

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

**Monday, 7 September 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor John Eagle (Chair)  
  
Councillor(s): S Ronchetti, J Wallace, D Bradford, L Caffrey,  
D Duggan, T Graham, S Green, M Hall, I Patterson,  
R Mullen and J Simpson

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): P Foy, J Raine, J McClurey and K Wood

**CR32 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

**CR33 MAKING GATESHEAD A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES - END OF YEAR ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY 2019/20 AND IMPACT OF COVID-19**

The Committee were presented with a report to provide the end of year update of performance and delivery for the period ending 31 March 2020 in relation to the Council's Thrive agenda for the indicators and activity linked to Corporate Resources. It also provides a high-level overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on performance.

The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives performance data relating to 14 strategic indicators. Of the 14 indicators, 9 indicators show improved performance, 2 show a slight reduction in performance, and there is 1 with no change.

There is no new data in relation to the staff survey further staff consultation will take place once the new working arrangements have been fully established.

With regards to Services to Schools, 2019 – 2020 is the baseline year.

The business rates indicator is slightly down. It was in line to meet its target however, due to Covid some payments were unable to be paid.

Sickness figures have seen a slight increase to 11.9 from 11.4 and sickness levels continue to be monitored.

All 5 digital indicators have shown improvement and are expected to continue to improve.

There have been some challenges, Cabinet has received 2 reports on the key impacts of COVID. To support the Gateshead community during the pandemic, community hubs were established in March 2020, the digital platform was used to develop a case management solution which supported customer contact. In addition a hotline telephone number was provided for those residents who required emergency support.

As at 1 July 2020 over 4,200 Gateshead residents were supported via these contact channels. There has been a huge increase in demand for services and the Council has been working hard to support residents, taking over 10,000 benefits calls and 14,000 council tax calls. From April 2020 the Council had responsibility for issuing Government payments from the Small Business Grant Fund (£10,000) and Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (£25,000). As at 30 June 2020, 3156 grants were issued to businesses for a total value of £36,975 million. The Council is also using this contact with Business Rate payers to signpost them to additional support.

From June 2020, the Council is supporting businesses that were not eligible for the Small Business Grant via the COVID 19 Business Support Grants: Local Authority Grant Fund. Up to 1 July 2020, 110 payments have been issued for a value of £570,000.

The Council's approach to debt recovery was paused as a result of the pandemic, however, from the beginning of July this was to be restarted providing a supportive approach that encourages contact, offers advice and guidance and signposts to any specific support people and businesses may need.

It was queried how the Council is dealing with employees who are working from home and maybe stressed and feeling isolated. It was noted that managers have been asked to be mindful of the needs of employees.

It was noted that we have to be mindful of a longer term impact as a result of the lockdown, such as more people claiming universal credit and using foodbanks. It is possible that it might take a couple of years for the impact to be known.

It was noted that the economic impact for the Council would need to be understood with people losing jobs and the impact on businesses.

It was noted that it needs to be clear that home working isn't appropriate for everyone, however, when things become more normal there should be an opportunity if possible for people to work from home.

It was noted that as Councillors it is important that some meetings should continue via teams and looking at longer term arrangements given the much higher numbers in attendance.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) that the Committee considered that the activities delivered during October to March 2020 are supporting delivery of the Thrive agenda.
  - (ii) that no areas were identified that it was felt required further scrutiny.

(ii) that it be noted that Cabinet will consider a composite performance report at its meeting on 20 October 2020.

**Chair.....**