at education and support for reporting at a grassroots level.
- Central Engagement Team continue to offer Hate Crime champions training across the partnership and have provided tailored awareness sessions to VCS and Public sector organisations.

#### **Preventing Radicalisation (Gateshead Council – Lead: Adam Lindridge)**

- New Prevent Duty Guidance 2023 and statutory instrument to bring it into law was set out in September 2023. The PDG (Prevent Duty Guidance) is statutory guidance under Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – and, subject to Parliamentary approval, it was due to come into force on 31 December 2023
- In addition, a Prevent Duty Toolkit has also been published which identifies a series of specified benchmarks for Local Authorities to deliver against as part of its Prevent Duty.
- The Home Office will use new benchmarks as part of its local authority assurance programme to monitor the delivery of Prevent. The assurance programme involves a 1:1 discussion with the Regional Prevent Adviser, where local authorities are expected to demonstrate their compliance against each of the benchmark criteria. This is due to take place in spring 2024.



## Combatting Drugs (Gateshead Council – Lead: Julia Sharp)

- The Local Combatting Drugs Partnership continues to meet on a Northumbria Police footprint, chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner, with Gateshead Director of Public Health, Alice Wiseman, as the Senior Reporting Officer. A needs assessment and the national outcomes framework has informed the delivery plan for the partnership.
- We are now reaching the latter part of Year 2 of 3 of the increased investment in substance misuse provision. This has resulted in scrutiny from the National Combatting Drugs Unit to ensure that the funding is translating into performance and outcomes. There is a particular focus on the numbers of people accessing structured treatment, access to residential rehab, and continuity of care from prison to community.
- Planning for the 3rd year of increased investment is now underway. Gateshead has been awarded a grant of over £2.4 million to continue to build capacity within the substance misuse treatment system. The funding runs until the end of March 2025, after which we have no certainty of future funding.
- The number of cases reviewed in the Gateshead Drug Related Death meeting remains higher than we would like, but stable. There have been 20 suspected drug-related death cases reviewed in 2023. This figure is lower than in previous years. We do not know the exact cause of death at the point of our local review, however, the latest ONS Drug Related Death figures were released in December and cover the period 2020-2022. This three-year rolling data shows that the standardised rate per 100,000 Deaths related to Drug Misuse (persons) is 12.8, which is an increase from the 2019-21 rate of 11.9. This rate shows the male rate as 21.3 and the female rate as 4.4. The North East continues to have the highest rate of deaths relating to drug poisoning and drug misuse nationally.

### STRATEGIC THEME 4:

#### Strengthening Governance & Accountability

- Carried out a review of Gateshead Council's Community Safety function. The recommendations have been presented to the Community Safety Board.
- Trialled a new process for undertaking the partnership strategic assessment. This new process involves more in-depth discussions with partners and subject matter experts in each thematic area and will help identify the strategic priorities for 2024/25.
- Discussions are ongoing with Northumbria Police to consider how we can improve perception and feelings of safety concerns through increased communications and media coverage to outline the breadth of proactive work undertaken by the partnership in Gateshead.

## 5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC is asked to:
- (i) Comment on the activities undertaken in relation to the strategic priorities of the Community Safety Board.
  - (ii) Continue to receive six-monthly Community Safety updates.
  - (iii) Identify any issues/areas OSC may want to scrutinise in detail at a future Committee meeting.

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**TITLE OF REPORT: Street Lighting Update – Impact of changes to street lighting in line with light pollution considerations and impact on community safety**

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## **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a broad overview of impact of changes to street lighting in line with light pollution considerations and the potential impacts of reduced street lighting on community safety and perceptions of crime and disorder.

