

## Corporate Resources: Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives – Six-Month Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2019/20

2 December 2019

Portfolio:	Leader
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Martin Gannon
OSC Chair:	Councillor John Eagle
Lead Officers:	Lindsay Murray, Service Director, Commercialisation & Improvement Andrea Tickner, Service Director, Corporate Commissioning Procurement

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report relates to how well the Council is achieving against the strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives and the Council pledges:
- Put People and families at the heart of everything we do.
  - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance.
  - Support our communities to support themselves and each other.
  - Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the Borough.
  - Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead.
- 1.2 Progress and achievements of strategic indicators, in line with the committee's remit, are provided along with areas of future focus.
- 1.3 Tables highlighting an update to the six-month performance and the performance of the strategic indicators are provided in sections B and C.
- 1.4 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the current position relating to the implementation of budget proposals that have previously been highlighted as potentially having a disproportionate impact in relation to equalities.

#### 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The committee is asked to consider:
- (i) whether the activities undertaken during April 2019 to September 2019 are supporting delivery of the Thrive agenda;
  - (ii) any areas they feel they require more detail or require further scrutiny;
  - (iii) the recommendations of service directors on future monitoring of budget proposals for equality impact and whether there has been a disproportionate impact following implementation (identified in Appendix 1); and
  - (iv) note that Cabinet will consider a composite performance report at their meeting on 21 January 2020.

## Section A

### 3.0 Performance Overview

- 3.1 The committee receives performance data relating to 15 strategic indicators. Of these, 7 are relatively new indicators to capture performance due to transactional digital improvements, and trading and commercialisation activities. Of the 15 indicators, 12 are reportable at 6-months with 10 indicators showing improved performance and 1 where performance is down and one unchanged. There is an indicator on the employee survey which is not reporting in 2019, as a survey has not been undertaken.
- 3.2 It is proposed that an indicator on the increasing in traded services be withdrawn. This is because the indicator is broad and duplicates data, particularly the information already reported in the Services to Schools indicator.

### 4.0 Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do

#### Performance

- 4.1 There are two strategic indicators linked to the Council pledge of putting people and families at the heart of everything we do:
- Performance relating to the speed of processing housing benefit claims has shown further improvement at 8.3 days, compared to 9 days for the same period last year.
  - To support the Council's role as corporate parents to children and young people who are looked after, the Council has a strategic indicator to achieve a year on year increase in the number of young people leaving care who are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship. The 6-month figure for 2019/20 remains at 2 including an apprentice in The Gateshead Housing Company.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

#### Achievements, Challenges and Actions

- 4.2 For the first six months of the year the speed of housing benefit claims processed have improved by 0.7 days measured against the equivalent period last year. This performance has been achieved despite the challenges faced administering an increasing volume of Universal Credit (UC) claims from those in supported and temporary accommodation. There have also been an increased number of changes of circumstance and reviews as part of initiatives required by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The team continue to support Gateshead residents and in addition to working with the Citizen's Advice Bureau to support UC claimants, a welfare benefit advice service is available to all Gateshead residents. This service aims to provide a more holistic approach to alleviating financial hardship.
- 4.3 The focus for the remainder of the year will be to improve performance by looking at further software changes and working with the DWP to identify more efficient ways of sharing data and building capacity in terms of welfare advice and provision.

- 4.4 On 15 October 2019, Committee received a report setting out the Council's strategy for the delivery of apprenticeships within the Council and the response to the Government's introduction of a number of changes to the apprenticeship system as part of their strategy to deliver three million apprenticeships by 2020. Included in the report was a draft apprenticeship strategy and an update that an Apprenticeship Co-ordinator has now been appointed for a two-year term. Part of their role will be to explore apprenticeships for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers. An update will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Sub OSC in January 2020, where the Education Annual Report will include an update on apprenticeships - including LAC apprenticeships.

## 5.0 Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance

### Performance

- 5.1 This committee does not monitor strategic indicators relating to this Council pledge.

### Achievements, Challenges and Actions

- 5.2 Between April and September 2019, a variety of courses were available on equality and diversity, including sessions directly aimed at foster carers and open access courses for staff and workers from partner organisations. The themes of the courses ranged from autism acceptance to Mate/Hate crime to raising awareness. In the first two quarters of 2019/20, 118 people have attended training with further courses planned.

- 5.3 Gateshead Council employees joined many other organisations from both public and private sectors to celebrate diversity by taking part in a Pride parade through Newcastle in July 2019. The feedback has been positive. It is proposed to continue to promote and celebrate diversity and equality within the Council and in our communities.

- 5.4 Appendix 1 summarises the assessments provided by services of the equality impact of budget proposals following implementation. Two existing budget proposals are monitored by this committee:

- Review of commissioned arrangements/supporting people voluntary organisations; and
- Review of Carers Services.

A further 9 agreed proposals from the 2019-20 budget setting process are included for equality monitoring by this Committee.

## 6.0 Support our communities to support themselves and each other

### Performance

- 6.1 New strategic indicators relating to the Council's Digital Programme and the Council pledge to help our communities to support themselves and each other, has seen percentage increases in online transactions improved over the previous year. Online payments saw an increase of 14.33% in income. There was growth in all online indicators with fly-tipping reported online growing by 6%, while garden waste subscriptions increased by a further 1.15% to 66.38%.

Further information is provided in Section C of this report.

## **Achievements, Challenges and Actions**

6.2 There are three workstreams which define the Gateshead Digital Programme. A summary of key projects achieved is identified below along with future actions intended over the next six-month period. Further information on achievements is provided in Section B of this report.

