

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18 January 2016

Council Plan – Delivery and Performance – Six Month Update

Summary

Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Corporate Resources

Chair:

Councillor John Eagle

Vice Chairs

Councillor Paul Foy

Councillor Jonathan Wallace

Role and Remit of the Committee:

- The management of the Council's financial, human and physical resources
 - Support for the democratic process;
 - The involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council
 - Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience
 - Matters relating to the Council's relationship with Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council including the Gateshead Offer
 - Social inclusion, equalities and diversity; and
 - The Council's arrangements for securing efficiency and money; and the development and operation of the Council's procurement strategy
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This report provides a summary of Council performance for the first six month period of the 2015/16 financial year against the role and remit of this Committee, in line with the Council's performance management framework.

Please note a substantial amount of the information included in this report has already been discussed and scrutinised by the committee through a series of specific performance reports throughout the year for example absence management.

Performance at a glance

Ref	Description	Year end performance 2014/15	6 month or latest performance	Year end target
CR01	Reduce sickness absence	10 days	4.47 days	9.50 days
CR 02	Increase turnout at elections	2014 Local 35.6% Euro 35.5%	2015 Local 62.88% Parliamentary 62.50%	1% above the regional average
CR 03	Increase Council Tax collection	95.4%	53.7% against target of 53.1%	96.5%
CR07	Increase satisfaction with Gateshead as a place to live	2012 residents survey baseline 73%	64.5% NB not comparable with 2012 as the survey method changed.	75% target set in 2013
CR08a	Increase formal volunteering	2012 residents survey baseline was:-	23%	Overall one third of our residents (66,000) are involved in formal and informal volunteering.
CR08b	Increase informal volunteering	Formal 18% Informal 34%	38%	
CR10	Increase speed of processing benefit claims	8.54 days	10.45 days	12 days
CR12	Population growth	2011 census 200,200	200,505 (IONS data Sept 15)	200,625
CR13a	Increase the number of under 19 year olds within the workforce through apprenticeships	0.44%	Number = 51 FTEs 0.73% of workforce	0.46%
CR13b	Increase the number of Job Carved posts within the Council (for people with a disability)	2.65 FTEs	Number = 4 FTEs 0.09% of workforce	5 FTEs

The following indicators were collected through the biennial residents survey, therefore there is no update available at this time. Alternative methods of collection of performance information are being explored for these areas.

- Increase number of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood -CR04
- Increase community cohesion CR05
- Increase the percentage of people able to influence decisions CR06
- Increase the number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations who feel supported by the Council CR09
- To what extent residents agree that local people pull together for the local area CR11

Section Two: Context for Current Performance

This part of the report provides performance updates against the remit of the Committee.

Social inclusion, equalities and diversity

1. Equality Objectives

A number of Equality Objectives are monitored as part of the Performance Management Framework (PMF). There are two Equality Objectives that fall within the remit of this committee, these are;

- **CR13a:** Increase the number of under 19 year olds within the workforce through the roll out of an apprenticeship training programme
- **CR13b:** Increase the number of job carved posts within the Council (for people with a disability)

The Council has continued to support the creation of apprenticeships in Gateshead, including apprenticeships within the workforce. There are currently 51 under 19 apprenticeships across the Council. This makes up 0.73% of the overall workforce. Current performance at this stage exceeds the target of 0.46% and shows a positive direction of travel against this indicator, having increased from the 0.44% reported at the end of the last financial year.