## **Background**

2. The principal objectives of the provision and maintenance of Street lighting are:
  - a. Provision of a safe network for all users, considering particular needs of vulnerable groups.
  - b. Protection of the night time environment by ensuring lighting levels reflect the diversity of the borough.
  - c. To maintain lighting to a standard that allows safe use of the network during the hours of darkness.
  - d. To sustain the night time economy of the borough
3. Street Lighting can be used to promote safety and security, in both urban and rural areas, and it can also help increase quality of life by artificially extending the hours in which it is light so that activity can take place. We know that darkness, and locations with restricted visibility, can often create feelings of personal insecurity and fear of victimisation. Darkness can also create a potentially favourable environment for crime, vandalism, and theft, including thefts from vehicles, and properties.
4. To achieve this street lighting, engineers follow industry guidelines set out in British Standard (BS) 5489-1:2020 that considers pedestrian and traffic safety when designing Street lighting levels.
5. As part of the Council's 2030 vision, it is planned to make Gateshead carbon neutral by 2025. To assist in achieving this goal, a Carbon Management Plan (CMP) was established with the aim of reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 35% (with an aspiration of 40%) by December 2014.
6. The Invest to Save Programme (ITSP) is a key project for the CMP and has seen Gateshead Council install LED lanterns across the borough. The ITSP has enabled part night switch off and dimming to be utilized across the borough.
7. Main and feeder road lighting (lanterns on columns 8 Metres and above) switch on at 100%, dim to 75% power at 8pm, then to 50% power at Midnight until 5.30am

when they return to 100% power. Main road dimming/switch off was first implemented 1/7/2015.

8. A trial demonstrated what light from the 'then new' LED lanterns in residential areas (lanterns on 6 metre and smaller columns) looked like when dimmed to 50% power and 25% power. This new light source of LED could be used at lower power outputs because of the way the human eye visualizes with the LED light's whiter colour.
9. Following the demonstration, trials were carried out to gauge the reaction from residents in selected areas in Dunston, Teams, Whickham and Saltwell. This had a favourable response from residents who reported that there wasn't much visible difference from 100% to 50% power.
10. Residential areas (lanterns on 5 and 6 Metre high columns) are dimmed to 50% power from switch-on, then to 25% power at Midnight until 5.30am when they return to 50% power. This dimming regime was first implemented on 2/9/2015.
11. Following the roll out of the above, the option of a part night switch off was considered. The Main and feeder network were the only area's considered, residential areas were not. To select the areas for part night switch off, guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals was considered and all main roads were risk assessed prior to being part night switched off.
12. In recent years, most local authorities, including Gateshead Council, have opted to reduce street lighting levels at night to reduce carbon emissions and to save energy and maintenance costs. This report hypothesizes how changes to street lighting might influence community safety-related issues.

## Theory

13. Light Pollution has become a more prevalent issue of late with reference dark sky areas attracting headlines. The Street Lighting code of practice changed the required levels of lighting & uniformity in all areas. This reflects the Directional white light sources we now use, reduces levels of light pollution, wasted energy and reduces carbon emissions.
14. Gateshead Council's remit is to provide lighting on the adopted highway. The previous generation of lanterns wasted energy spreading light in an indiscriminate manner, illuminating gardens and resident's front doors which, for some people was a bonus but for others, was intrusive.
15. This change to directional LED lanterns has had an impact on resident's perception of lighting levels, and coverage, while correctly only lighting the adopted highway.
16. The issue of reduced street lighting on tackling crime is often hotly debated with various academic studies carried out to assess associated benefits and limitations

of street lighting initiatives on crime prevention efforts. In broad terms, there are two main theories of why improved street lighting may cause a reduction in crime:

- a. The first theory suggests that improved lighting leads to increased surveillance of potential offenders (both improving visibility and increasing the number of people potentially on the street) and therefore leading to increased deterrence of potential offenders.
- b. The second suggests that improved lighting signals community investment in an area, leading to increased community pride, community cohesiveness, and informal social control.