1) **Digital Customer** - making it easy for customers to report, book, pay, be paid, attend and to receive a decision online.

- A focus of digital services is delivering an excellent customer experience to those choosing to self-serve on the internet. This is demonstrated by the introduction of online birth and death appointment bookings for the Registrars service from March 2019. Previously all appointments had to be made over the phone or face-to-face. Since the introduction of the new facility 64% of birth registration appointments and 36% of death registration appointments have been made online. In the first 6 months of 2019/20 this has meant the Council has received 1,172 fewer calls to book appointments.
- The number of residents choosing to pay their bills online has increased with 10.12% more transactions in 2019. For the first time income received via the website is forecast to exceed £20m this year with residents rating the service 4.6 out of 5. The facility to register a My Gateshead account, so that you don't have to remember account numbers, was also introduced in April 2019. Currently 955 people have signed up.
- The number of garden waste subscriptions paid for online has remained stable in the six months to the end of September 2019, at 66.38%.

Future focus over the next six-month period:

- Garden waste subscriptions and payments will be moved to the GOSS digital platform for 2020 collections. This will introduce new improvements such as the ability to sign up for notifications about when the service starts and when payment is due.
- Gateshead residents will be able to book the majority of registrar's appointments online including notice of marriage, notice of civil partnership, conversions from partnership to marriage and corrections to certificates. In addition, SMS notifications will be introduced to remind people about their appointment bookings. As the services continue to be promoted, we expect online access to increase to over 60% in 2020.
- As demand grows for online services, we will continue to provide a joined-up experience across all channels by making greater use of the GOSS digital platform for handling customer contact in a consistent way for all our customers.

2) **Digital Ways of Working** - making it easy for employees and Councillors to work remotely, collaboratively. To simplify our policies and processes, merge and optimise frontline mobile processes, improve key systems and make them easy to use. To support employees to use digital solutions and work together to solve problems creatively.

- Introduced a self-service booking system for Civic Centre meeting rooms. This started in July 2019 and by the end of September 2019, 66% of all room

bookings were made via self-service, reducing the time spent on each booking by almost 80%. There are now 52 rooms available to book or request via the self-service booking system. This figure is anticipated to reach 77 rooms in the next reporting period.

- New digitised processes have been introduced for Sundry Debtor requests; Nexus Travel Pass applications; travel request applications and Print Point requisitions.
- Introduction of telephony one number dial technology, to enhance communication for employees to effectively work from anywhere e.g. to receive calls to their 433 number to an app on their works mobile device, and to show the 433 number when dialling out from the app rather than the mobile number.
- Introduced home working telephony for contact centre employees, to enable the employees to receive routed contact centre calls on their preferred device - effectively working from anywhere.
- Implementation of Microsoft 365 across the Council which has enhanced both agile and collaborative working with the introduction of the following new technologies:
  - OneDrive – Cloud based storage space. For personal files, enables collaboration and sharing with internal colleagues.
  - OneNote – your own digital note pad, which can be accessed on your desktop, mobile device or online. Updating in real-time.
  - Skype – allowing you to make and receive video and audio calls. Providing employees, the benefit to dial into meetings as an alternative to attending a meeting where required.
  - Bring Your Own Device – allowing access to your work Outlook account on a personal device through Microsoft Outlook application.

Key areas of focus over the next six-month period to improve ways of working will be on:

- Onboarding / Exit Processes - ensuring new entrants are fully equipped to fulfil their role from day one and leave the organisation in a managed way.
- Review and automation of employee expenses e.g. overtime, car mileage and personal expenses.
- Automating employee correspondence (where appropriate) to achieve efficiencies via electronic means.
- Upgrade to the Council's HR and Payroll System - i-Trent.
- Undertake a review of the Council's Agresso financial processes.
- Introduction of Microsoft Teams and SharePoint Online – secure platforms for both internal and external collaboration. Microsoft Teams brings together into one platform, voice and video meetings along with file storage and collaboration.
- Microsoft Portal Any Device – Allowing access to your Microsoft online portal (providing MS applications such as Word, Excel, Outlook) via your own device outside of the Citrix remote access platform.
- Implement agreed changes and new ways of working for the telephony contact for customers contacting The Gateshead Housing Company housing offices.

3) **Digital Skills** – We aim to engage, enthuse, empower and enable residents, employees and councillors to make better use of and benefit from technology and digitally supported services. This workstream is aligned to overcoming barriers of access, confidence and motivation.

- 140 public internet PCs are accessible in the Civic Centre and libraries across the Borough.
- 324 local people have accessed life skills courses, including a City & Guilds qualification for absolute technology beginners, including jobseekers. 306 informal digital skills workshops have been delivered, reaching 3,988 children, young people and adults.
- Corporate meeting rooms have been equipped with standardised, easy to use technology to ensure all employees are able to use the equipment without specialist intervention.
- There has been targeted outreach work with residents to increase skills and confidence, for example a men's group at the Blaydon Shed and work with a group of resettled families with The Gateshead Housing Company.
- 8 tailored sessions for domiciliary care staff using apps and tools they can use in their personal life to build confidence in using mobile devices.
  - Initiated a comprehensive face to face IT training programme, online user guides and videos to support employee confidence in using products such as Microsoft 365 and presentation equipment.
  - Online guidance documents have been accessed 4,188 times in the last 6 months and face to face education has been delivered to 63 attendees since the launch of the IT training room in September 2019.