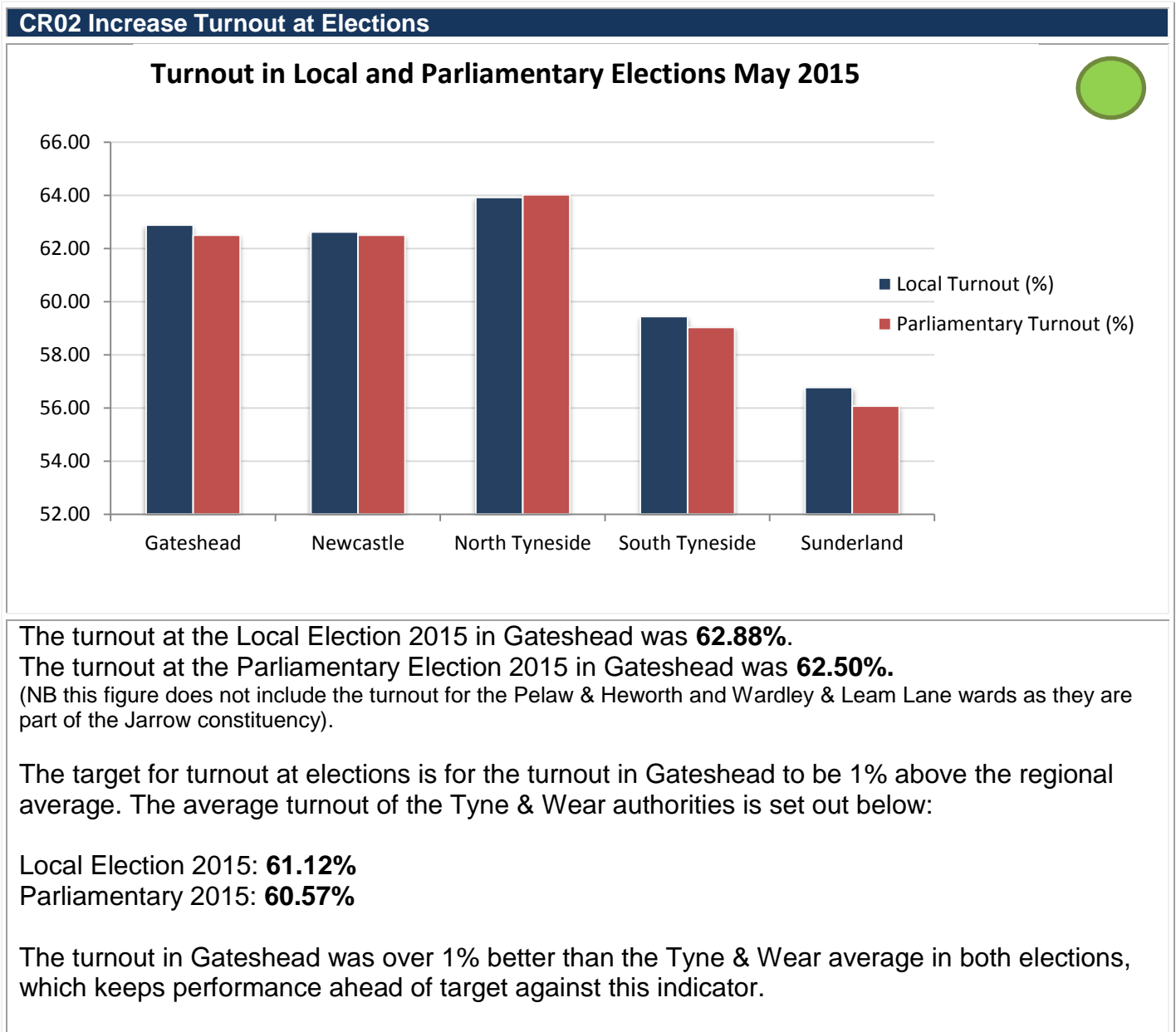
Job carving is a supported employment strategy that takes certain parts of existing job roles and creates new employment opportunities for others. This approach is being used to create roles for people with learning disabilities at Gateshead Council. There are currently 4 job carved posts across the Council which equates to 0.09% of the workforce, falling just short of the 0.10% target.

Future action

As part of the Council's approach to Equality, all of the Equality objectives that are set out in the Performance Management Framework will be reviewed to ensure that the Council continues to monitor the correct indicators of Equality in Gateshead.

Support for the democratic process

2. Elections



The involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council

3. Refresh of Vision 2030

Vision 2030 sets out the framework and direction of travel for the Gateshead Strategic Partnership to drive forward the economic, social and physical improvements in Gateshead in the future.

The Gateshead Strategic Partnership (GSP) agreed to look at Vision 2030 again in light of the changes partners involved and most importantly in the context of less resource to enable the GSP to be better placed to achieve positive outcomes for the people of Gateshead.

The 2015 refresh

The vision and the 6 big ideas have been retained and 18 long term outcomes outline what success will look like.

What's new:

- info-graphics for each of the 6 big ideas have been introduced to help with communicating achievements in these areas.
- The operational detail (the pathways) has been removed so that it has a medium to long term focus.
- new branding and the language has been changed to appeal to a wider audience.
- all of these changes reduced the document from 48 pages to 8 pages.

Another change is that there a focus on delivery over the next 5 years as a stepping stone to 2030 so that we can realistically deliver the ambition and outcomes – the ambition is still there but how we get there is different with shared outcomes (see Council Plan below).

Partners will have to work differently together and the operational detail will be made manifest in the aligned medium term strategies and plans of the partnership boards to be more realistic, flexible and respond to changes quicker.

4. New Council Plan 2015-2020

Following significant changes in the national policy landscape and the challenging financial climate the Council has, and is still facing, a new approach to the Council Plan was developed as part of the strategic planning framework.

The new Council Plan 2015-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 14 July 2015 and will enable the Council, along with partners, to be better placed to achieve positive outcomes for the people of Gateshead and deliver the ambition of Vision 2030 over the next 5 years.