## **Evidence**

17. The national evidence base surrounding the impact of reduced street lighting on crime and disorder is not strong – and questions concerning potential crime preventive effects of lighting initiatives remain unanswered.
18. An academic study carried out in 2022 by LANTERNS (\*a national collaboration between London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and University College of London Security Crime Science Department) evidenced the absence of street lighting altogether may prevent crime but that spatial and temporal displacement remains. The study found that the absence of street lighting was strongly associated with a reduction in vehicle theft compared with daytime incidents but night time thefts from vehicles increased in the surrounding streets where street lights remained unchanged. It was also suggested that reducing the lighting in streets could hinder a criminal's ability to assess their target suitability and, therefore, they are less likely to pursue their target. Conversely, research published in 2008, by European Crime Prevention Network, would indicate improved street lighting in an area leads to significantly reduced crime and advocated street lighting initiatives within public spaces. The College of Policing Crime Reduction Toolkit also evidenced street lighting, as a form of situational crime prevention, is positive and an intervention that can reduce crime. Violent and property crime was reduced by an average of 21% in areas with improved street lighting compared to areas lower levels/without. A Department for Transport study in 2003 found that road safety was perceived as a key benefit for street lighting improvement in an area.
19. Research carried out in 2015 by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine looked at the determinants of health and wellbeing in relation street lighting. The report found little evidence that the introduction of lower street lighting had made significant differences to wellbeing, except in residents' feelings of personal security and safety; albeit, even where there were strongly held views or anxieties few reported direct impacts on outcomes such as mobility.

## **Gateshead Context**

20. Benefits of the ITSP include:-
  - a. The dimming and part night switch have enabled optimal reduction in the levels of power required and the carbon generated to do this.

- i. In the financial year 2009/10 7466 tonnes of carbon were burnt on street lighting, in 2022/23 it had reduced to 761 tonnes a reduction of 6705 (90%) tonnes of Carbon dioxide that will be emitted by Power Stations into the Atmosphere.
      - ii. In the financial year 2009/10 15,120,571 kw/h of energy was required to for street lighting, in 2022/23 it had reduced to 3,646,003 kw/h a reduction of 11,474,568 (76%) kw/h consumed
    - b. Any reductions in lighting levels automatically produce savings in energy costs and form Part of Gateshead Councils contribution to being Carbon Neutral by 2030.
    - c. A reduction in the number of lighting patrols
    - d. Increased lamp-life due to dimming.
    - e. The lamps produce white light which improve colour recognition.
    - f. New lanterns require less maintenance and cleaning.
21. However, concerns have been raised by members about the lighting levels throughout the borough. Reference has been made to the fact that cabinet reports associated with the dimming process deemed that there were no crime and disorder implications.
22. Officers are also aware that new lanterns have been installed on columns with height and spacings designed for previous generations of street lights. This will in some instances reduce the light levels. The column replacement programme will rectify this in many instances but has another 10 years to completion.
23. Between January and March 2023, we launched a Community Safety Survey which asked residents to pinpoint areas in Gateshead where they felt unsafe and the potential reasons why. We received more than 470 responses to the Survey – of which around 38% (180) of people cited poorly lit areas as a potential reason for feeling unsafe/avoiding an area – extending to 59% (279) if we included all respondents who cited poor lighting as a reason a person may feel unsafe but who have reported that they themselves feel safe in the area.
23. There were a total of 472 responses to the Survey, of which 340 said that they felt very or somewhat unsafe (72%) – of which:
- i. 54% say the area being poorly lit makes them feel unsafe
  - ii. 24% of respondents say the area having restricted visibility makes them feel unsafe.
24. If the Survey responses are filtered on “Poorly Lit” and “Restricted Visibility at otal of 279 responses are identified – of which:
- i. 194 say feel very or fairly unsafe (7 out of 10 people)
  - ii. 60% of respondents are women
  - iii. Almost 9 in 10 live in the area they are saying is poorly lit/restricted visibility
  - iv. Two thirds say the area has become worse in the last 12 months
  - v. Almost 60% have witnessed or been a victim of an incident here (we don't ask what the incident was)
  - vi. Three quarters say they would avoid the area after dark
  - vii. Almost half are aged 45yrs+ (a quarter 45 to 54yrs, a fifth between 55 and 64yrs)
  - viii. Responses mostly from Vulnerable or Just Coping neighbourhoods

25. A separate Safer Communities Survey was carried out by Northumbria Police. The latest results show that 91% of Gateshead respondents feel very or fairly safe living in their neighbourhood (force area = 94%) and 40% think that their neighbourhood has got worse in the last 12 months (force area = 30%). The survey covers the 12 months to September 2023.

## **Recommendations**

The Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC is asked to note the information provided on the Impact of changes to street lighting in line with light pollution considerations and impact on community safety.