Key areas of focus over the next six-month period include:

- Introduction of a tablet-lending service for residents and community groups to encourage improvement in their digital skills and promote digital inclusion.
- A new library activity van will enable digital activities to be taken to targeted communities and events such as community festivals.
- A new creative digital space will be opened at Gateshead Central Library that will provide access to 3D printers, a laser cutter and provide a base for coding activities and workshops.
- Local people considering starting a business will have access to technologies used for prototyping.
- Evaluation of employee access to technology to help address any areas where there is an unfulfilled requirement.

## **7.0 Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough**

### **Performance**

7.1 There are 6 strategic indicators identified for this Committee to monitor in support of the Council pledge of investing in our economy:

- Performance relating to council tax collection has improved compared to the same period last year with collection at 53.7% delivered alongside an increased amount of £5.5m to be collected in 2019/20.

- The sixth-month period for the indicator relating to business rates collection achieved an increase of 0.6% compared to the same period last year, with 56.2% collected.
- There has been significant improvement in the Council's performance regarding the percentage of undisputed invoices paid on time, up from 78.9% in 2017/18 to 87.7% for the sixth-month period 2019/20.
- The direction of travel continues to be positive in improving Superfast Broadband connectivity. Coverage now stands at 97.64% (up from 9.5% at the previous year end). The access in Gateshead continues to remain ahead of the UK average figure of 96.32%.
- The new Services for Schools North East website launched in December 2018 and has been well received by schools who are now using this to purchase services. In 2019/20 the Council offered 53 services to schools and academies for the annual buy back under the following themes:
  - Pupil Focused Services such as Education Psychology
  - Facilities Management Services such as school cleaning
  - Professional & Technical Services such as payroll provision
- Two new strategic indicators relating to trading activities were previously agreed in respect of:
  - The amount of traded income achieved; and
  - £ increase in new Services to Schools business generated.

It is proposed that the indicator on the amount of traded income services be withdrawn. This is because the indicator is broad and duplicates data already reported in the Services to Schools indicator which would contradict the objective of having a clear and strategic performance indicator. Baseline data is currently being established in relation to the Services to Schools indicator.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

### **Achievements, Challenges and Actions**

- 7.2 The amount of Council Tax to be collected in 2019-20 increased by £5.5 million compared to 2018/19. Collection performance, however, has improved as a result of changes made to how we collect Council Tax. These changes include helping customers to pay their current charge first, so avoiding additional costs; ensuring arrangements are affordable and sustainable; being empathetic; acknowledging individual circumstances; giving extra time and flexibility when a customer requires this; providing financial advice and signposting customers to this when it is needed. In addition, the ongoing review and improvement our processes have contributed to this improvement.
- 7.3 Although challenges remain, customer satisfaction is high with continued receipt of positive feedback from residents who have received and appreciated how we have been able to support them. In the future, the use of new technology will help improve our performance and service to our residents with the introduction of online forms and SMS texting will improve how we communicate with residents.
- 7.4 The progress made with superfast broadband connectivity is welcome and it is now intended to amend the reporting of the measure with an intention to increase annually rather than set a specific target beyond 2020.

- 7.5 In the first six-months of 2019/20, approximately £170k of capital receipts were secured from the disposal of surplus assets with £1.15m of net revenue income received from the TNRP (unaudited figure). The Gateshead LLP (Limited Liability Partnership) is currently considering a disposal of selected industrial estates and ground leases, which are poorly performing, with a view to reinvesting the proceeds in new investments (either acquired or constructed).
- 7.6 Marketing is underway for Baltic Quarter with terms agreed with SMG for the construction of the Arena Conference & Exhibition Centre in the Quays. Properties are being acquired in the High Street South area to support the Intergenerational Village proposal. Land for housing growth continues to be marketed to support our growth targets.

## **8.0 Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead -**

### **Performance**

- 8.1 There are two strategic indicators identified that support the Council pledge to work together, as follows:
- The 2018 staff survey saw an increase in council employees feeling that the Council is a good place to work. Responses showed a rise from 64% in 2016 to 73% in 2018. Service Directors have devised action plans for their services and are in the process of implementing identified actions to reflect feedback.
  - The 2019/20 six-month performance for the strategic indicator reporting on the number of days staff sickness absence per FTE (excluding school staff) has been recorded as 11.67. This shows a small increase from the last six-month figure of 11.4 days reported at 2018/19 year-end.

Further information is provided in section C of this report.

### **Achievements, Challenges and Actions**

- 8.2 The Tackling Poverty in Gateshead Board meets bi-monthly and has strategic oversight of approaches to tackling poverty in Gateshead, which include:
- Launch of LEAP (Local Energy Assistance Partnership) in Gateshead - the only local authority area in the region to offer this to its residents.
  - Ongoing development of a year-long fuel switching campaign.
  - The national closure of the 'Red Box Project' has resulted in the handover of the project to Gateshead Youth Council - relaunched as 'Project ToM' (Time of Month).
  - Work continues with NEFirst Credit Union to grow its membership in Gateshead.
  - The Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission has now started. A launch event will be held in the Council Chamber on 5th March 2020.
  - The second poverty conference took place on 15 July 2019, focused on food and fuel poverty. High profile speakers from National Energy Action, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Northumbrian Water attended.
  - Facilitated an initial response that offers financial support to 14 support organisations that offer emergency food to vulnerable residents and who are part of the Gateshead Community Food Network to allow them to prepare for Brexit.

- Almost 500 children received financial education in school via a 12-week Financial Education programme delivered by Newcastle Building Society's charity Boardroom Challenge.

