

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 27 June 2022

PRESENT: Councillor B Clelland (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, A Geddes, F Geddes,
H Weatherley, H Kelly, J Reay, J Turnbull, K Dodds,
R Waugh, S Dickie, V Anderson, P Maughan, A Wintcher,
P Burns and D Welsh

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): D Burnett and S Gallagher

CPL33 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on 25 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

CPL34 CONSTITUTION/ROLE & REMIT

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the Constitution and the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair as approved by Council for the 2021/22 municipal year.
- (ii) The Committee noted the remit and terms of reference report.

CPL35 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK - YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2021-22

The Committee received a report and presentation providing the Council's new Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF), reporting performance on the delivery of Council priorities for the period April 2021 to March 2022.

The Committee were provided with a summary of the PMIF purpose and background for context; it was reported that the PMIF is provided to enable members to see the full picture of performance across all priority areas detailed in the report.

From the presentation, it was highlighted that key emerging areas impacting on performance included:

- The continuing impact of Covid 19 on performance
- Widening inequalities, income and the longer term anticipated impact i.e. health
- The demand pressures facing services i.e. social care
- The impact of EU Exit / Ukraine conflict, rising costs for residents / businesses and in service delivery

- Staffing pressures including recruitment and retention across the Council
- Good progress in key policy areas such as climate change strategy and engagement
- Increase in shift towards digital and online services
- Support being provided to local people / businesses i.e. Household Support Grant
- Effective response to supporting vulnerable people throughout the pandemic i.e. through local hubs, public health, vaccinations and work with businesses

The Committee also received a presentation providing an update on performance in terms of business engagement, support and investment activity. From the presentation, the Committee were advised that business engagement, support and investment activities continue throughout the borough to raise awareness of self-employment and helping individuals explore enterprise at a grassroots level.

It was also reported that 140 businesses had been supported to implement successful investment or expansion projects including 12 inward investment success, creating 2,170 jobs, safeguarding 389 jobs and 183 jobs relocated to Gateshead.

A breakdown of the support provided to businesses in response to the pandemic was provided; the Committee were advised that the Council's business centres had remained open during the pandemic to support businesses and their employees who were unable to work from home. It was also highlighted that a pilot had been launched to support SMEs in Gateshead and in the Council's supply chain to manage their wider environmental impact. The Committee were also provided with an update on employer engagement, it was noted that InvestNewcastle has continued to raise the profile of Gateshead as an investment location.

The Committee received a further update on employment support activity delivered by the Council. It was reported that support had been provided for residents to sustain and progress into employment and achieve economic security. An overview of activities to support young people into employment was also presented for information.

It was stated that of the 850 residents who had received 1-2-1 information, advice and guidance 628 of them had went on to receive intensive employment support from a Working Gateshead Job Coach, 54 were signposted to external services and 45 had been connected with internal Council services. It was highlighted that during the reporting period that there had been 286 job starts.

From the presentation, the Committee also noted that the ESF Make a Change project between 2019/20 and 2021/22 in partnership with the Gateshead Housing Company, Gateshead Council Localities and Housing Options Service had seen 263 residents be supported. It was also reported that partnership work with the Gateshead Older People's Assembly had established an employability hub for residents aged 50+.

The Committee were also provided with an overview of the Council's Economic Development Strategy for context.

The Committee questioned the role of the DWP in supporting residents to find work; it was noted that there is a joined-up approach in partnership with the DWP on several employment support projects. It was also stated that the Council will endeavour to fill the gaps between mainstream provision and provide person-centred tailored support where it is required.

The Committee discussed apprenticeship opportunities in the Council; it was suggested that the number of apprenticeships available at the Council had decreased, it was also stated that the use of apprenticeships could bridge the skills shortage in services such as construction.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the updates from the report and presentations.
- (ii) The Committee agreed that the performance report could go to Cabinet in July 2022.

CPL36 HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q4 2021-22

The Committee received a report providing an update on Housing Performance results at the end of quarter 4, 2021/22.

It was reported that in line with the new Performance Management Information Framework (PMIF) that housing performance measures had been developed in line with the approach to support the achievement of Thrive outcomes.

From the report the Committee were reminded that since 1 April 2021 all Housing related functions were brought together within the Council and that this necessitated a change to and the development of a new framework of performance indicators. It was stated that this framework underpins the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities across all tenures and not just limited to Council housing. Appended to the report was a detailed breakdown of housing performance for information.

The Committee questioned the figures reported on rough sleepers; it was asked how the Council know who the rough sleepers are. It was noted that the Council identifies those who are sleeping on the streets through outreach and engagement work. The Committee also queried the Council's targets on new housing; the Committee were advised that a report would be submitted to Cabinet on this matter in September 2022 with an update being provided to the OSC shortly after.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the housing performance report and appendices.

CPL37 FLYTIPPING UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an update on the levels of fly-tipping, how the Council is addressing fly-tipping and a 6-month review of the Household Waste Recycling Centre system.

From the report it was stated that the Council has an interactive fly-tipping reporting system (Goss) which enables residents to pin-point fly-tipping on a map and

describe the items deposited, it was highlighted that this system updates the resident with the progress of the fly-tipping collection. It was also reported that fly-tipped waste is collected by 3 teams of 2 staff using a tipper vehicle per team. It was noted that the service currently only has a budget for 2 teams and the additional team had been funded by a budget overspend.

The Committee were advised that the additional team had been necessary to meet the increased demand from rising fly-tip incidents in some areas and ensure collections are completed within an acceptable timescale. One team concentrates 4 days per week in the Saltwell, Deckham and Bensham area due to the higher level of incidents particularly in the back lanes. It was reported that each team will collect items not previously reported and record this using their iPad on the Goss reporting system.

A breakdown of fly-tips per ward (between May 2021 and May 2022) was provided in the report, this information showed that Saltwell had the highest number and Crawcrook and Greenside had the lowest.

The Committee were advised that fly-tipping has increased significantly during the pandemic (nearly 22%, DEFRA reported an increase in 16% across all English authorities). It was noted that the numbers of incidents have decreased overall in 2021/22 but larger fly-tips have increased whilst smaller fly-tips have decreased. It was further noted that Saltwell and Lobley Hill & Bensham wards had experience the greatest level of fly-tipping with back lanes being the most heavily fly-tipped location. Single or car boot size volumes of bin bags and household waste are the most common types of fly-tips in this area. It was highlighted that satisfaction with the reporting process and collection service was 62% over the last year.

The Committee received an overview of the advanced booking system for the Household Waste and Recycling Centre, it was reported that despite initial teething problems the booking system has been very popular. From the report it was noted that 98% of bookings had been self-service and only 2% requested via the Council's Customer Service team. It was reported that the effectiveness of the online booking system will continue to be monitored but that it is envisaged that the booking system will be retained due to its success to date.

The Committee noted its thanks to officers for their continued hard work and for their responsiveness to Councillor queries.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the update from the report.

CPL38 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the annual work programme report for 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the information in the report and endorsed the provisional work programme.
- (ii) The Committee noted that further reports would be brought to the meeting

to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Chair.....