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**Contact:** Adam Lindridge, Community Safety Manager/Mike Batty Interim Head of  
Community Safety **Tel:** 0191 433 3243/07970 271528

**Contact:** Paul Fairless, Highways Service Manager **Tel:** 0191 433 7222

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## **TITLE OF REPORT: Update on the Council's Allotment Service**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To report on the work of the Council's Allotments Officer and allotments service.

### **Background**

2. The Council employed an Allotments Officer in November 2020. Since that time the Officer, Colette Davies, has been working to deal with a number of issues, including waiting lists, unlettable and overgrown plots, and invoicing among others. The service transferred from Public Health to Environment & Fleet Management in October 2022. An update was provided to OSC in March 2022 and the following updates on progress since that date.

### **Waiting lists**

3. We currently have 594 waiting list applications and this figure includes 215 new applications that have been processed since 1 Oct 2022.
4. Between October 2022 and October 2023 120 waiting list applicants have been allocated their own plot.
5. Where possible larger plots are being split into more manageable sizes, reducing waiting list and this also brings in extra revenue, this is to be continued as part of routine site management.
6. Regular contact with waiting list applicants is proven to be beneficial to manage long waiting lists. We currently have no lettable vacant plots suitable for cultivation.

### **Updated Tenancy Agreement**

7. The council currently has 1333 allotments across 56 sites. Each allotment holder tends their allotment under a Tenancy Agreement. In general, most allotment holders manage their plot in line with the council's expectations and the Tenancy Agreement. However, on occasion, issues can arise where tenants have misunderstood or misinterpreted the Agreement and gaps in the existing Agreement have been exposed. This is usually by new allotment holders who do not have the experience or full understanding of how allotment plots should be managed. Also, the Tenancy Agreement has not been reviewed for some time and it was felt necessary to update the Agreement to help support the Allotments Officer in their application of the rules and also make it easier to understand, particularly for new tenants.
8. The updated agreement will be issued to new allotment holders only, to ensure a gradual improvement in plots in going forward but the improvements will also be

encouraged amongst existing holders. The changes have been given the full support by the Allotment Association.

9. The key changes and reasons for the updates are detailed below.

#### Vehicles and Tyres

10. Historically tenants have used tyres to grow vegetables in but it has been found that tyres degrade and leach chemicals into the soil. Also, it is very costly for the council to remove and dispose of tyres from vacant plots. Some tenants store trailers or old cars on their plots which is inappropriate and can cause pollution problems. Caravans have historically been used on allotments but we want to prevent this in going forward. They can also be very expensive to remove from vacant plots.
11. The updated Agreement includes clauses to prevent the use of tyres, vehicles and caravans on allotment plots.

#### Beekeeping

12. Beekeeping is becoming more popular and we wish to encourage this where it is appropriate to do so. Beehives can pose a risk to allotment holders where they are not properly managed.
13. The updated Agreement includes a clause to request permission prior to introducing beehives and other arrangements will be required to ensure that proper arrangements are in place to minimise risk and nuisance.

#### Bonfires/burning rubbish

14. The majority of our sites are located very close to residential properties. Residents should be able to open their windows, hang out washing, sit in their garden without smoke nuisance from the allotments. The majority of allotment complaints relate to smoke nuisance. Association managed sites already have burning restrictions (Nov to March) but at the moment our tenants can burn all year. There is no need to burn all year and tenants should be encouraged to compost garden waste. There is concern that some tenants bring waste to the sites to burn.
15. The updated Agreement includes clauses to control and restrict burning.

#### Vermin

16. Vermin problems are on the increase and it needs to be made clear to tenants that they are responsible for their own pest control and to manage their allotment to prevent attracting and harbouring vermin. The updated Agreement includes a clause on this requirement.

#### Cultivation

17. An updated clause clarifies the percentage of the allotment that needs to be cultivated.

## Structure/buildings

18. Historically tenants have built brick buildings and oversized structures such as conservatories on allotments. The updated Agreement clarifies what structures and items are allowed on site.

## Site Perimeter

19. The council is responsible for the perimeter of allotment sites but it is not always affordable to replace or repair perimeter structures in line with the expectation of allotment holders. The current clause on the issue will be updated with 'determined by the available budget' to help manage tenants' expectations.