### **Statement of Accounts**

- 8.3 This year, the Statement of Accounts was finalised in accordance with the statutory deadlines of draft accounts by 31 May 2019 and audited accounts by 31 July 2019.
- 8.4 On Friday 26 July 2019, Mazars issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. The key messages from Mazars Independent Auditor's Report are:
- [the accounts] give a true and fair view of the financial position of Gateshead Council as at 31 March 2019 and of its expenditure and income for the year;
  - have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice; and
  - the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year.

### **Budget**

- 8.5 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2020/21 to 2024/25 was agreed by Cabinet on 15 October 2019. This presents a very challenging financial position over the medium term as a result of assumptions concerning future Government funding. The indicative budget forecasts show an estimated funding gap of £49.9m for the next five years (to 2025) with an estimated gap of £8m in the first year.
- 8.6 Following national political events, a one-year settlement is now expected after the General Election, with the multi-year spending review and finance reforms being pushed back to 2021. All assumptions around UK European Community membership will need to be revisited regularly and the financial impact to the Council's MTFS will be reconsidered because of the revised funding position and/or external context.

### **Consultations**

- 8.7 During this six-month period (Apr – Sep 2019), 23 consultations have been undertaken using the Council's consultation portal in relation to local transport schemes, Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for School Parking, Gibside School Relocation, Learning Pathways & Educational Provision for Young People with SEND Aged 16+, Capital Allocation Fund for Pupils with SEND, Bewick's vending machines, Air Quality and the Safer Gateshead Survey. A total of 3,587 responses were received from Gateshead residents and staff over this period.
- 8.8 This Committee receives regular updates on the Council's resilience and emergency planning. Following on from the year-end performance report the Council Emergency Planning Team has:
- revised its Strategic Resilience Management Framework which was presented to Committee on 9 September 2019. The purpose of this revised framework is to outline the focus for Gateshead Council to continue to work in collaboration with our partners and communities over the next two years for emergency planning, resilience, response and recovery. This will ensure that the council continues to comply with statutory legislation and has the necessary capacity and capability to

mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency or major incident situations and use the learning to inform contingency planning. The emphasis of this framework is to support the sustained development of a network of competent officers who are able to respond to emergencies and carry on embedding resilience into all aspects of service delivery.

- developed a Community Emergency Guidance document, which aims to:
  - Provide emergency contact details for a range of situations and the type of assistance that can be provided.
  - Enable residents and business proprietors to be better prepared to protect themselves and their properties.
  - Provide opportunities to volunteer as Community Resilience Wardens.
- commenced a recruitment campaign for additional staff volunteers to join the council's emergency response team, ensuring continued resilience and maintaining capacity and capability;
- implemented a new online digital logging system for use during incidents and emergency situations. Training and awareness sessions are continuing for members of the emergency response team.

8.9 Over the immediate short term there will be a focus on mitigating the local impacts of EU Exit and ensuring the Council is prepared for all eventualities strengthening resilience and develop any necessary contingency plans.

## Section B: Update on actions from previous report

Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Employee Engagement	Work Together	Policy, Performance & Comms	<p><b>2018 Employee Survey:</b></p> <p>There has been no employee survey during 2019. As Cabinet agreed on 15 October to implement a revised senior management staffing structure effective from 1 November 2019, consideration will need to be given as to the appropriate timing for the next employee survey.</p>
Workforce Plan	Work Together	Human Resources & Workforce Development	<p><b>Workforce Plan:</b></p> <p>The Sickness Absence Management Policy will be presented to trade unions for consultation during the winter. It is hoped that updates to the policy can be agreed so it can be implemented quickly.</p> <p>Cabinet agreement to a revised senior management staffing structure was secured to reflect a more effective way of working across Council services. The proposals set out a staffing structure for the Council critical to the culture of how we work and to reinforce the commitment for functions to work together to facilitate outcomes, rather than the structure of the Council influencing how services are delivered.</p> <p>Between April and September 2019, a variety of courses ran around the subject of Equality and Diversity, including sessions directly aimed at foster carers and open access courses for staff and workers from partner organisations. The themes of the courses ranged from autism acceptance to mate and hate crime as well as general awareness raising, we have trained 118 people with further courses planned for the remainder of the financial year.</p> <p>The Ways of Working Board continues to support agile working across the Council. There is an emphasis on business cases which support agile working principles and provide benefits to the Council. Leadership Team will be working together over the coming months to develop this concept.</p>

Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Equality Impact Monitoring	Tackle Inequality	All	<p><b>Equality Impact Budget Proposals:</b></p> <p>Two pre-2019/20 budget proposals are continuing to be monitored along with 9 from the 2019/20 budget setting process. Assessment of the impact of the proposals on equalities is set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Officers are now using a revised approach to identifying impact through the introduction of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) of council strategies, policies, services or budget proposals on people and their surroundings. These assessments support the Council in meeting its equality obligations but also ensure the decision-making process is transparent and provides evidence of how a proposal will contribute to the delivery of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.</p> <p>The IIA has 5 main areas for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equalities</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Socio-economic</li> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Cumulative</li> </ul>
Trading	Work Together	Trading	<p><b>Services to Schools</b></p> <p>The Council has continued to develop its co-ordinated approach to services for schools. The Commercial Manager (Schools) has been continuing to have positive discussions with schools, academies and services for the ongoing development of Services for Schools along with the new packages and longer-term SLAs.</p> <p>Within the defined service areas there are numerous packages available to the schools and academies, this year there were just under 200 available, demonstrating the range, options and choice for schools. Currently there are schools and academies from 13 different local authorities purchasing services from Gateshead Council for 2019/20. In 2018/19, schools received services to the value of £12.965m. This will form the baseline for reporting 2019/20 performance, which will be available at year end.</p> <p>Schools are facing significant budget pressures, while the costs of providing services are also increasing e.g. the price of food needed to meet nutritional standards for school meals. Meetings with schools are ongoing to discuss the services on offer for next year and a new pricing strategy with packages to help schools is being developed. In addition, following consultation with schools, more packages and bespoke approaches will be available to help meet the different needs of pupils and families.</p>

Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Tackling Poverty	Tackle Inequality	Poverty & Inequality	<p>The Tackling Poverty in Gateshead Board meets bi-monthly and has strategic oversight of approaches to tackling poverty in Gateshead. Recent activity includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of LEAP (Local Energy Assistance Partnership) in Gateshead - the only local authority area in the region to offer this to its residents. LEAP is a free energy support service that supports residents with energy costs, efficiency and income maximisation via a 1-2-1 home visit with a qualified energy advisor.</li> <li>• Ongoing development of a year-long fuel switching campaign. This is initially a pilot aimed at maximising household incomes.</li> <li>• The national closure of the 'Red Box Project' has resulted in the handover of the project to Gateshead Youth Council - relaunched as 'Project ToM' (Time of Month). This continues to provide free sanitary provision to schools in Gateshead with additional focus on primary schools and colleges.</li> <li>• Work continues with NEFirst Credit Union to grow its membership in Gateshead. This includes support to develop a growth plan and marketing strategy in partnership with Durham County Council.</li> <li>• The Gateshead Poverty Truth Commission has now started. Seventeen testifiers meet regularly to share their real lived experiences of living in and with poverty in Gateshead. A launch event will be held in the Council Chamber on 5th March 2020.</li> <li>• The second poverty conference took place on 15 July 2019, focused on food and fuel poverty. High profile speakers from National Energy Action, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Northumbrian Water attended. Also included was a 'prioritising' workshop to identify future delivery priorities for the end of 2019 and into 2020.</li> <li>• Facilitated an initial response that offers financial support to 14 support organisations that offer emergency food to vulnerable residents and who are part of the Gateshead Community Food Network to allow them to prepare for Brexit.</li> <li>• A 12-week Financial Education programme was delivered into eight Gateshead primary schools via Newcastle Building Society's Charity Boardroom Challenge. This resulted in almost 500 children receiving financial education in school courtesy of an external teacher and building society branch managers acting as school mentors.</li> <li>• Delivered in partnership with Newcastle Building Society a series of Retirement Talks for Council employees to allow to better plan for their life after employment.</li> </ul>

Action	Thrive Pledge	Service Area	Update
Digital Programme	Work Together	<p data-bbox="472 181 667 268"><b>Policy, Performance &amp; Comm</b></p> <p data-bbox="472 331 667 357"><b>IT Services</b></p> <p data-bbox="472 395 667 453"><b>Exchequer Services</b></p> <p data-bbox="472 491 667 517"><b>Libraries</b></p>	<p data-bbox="703 181 936 207"><b>Digital Customer</b></p> <ul data-bbox="703 217 2148 1123" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="703 217 2148 312">• Gateshead resident's uptake of digital services has continued to rise this year. In terms of demographics the fastest growing age group who are accessing <a href="http://www.gateshead.gov.uk">www.gateshead.gov.uk</a> are over 65s. They currently account for 12.73% of the total visits to the website which is a 27.35% rise compared to 2018.</li> <li data-bbox="703 331 2148 667">• A focus of digital services is delivering an excellent customer experience to those choosing to self-serve on the internet. This is demonstrated by the introduction of online birth and death appointment bookings for the Registrars service from March 2019. Previously all appointments had to be made over the phone or face-to-face. Since the introduction of the new facility 64% of birth registration appointments and 36% of death registration appointments have been made online. In the first 6 months of 2019/20 this has meant the Council has received 1,172 fewer calls to book appointments. In the next 6 months Gateshead residents will be able to book the majority of registrar's appointments online including notice of marriage, notice of civil partnership, conversions from partnership to marriage and corrections to certificates. In addition, SMS notifications will be introduced to remind people about their appointment bookings. As the services continues to be promoted, we expect online access to increase to over 60% in 2020.</li> <li data-bbox="703 686 2148 817">• The number of residents choosing to pay their bills online has increased with 10.12% more transactions in 2019. For the first time income received via the website is forecast to exceed £20m this year with residents rating the service 4.6 out of 5. The facility to register a My Gateshead account, so that you don't have to remember account numbers, was also introduced in April 2019. Currently 955 people have signed up.</li> <li data-bbox="703 836 2148 967">• The number of fly-tips reported online has reached 63.4% of reports being submitted via <a href="http://www.gateshead.gov.uk">www.gateshead.gov.uk</a>. The same reporting tool will now be implemented for other services requiring requests that need to be identified by location such as dog fouling, graffiti, street lighting defects and potholes.</li> <li data-bbox="703 986 2148 1123">• The <a href="http://www.gateshead.gov.uk">www.gateshead.gov.uk</a> website received 4,002,130 views over the past 6 months. Of these 59% were viewed on a smartphone; 11% on a tablet and 30% on a computer. An issue on double counting page views was identified and corrected meaning the total views figure is marginally down on the previous year-end figure.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="703 1177 1043 1203"><b>Digital Ways of Working:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="703 1212 2148 1594" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="703 1212 2148 1315">• A self-service booking system for meeting rooms commenced in July 2019 which reached 66% of meeting rooms by the end of September 2019. There are now 52 rooms available to book or request via the self-service booking system. This figure will rise to 77 rooms in the next reporting period;</li> <li data-bbox="703 1334 1720 1359">• Organisation-wide Corporate Warning Alerts System (including TGHC); and</li> <li data-bbox="703 1378 1214 1551">• New digitised processes: <ul data-bbox="757 1423 1214 1551" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="757 1423 1115 1449">▪ Sundry Debtor requests.</li> <li data-bbox="757 1452 1214 1477">▪ Nexus Travel Pass applications.</li> <li data-bbox="757 1481 1155 1506">▪ Travel request applications.</li> <li data-bbox="757 1509 1205 1535">▪ Submit a Print Point requisition.</li> </ul> </li> <li data-bbox="703 1570 2148 1594">• Initiated a project / pilot group to fully implement agile working with hot desking, reduce space within the</li> </ul>