## **Ongoing Issues being addressed**

20. Historical unlettable plots are being identified with a view to bringing them back into a lettable condition subject to appropriate funding.
21. Overgrown plots will be offered out with a rent-free period as an incentive to accept the plot.
22. Regular monitoring of outstanding invoices and 'notice to quit' letters have been issued where necessary, allowing waiting list applicants to be allocated newly vacated plots.
23. Regular site visits are taking place to ensure current tenants are complying with their tenancy agreement.
24. Historically, site secretaries on Association managed sites have been responsible for allocating plots and there have been cases where people on the waiting list have been bypassed. The Allotments Officer now takes a more proactive role with the site management and allocations to prevent queue jumping. Regular updates are requested and if a plot is not allocated in accordance with the Council's waiting list, this is challenged.
25. We currently have 2 sites with horses; Leam Lane Stock and the Hurrocks. Historically both sites have been used for horses albeit unauthorised use for number of years.
  - Hurrocks - topographical and bathymetric surveys at Derwent West Bank have now been completed and the Consultant is moving on to the next stage of the feasibility report. We are awaiting a further update.
  - Leam Lane Stock allotments – a full survey was carried out Oct/Nov 2022. The site is not classed as an allotment site and discussion will take place with Property Services and Ward Members on its future management, Property Services currently rent out the surrounding grazing land. Details of a survey have been provided to Ward Members including information on what the individual plots are being used for.
26. Community Gardens – Constant monitoring of the waiting list and communication with individuals has resulted in increased participation. We have 2 new community groups this year at Bill Quay and Heartlands, Chopwell. They have been given free rent. Community group gardening has had a positive impact on the waiting lists. We will continue to encourage community groups with an interest in allotments.

Community allotments will also provide some capacity and opportunity for GP social-prescribing and we will work with Public Health on this longer term objective.

27. We have found that it has not been necessary to purchase new software to manage the allotments as we have a working spreadsheet system that has proven to be more than adequate to successfully manage the allotments. The interactive map on the council website is now up and running for members of the public to use.
28. Bill Quay Allotments is now managed by the council as unfortunately the previous Association folded.

### **Recommendations**

29. The Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities OSC is asked to note progress and ongoing improvement of the allotments service.

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### **Contact:**

Kevin Hills, Technical & Bereavement Services Manager, ex 7413

Colette Davies, Allotments Officer, ex 8480

## **TITLE OF REPORT: Building Safety and Compliance**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an overview on the current building safety and compliance position

### **Background**

2. The Building Safety Act 2022 (The Act) came into law on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023. The Act introduced new duties for the management of fire and structural safety in high rise residential buildings. This includes increased responsibilities for building owners and changes to fire safety legislation.
3. The Act applies to new and existing occupied buildings over 18 metres high or containing seven storeys or more with at least two residential units. The Act clarifies who has responsibility for fire and building safety for the life cycle of higher risk buildings.
4. The Act introduced a requirement for building owners to have an Accountable Person (AP). The AP has a legal duty to assess building safety risks and provide a Safety Case Report to the Building Safety Regulator. This report demonstrates how risks are being identified, mitigated, and managed to ensure residents' safety.
5. The Safety Case report is supported by the golden thread of information which evidences the assessment and management of Building Safety risks.
6. In addition, to The Act, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations came into force in January 2023 which introduced new duties for building owners or managers. There was no impact to the Council as all regulatory requirements are in place.
7. The Act made amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 to improve fire safety in all buildings regulated by the FSO. These improvements form Phase 3 of the Home Office's fire safety reform programme, building on Phase 1 (the Fire Safety Act 2021) and Phase 2 (the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022). There was no impact to the Council as all regulatory requirements are in place.
8. The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 came into force 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022. This requires smoke detection on every habitable floor of a property and carbon monoxide detection in any room with a gas appliance (except kitchens). Carbon monoxide detection is fully in place. Smoke detection is in a rolling programme with a July 2025 completion target.

### **Current Position**

9. In line with the requirements of The Act all Gateshead Council high-rise blocks were registered with the Building Safety Regulator by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October

2023. Key building information was provided within the 28-day timeline after the registration application was submitted.

10. The key building information included details of:
  - the external wall system of the building,
  - the type of roof system,
  - detail of any external fixtures, such as balconies,
  - the structural design of the building,
  - the type of staircasing,
  - the make up of the different levels of the building,
  - the energy supply,
  - fire and smoke control systems,
  - type of evacuation strategy in place.
  