## Section C: Performance Overview

Indicator	Thrive Pledge	Service Director Lead	Year-end Target 2020	Performance @6-Month 2019/20	Direction of Travel	Comments and Actions
<b>IE01</b> % of Council Tax collected that was due to be paid	Invest in our economy	John Jopling	96.6%	53.7%		<p>For the 6-month period 2019/20 collection rate was 53.7%. This is up on the same period last year when the rate was 53.3%.</p> <p>Despite the amount of council tax to be collected in 2019-20 increasing by £5.5 million compared to 2018-19, collection performance has improved as a result of changes we have made to how we collect Council Tax. These include but are not limited to helping customers to pay their current charge first - which avoids additional costs; ensuring arrangements are affordable and sustainable; being empathetic; acknowledging individual circumstances; giving extra time and flexibility when a customer needs this; providing financial advice and signposting customers when it is needed. The ongoing review and improvement our processes have contributed to this improvement.</p>
<b>IE02</b> % of Business Rates collected	Invest in our economy	John Jopling	97%	56.2%		<p>For the 6-month period 2019/20 the collection rate is 56.2%. This is up from the same period last year when the figure was 55.6%.</p> <p>Business rates collection performance has improved due to a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reduction of business rates to be collected, due to changes to some of the business rates relief schemes - currently £453k less is due to collect in 2019-20); and</li> <li>• the ongoing improvements of our billing and recovery processes.</li> </ul>

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<b>IE03</b> % of undisputed invoices paid on time	Invest in our economy	John Jopling	95%	87.2%		The year-end figure for 2018/19 was 87.7%. This is an improvement on the previous year's figure of 78.9%. The first half of 2019/20 has seen continued improvement from the previous year's performance of 85%. This has largely been achieved by the increased use of purchase cards and the ongoing review of business processes to allow speedier payment of invoices.
<b>IE04</b> Improve Superfast Broadband connectivity-coverage in Gateshead	Invest in Our Economy	Roy Sheehan	To increase	97.64%		The direction of travel continues to remain positive with a further increase in coverage made during the year. Superfast broadband is now available to 97.64% of premises in Gateshead which compares favourably against the UK average figure of 96.32%.
<b>IE05</b> £ increase in new Services to Schools business generated	Invest in Our Economy	Lindsay Murray	To increase	Baseline year	Not available	The 2018/19 Services to Schools figure will be used to establish a baseline for reporting at the year-end 2019/20.
<b>IE05B</b> Amount of traded income achieved	Invest in Our Economy	Lindsay Murray	To increase	Proposal to withdraw	Not available	It is proposed that this indicator be withdrawn. This is because the indicator is very broad and would duplicate data already reported in the Services to Schools indicator.
<b>PF01</b> Speed of housing benefits claims (processing) – average time to process new claims & changes in circumstances	People and Families	John Jopling	7.5 days	8.3 days		Performance for 2019/20 at the 6-month stage shows an improvement to 8.3 from 9 days achieved in the same period last year. Following the full service roll out of Universal Credit, the volume of new claims has reduced, allowing for quicker processing times. IT improvements have been introduced to allow further automation of changes of circumstances and customer self-service.
<b>PF02</b> Ensure young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship	People and Families	Janice Barclay/ Dep. Strategic Director Children's Social Care	Year on year increase	2		The Education Annual Report in January 2020 will include a focus on employment, training and apprenticeships where the issue of care leavers apprenticeships will be picked up. Corporate Resources OSC reviewed a report on 14th October 2019 on Apprenticeships. Apprenticeship Co-ordinator has been appointed on a 2-year contract. Part of their role will be to explore apprenticeships for LAC and care leavers.
<b>WT01</b> Employee engagement e.g. a good place to work	Work Together	Marisa Jobling/ Janice Barclay	70%	73% (2018/19)	No survey in 2019	The 2018 staff survey saw an increase in council employees feeling Gateshead is a good place to work from 64% in 2016's survey to 73% this year and surpassing the target for 2020. There has not been a staff survey for 2019, so there is no further update to this figure. Service managers, however, have all devised service action plans to try and address the concerns raised within their service areas.