2. In late 2023, Gateshead Council took part in a pilot scheme with the Health and Safety Executive which looked at the content and layout of the Safety Case Report and the type of information required. This has enabled completion of the first 2 reports with the remaining 22 to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
  
3. The Building Safety Regulator will assess all high-rise buildings in the UK over a five-year period starting from April 2024 prioritised on their height and number of residential units. Four of Gateshead Council high-rise blocks are expected to be categorised in the first tranche – Eslington Court and Redheugh Court with 21 storeys and 166 flats each, Regent Court with 10 storeys and 160 flats and St Cuthberts Court with 17 storeys and 84 flats.
  
4. A significant amount of work has taken place to meet the requirements of the current legislation and regulation. This includes:
  - an ongoing fire risk assessment programme,
  - completion of external wall structure surveys,
  - completion of building fire strategies,
  - block evacuation processes,
  - a customer vulnerability process in partnership with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service,
  - ongoing high rise block audits, with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service,
  - completion of safety case reports for Regent Court and St Cuthberts Court with Eslington Court and Redheugh Court due for completion by mid-February 2024,
  - resident engagement strategies and meetings with the resident's multi-storey safety group to discuss how documentation is shared with residents and plans for a high-rise block website page,
  - a complaints procedure for residents via a dedicated email address'
  - a mandatory occurrences process to report any incident or situation relating to the structural integrity or fire safety of a higher risk building to the Building Safety Regulator. This is over and above the existing Council incident reporting process and those relating to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.
  
5. An annual flat front door inspection programme is in place and on target. 577 of 837 flats in 10 blocks have been accessed to date for inspection – 67.02% access rate. A total of 1,850 require inspection across the 24 blocks. All missed

appointments will be followed up. There may be a need in extreme cases to take legal action to enforce access under the new powers included in The Act.

6. A fire door specification is in place to expedite replacement of tenant damaged doors at an average of 15 doors at £20,000 per month. This changes the current 3 week lead in from the current supplier to a reactive service.
7. A quarterly inspection programme of 1,534 communal fire doors is in place and on target.
8. Any high risk repairs are addressed immediately.
9. The high-rise fire detection system, within dwellings, complies with regulation. Some upgrades to the existing systems are planned during capital schemes or when the properties become vacant. This will place additional detection in kitchens and lounges.
10. New compliance software is in the process of implementation with a target date of April 2024. This will provide a major part of the golden thread of information directly from the various compliance and risk assessment programmes.

## **Compliance**

11. Of the six key compliance areas there are no areas of high risk.
12. Fire risk assessments are within target. All remedial actions are within acceptable completion action plans. The programme comprises of 24 high rise blocks, 104 mid rise blocks, 308 low rise blocks, 9 aged person units and 27 communal lounges.
13. Gas Servicing is 100% compliant – 16,607 properties. Solid fuel servicing is 100% compliant – 10 properties.
14. 98.94% of properties have an electrical condition report that is less than five years old – 18,014 of 18,206 properties. The testing programme is in year five of a five-year programme. 192 properties without a test certificate within the last 5 years are due to three access refusals. Re-access will be attempted on an annual basis unless a significant hazard can be evidenced. 3,767 properties are considered safe but are not compliant with the latest electrical regulations. These properties are reinspected every two years and are on a rolling upgrade programme.
15. All fire alarm and emergency lighting testing are compliant.
16. The programme of inspecting the 413 known asbestos containing materials in communal areas is compliant. Two sections contained within service risers are considered high risk asbestos but negligible risk due to near impossible access. These continue to be monitored.
17. The domestic property water risk assessment programme is on target. This has prioritised properties which are at higher risk due to stored water systems. The team continue to carry out water risk assessments in vacant properties and where

changes are made to the water systems in properties. This builds data used to identify any additions needed to the programme.

18. The passenger lift servicing contractor has fallen behind on a servicing programme that is usually 100% compliant due to staff illness. This will be back to full compliance during February 2024. This is minimal risk due to the safeguards built into the lifts. Passenger lift servicing is currently 53% complete and thorough inspections 77% complete.

19. Personal lift and lifting device servicing is currently 83% complete. Access continues to be difficult, and support is provided by Adult and Childrens Social Care and Housing Management. As reasonable endeavours can be evidenced the programme is considered compliant.

20. LOLER/thorough insurance inspections of lifting devices have similar access issues and are currently 66% complete.

21. New compliance software is in the process of implementation with a target date of April 2024. This will report on all areas of compliance.

### **Proposal**

11. Continue to meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulation.

### **Recommendations**

12. OSC is asked to note this report.

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**Contact:** Ian McLackland, Service Director, Repairs and Building Maintenance.



**TITLE OF REPORT:**           **Work Programme**

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

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## Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

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1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 19 June 2023 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 and highlights proposed changes to the programme 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.



<b>DRAFT Housing Environment &amp; Healthy Communities OSC Work Programme 2023-24</b>	
<b>19 June 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance Management and Improvement Framework – Year End Performance 2022-23</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing Design and Energy Efficient Standards</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing Key Performance Indicator Target Setting 2023/24</b></li> <li>• <b>Changing Futures, MCN and Homelessness</b> (<i>focus on linkages and impacts and join up</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>
<b>11 September 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Safety priorities update / progress</b></li> <li>• <b>Lifelong Learning</b> (<i>focus on;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>what is available academically and physically</i></li> <li>- <i>Is there a clear picture of provision across the borough</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Parking enforcement – Update</b> (<i>focus on;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>what can be done to prevent pavement parking</i></li> <li>- <i>how can we better enforce / do we need additional powers?</i></li> <li>- <i>Plan / projected timescales / measuring success</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Brexit Update (Information Only)</b></li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>
<b>23 October 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Construction Services Update - Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Plan Progress Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Damp &amp; Mould Compliance</b></li> <li>• <b>Locality Working</b> (<i>focus on progress and any impacts</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>
<b>4 December 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance Management and Improvement Framework – Six Month Update – 2023-24</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing Complaint Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing and Compliance Performance Monitoring Q2</b></li> <li>• <b>Council Voids</b> (<i>deep dive into whole end to end process</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>
<b>29 January 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Safety priorities update/progress</b></li> <li>• <b>Update on Allotments</b></li> <li>• <b>Street lighting in relation to Community Safety</b></li> <li>• <b>Building Safety Compliance and Assurance in Council Homes</b></li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>
<b>11 March 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Flood and Water Management Act 2010: Annual Progress Report</b></li> <li>• <b>Update on new approach to anti-social behaviour</b> [<i>Deferred from January 2024</i>]</li> <li>• <b>Housing Development Programme Update</b> (<i>focus on;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Progress reporting / breakdown of tenure</i></li> <li>• <i>Risks issues and challenges to deliver</i></li> <li>• <i>Gateshead's vision re fall in local population / housing development to facilitate more sustainable living / redevelopment of brown field sites</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Affordable Housing</b> (<i>to include;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Profile of existing stock</i></li> <li>• <i>Housing in pipeline / proposed housing</i></li> <li>• <i>Organogram showing affordability based on income</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2023</b></li> <li>• <b>Economic Development/Physical Development and Regeneration</b></li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>

<b>13 May 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing and Compliance Performance Monitoring Q4</b> <i>(to include;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>Operational Performance</i></li> <li>b) <i>Compliance Performance</i></li> <li>c) <i>Regulatory Self – Assessment)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Housing Complaint Update</b></li> <li>• <b>Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan</b> <i>(to include;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Fleet, community EV provision and infrastructure</i></li> <li>- <i>School catering (plant based alternatives to meat / cheese</i></li> <li>- <i>Impact of domestic fires / log burning</i></li> <li>- <i>Local transport networks and encouraging connectivity without car dependency</i></li> <li>- <i>Public transport and connectivity</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Work Programme</b></li> </ul>
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**Issues to slot in:**

- **Street Scene Investment Impacts**
- **Housing Regulatory Standards (Self-Assessment)**

**Issues for 2024/25 Work Programme**

- ***Housing Allocations – May / June 2024***
- **Update on Environmental Enforcement – Sept 2024**