Indicator	Thrive Pledge	Service Director Lead	Year-end Target 2020	Performance @6-Month 2019/20	Direction of Travel	Comments and Actions
<b>WT02</b> Staff sickness (excluding school staff) per FTE	Work Together	Janice Barclay	8.0 days	11.67 days		<p>The recent 6-month performance for April-September 2019, shows a marginal increase for sickness to 11.67 days from 11.4 days at 2018/19 year-end. However, the 6-month figure for 2018/19 was 9 days, so the current figure is an increase.</p> <p>The Sickness Absence Management Policy will be presented to trade unions for consultation. It is hoped that they will react positively to the policy updates, so it can be implemented quickly.</p> <p>The Health &amp; Wellbeing groups continue to promote health and wellbeing initiatives; Leadership Team has been updated on progress with wellbeing initiatives and appraised of the help and support available for managers and staff.</p> <p>Service Directors and Service Managers continue to use the HR Dashboard information to ensure sickness is tackled in a timely manner.</p>
<b>SC01</b> Percentage increase in online transactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online payments</li> </ul>	Supporting Our Communities	Marisa Jobling	To increase	10.12%		<p>Between April 2018-September 2018, there were £9,175,317.25 paid online from 84,003 transactions. The satisfaction rating was 4.1 out of 5.</p> <p>Between April 2019-September 2019 transactions online increased significantly to £10,489,810 paid online from 92,057 transactions. This is a 14.33% increase in income and 10.12% increase in transactions. The satisfaction rating has also increased to 4.6 out of 5. This amounted to a 14.1% increase in income paid online.</p>
<b>SC02</b> Percentage increase in online transactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fly-tipping reports</li> </ul>	Supporting Our Communities	Marisa Jobling	To increase	+6% (to 63.4%)		<p>Between April and September 2018 there were 2,886 incidents of fly-tipping reported. Of these, 57.4% were made online and 42.7% by other means. The satisfaction figure was 3.54 out of 5.</p> <p>Between April and September 2019, 2,858 incidents were reported. The number made online rose to 63.4% and increase of 6%. The satisfaction rating also increased to 3.79 out of 5.</p>
<b>SC03</b> Percentage increase in online transactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Garden Waste subscriptions</li> </ul>	Supporting Our Communities	Marisa Jobling	To increase	+1.15%		<p>In total 66.38% (16,303) of garden waste subscriptions were paid for online in 2019. This is compared to 65.23% (16,275) in 2018.</p> <p>The garden waste payment system will be delivered via the digital platform for customers paying online or over the phone for 2020 subscriptions. Customers will, in future, be able to subscribe to receive notifications regarding the service.</p>

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<b>SC04</b> Percentage increase in online transactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registrars appointments</li> </ul>	Supporting Our Communities	Marisa Jobling	To increase	55% (of appointments made online)		Online Registrars birth and death appointments were launched on 13 March 2019. In the first six-months of 2019-20, 2,132 birth and death appointments were made with 55% made online. The remaining 45% of bookings were made over the phone or face-to-face via Customer Services and Registrars. This means a reduction of 1,172 phone calls to the Council.
<b>SC05</b> Percentage increase in online transactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult social care forms</li> </ul>	Supporting Our Communities	Marisa Jobling	To increase	2,007		Since the Adult Social Care online forms were launched in November 2018. In the period April to September 2019, 2,007 forms were submitted. The breakdown of the forms received were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>892 social care assessments;</li> <li>634 social care enquiries; and</li> <li>475 social care reviews.</li> </ul>

**1.0 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.1 The Council's strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives identifies a commitment to reduce the levels of inequality that are apparent within the Borough.

1.2 During the 2019/20 budget process all areas of spend were reviewed. This identified budget proposals that reduced service provision directly supporting the protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010. To mitigate any levels of impact identified in the equality impact assessments, wherever possible, following implementation of proposals bi-annual reporting of monitoring is carried out to this Committee.

**2.0 Monitoring the impact of budget proposals**

2.1 Budget proposals considered as having an impact are set out below along with mitigation identified.

2.2 The proposal to stop maintenance of bowling green's and football pitches has not proceeded. It is recommended this be removed from the monitoring schedule.

2.3 A number of proposals have been assessed by service directors as having had no impact on equalities with continued monitoring no longer required. These are:

- Deletion of posts in the Early Help Service;
- Deletion of posts in the Children and Families Service;
- New or increased charges for adult social care services:
  - Day services; and
  - Meals in day centres and promoting independence centres;
- Guidepost drop-in service;
- Reduction in the standard allowance of Disability Related Expenditure; and
- Removal of CAMHS contribution.

**2017/18 & 2018/19 - Review of commissioned arrangements/supporting people voluntary organisations**

2.4 Since the new SAILS - supported and independent living services for young people Housing pathway for people aged 16 to 25 years commenced in July 2018, the following outputs up to the end of June 2019 include:

- The total number of referrals was 282, of which 254 were accepted and accessed services;
- 22 young people were successfully referred to the High Needs, Clinical intervention, Shared Living Service;
- 35 young people were successfully referred to the Taster Flats Service;
- a young person was referred to the Supported Lodgings Service;
- 46 young people have moved outside the pathway, i.e. not homeless or in custody; and out of 254 accessing support:
  - 14 returned home to family; and referrals, a total of 8 young people returned home; and

- 16 young people have been evicted for a variety of reasons, including arson and threats to staff.
- 2.5 The Council is working with Durham University to prepare an outline proposal for further funding via a Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme to enable a comprehensive practice evaluation of the services. This work is proceeding, and initial meetings have taken place with two of the SAILS providers to scope the brief of the proposed research.

### **2018/19 - Review of Carers Services**

- 2.6 The Carers Service was awarded in 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 and will continue to the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and is joint funded by the Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group and Gateshead Council. The Commissioning Team from Gateshead Council's Care Wellbeing & Learning service continue to monitor the mobilisation of the services and work with the two service providers to ensure that there is a smooth transition of staff and service users.
- 2.7 The providers awarded the contact, were:
- Carers Trust Tyne and Wear for support to Young carers up to 18 years; and
  - Gateshead Carers Association are responsible for delivering services to support Adult Carers who are aged 18 years and over.
- 2.8 The Carers Partnership has reconvened and is being well attended meeting bi-monthly, with the primary goal in 2019 to refresh the current Carers Strategy, a working group is being created to take this forward. The Commissioning Team will continue to monitor performance and quality on a quarterly basis. A full review is scheduled to be completed after 12 months of the award.

### **2019/20 Budget Proposals**

#### **2019/20 - Deletion of posts in the Early Help Service**

- 2.9 The reduction in posts in the Early Help service has been assessed as seeing no impact on the services provided. The reduction in posts and reorganisation has seen an actual caseload capacity reduction of 39.7% (460 cases), cessation of self-referral with the introduction of small and occasional waiting lists.
- 2.10 To mitigate this impact a number of measures have been introduced. The management structure has been reconfigured, including backfilling two posts to stabilise capacity. The service offer has been differentiated to meet specific areas of demand while referral pathways remain open to a wide range of practitioners. The possible re-introduction of self-referral in 2020/21 is also being considered. As such the impact on service delivery is being managed and considers further monitoring is not required.

#### **2019/20 - Deletion of posts in the Children and Families Service.**

- 2.11 The way we support foster carers has had to change, as the team are carrying 40 more cases. There has been a RAG rating established to try and give all the foster carers the support they need. Early indications are this is working. Foster carers continue to be provided with the necessary support. The recruitment

process has also changed to ensure everyone that enquires are managed in a uniform way. This is undertaken by one assistant team manager. No reduction in service standards has been identified and the service director recommends no further monitoring is required

### **2019/20 - No longer provide maintenance for bowling greens and football pitches**

2.12 The original proposal was not taken forward. Council agreed a revised proposal for work, including the strategic investment in 3G Football pitches, potential asset transfer, increase in fees and charges over a 3-year period and a rationalisation of the number of pitches and bowling greens provided. As such, the original proposal has not occurred and does not require further monitoring at his stage.

### **2019/20 - New or increased charges for adult social care services:**

#### **2.13 - Day services**

Adult Social Care have monitored the impact of the changes, and whilst some people were unhappy at having to pay higher charges, there have been no formal complaints about the changes to the charge. There is also no evidence to indicate that large numbers of people reduced or cancelled their services specifically as a result of the increase. The service director has recommended no further monitoring is required.

#### **2.14 - Meals in day centres and promoting independence centres.**

Most people consulted indicated that they were happy to pay the extra charge, commenting that they found the meals to be excellent value. In monitoring the impact of the budget proposal, there has been no evidence to suggest that significant numbers people are cancelling their meals. Additionally, bringing a packed lunch has always been an option for people attending the Council's day services. The service director recommends no further monitoring is required.

### **2019/20 - New accommodation charge for aftercare post discharge from hospital**

2.15 We are still in the process of developing the policy and procedure related to this proposal. Consultation with individuals who are impacted will be undertaken. It is noted that other local authorities have joined Gateshead in exploring this proposal, removing one of the concerns from consultees that Gateshead was the only council considering this charge. A further update will be included in the 2019/20 year-end performance report.

### **2019/20 - New charge for Guidepost drop-in service**

2.16 Since this budget proposal was announced, concerns were raised by Guidepost attendees. There was a view that attendees would be exposed to a social care assessment to establish if they should pay for their attendance at Guidepost drop-in groups. There has never been a desire or need to undertake this process. Consequently, the Guidepost committee, supported by Involvement Now (Gateshead People) met during April 2019 to discuss the Guidepost budget proposal. Following consultation with attendees and the committee, an agreement was reached to introduce a sessional charge of £3 for all attendees. This approach led to Guidepost retaining all its existing

attendees, as well as securing more people with disabilities to the drop-in sessions. The £3 sessional charge to all attendees has led to the Council attaining the service's income level. Guidepost's committee has also been successful in securing £7k of funding from the People's Health Trust in September 2019. This has led to the continued delivery of more Guidepost projects and activities. The service director recommends no further monitoring is necessary.

### **2019/20 - Reduction in the standard allowance of Disability Related Expenditure.**

2.17 Monitoring of the charge impact has been undertaken by Adult Social Care and whilst some people were unhappy at having to pay higher charges, there have been no formal complaints about changes to the charge with no evidence to indicate that large numbers of people reduced or cancelled their services specifically as a result of the increase. The service director recommends no further monitoring is required

### **2019/20 - Removal of contribution to Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.**

2.18 On the 1st April 2019 a change in the commissioning of children's mental health services from the CCG started. NTW became the lead provider, directly commissioning 5 voluntary sector organisations (VSOs):

- Streetwise
- NE Counselling
- Counselling Northeast
- Kalmer Counselling &
- EWT.

2.19 The new contract brought children's mental health providers services under one umbrella. The aim was to capture capacity and the footprint of children's mental health demand and outcomes across the area. Going forward it is intended to review the existing service model leading to transformation plans for Year 2.

2.20 The VSO's have come together with NTW to provide the "getting help" and "getting more help"<sup>1</sup> service in Newcastle and the "getting more help" service - only in Gateshead. All the providers consider the holistic needs of the child/young person and where appropriate delivers a wide range of support which may include access to therapies and therapeutic activities. The lead provider model supports this need.

2.21 The lead provider model is working with no significant issues to report of impact on equalities. Contract meetings, pathway review meetings and weekly Single Point of Access (SPA) meetings have been established and taken place throughout quarter one. The performance data captures all providers' data in order to provide a full picture of the children's and young person's pathway.

2.22 Significant work has also taken place in quarter one regarding clients waiting over 18 weeks for both assessment and treatment. This targeted work has

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<sup>1</sup> (previously Tier 2 and Tier 3 services)

resulted in a significant reduction for this group. The service director recommends no further monitoring is required.