Key outcomes for the next five years were identified as:-

Prosperous Gateshead – a thriving economy for all

- More and better paid jobs and more people in work
- Fewer people with low level skills and more people with higher level skills through:

- improved educational attainment
- increased learning and development
- More private, public and social investment
- An increase in the working age population

Live Love Gateshead – a sense of pride and ownership by all

- A confident and more aspirational population acting as Gateshead’s strongest advocates
- Gateshead people who care about their local area and share responsibility for making and keeping our environment the best it can be
- A community who take pride in Gateshead the place and enjoy and engage in world class culture and heritage that contributes to a sense of belonging and wellbeing

Live Well Gateshead – a healthy, inclusive and nurturing place for all

- The destination of choice for families with a range of excellent and affordable housing options
- A place where children have the best start in life
- A place where older people are independent and are able to make a valuable contribution to the community
- A place where people choose to lead healthy lifestyles, with more and more people across Gateshead living longer and without life-limiting illnesses
- A place where those who need help have access to appropriate joined up services that make a difference to the quality of their life
- A tolerant place where people feel safe

5. Resident’s Survey 2015

The Council undertook a ‘Residents’ Survey’ in June 2015. The survey was made available to all households in Gateshead using the June edition of ‘Council News’ and via the council’s online consultation portal. A total of 935 survey forms were completed.

Because the methodology has changed for this survey, the results should not be directly compared to those from previous surveys.

Key findings include

- 64.5% are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 52.1% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things

Residents were asked what they like most about their local area. The open responses were coded and analysed and the top 6 are shown below:

- Access to parks and green spaces for those living in urban areas and access to the countryside for those in rural areas (37%)
- Access to shops and local services (34%)
- Friendly neighbours and good community feel (25%)
- Transport links/road/public transport/cycle paths (20%)
- Quiet/peaceful (13%)
- Like the area/improving area (13%)

Residents were also asked what needs improving in their local area. The open responses were analysed and the results are shown below:

- Street cleaning, litter, fly tipping (40%)
- Parks and green spaces maintenance (39%)
- Road and pavement maintenance (17%)
- Traffic, road and pedestrian safety (15%)
- Shops/businesses, community facilities and amenities (15%)
- Safety, crime and anti-social behaviour (14%)
- Dog fouling (13%)

Almost 300 respondents (36%) provided information about how they could help, what could be done, or what they are already doing to help improve their area as

- Litter picking/clean up days (44%)
- Volunteer in community/be a good neighbour (28%)
- Report issues e.g. fly tipping, dog fouling, ASB (15%)
- Maintain flowers, trees, green spaces, weeds (15%)
- Look after my house/garden (8%)
- Other – including using local shops, public transport/car sharing, involving schools, reparation schemes (10%)

The most common response was litter picking or getting involved in clean up days. Many residents stated that they are already actively involved in this and the Council could provide support in terms of litter pickers, ensuring litter bins are emptied, coordinating events, promoting anti-litter campaigns and ensuring greater enforcement is in place.

Volunteering was also seen as a way to help improve local areas (libraries, community centres etc.), together with reporting issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling etc. Those who would like to, or are already involved in maintaining flowers and green spaces said that the Council could help by providing tools and collections of green waste.

Residents were asked if they had noticed an impact on their daily lives as a result of the Council receiving significantly less funding from the Government and having to find new ways of delivering services with less money. Half of respondents said that it had a noticeable impact and half said that it had little or no impact.

The main impacts are felt to be:

- Lack of maintenance of green spaces (40%)
- Less street cleaning resulting in more litter and dog fouling (40%)
- Charging for green and bulky waste (16%)
- Poor condition of streets and pavements (13%)

- Less frequent bin collections (12%)
- Feels less safe (9%)
- Reductions in specific services were also highlighted by some respondents, including libraries (8%), services for vulnerable people (7%), leisure (6%)

Future action

A new and more sustainable approach to undertaking future residents' surveys is currently being developed. This involves moving away from commissioning costly one-off pieces of research and setting up an online residents' panel to capture views on a more regular basis using the council's existing consultation system. Almost 400 residents have already expressed an interest in joining the online residents' panel 'Viewpoint ONLINE' and it is encouraging that recruits come from across all wards and age ranges. Residents will soon be able to sign up on the council's website to join 'Viewpoint ONLINE'. Once signed up, every few months they will receive an email link to an online survey.

Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience

6. Resilience Strategy Update

The Council has developed a Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework for Gateshead. As set out during the latest resilience report to committee there were a number of updates, including;

- A review of business continuity and revised guidance for established businesses and voluntary organisations in Gateshead.
- Councillors have been provided with emergency response guidance setting out the role of councillors before, during and after an incident or emergency.
- The main focus of the Environmental and Public Health had been planning to ensure the necessary preparedness and response arrangements if the Ebola virus were to have an impact in the UK and within Gateshead. This work was undertaken locally, regionally and nationally.
- Six volunteers had been recruited to the Community Resilience Volunteer Project in Gateshead.
- A draft mutual aid resilience agreement has been developed for the North East and Cumbria areas. The agreement will ensure that we have robust arrangements in place to assess risk, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies to support a resilient Gateshead.

7. Volunteering

Gateshead's third annual Volunteers Month took place in June 2015. The month long celebration builds upon the national Volunteers week, an initiative to raise the profile of volunteering.

- 207 volunteers registered with the Council out of a total of 229 who submitted an expression of interest to volunteer during the month
- 62 events took place throughout the month, with over 30 groups and organisations accessing the volunteers month grants scheme, a £10,000 ring fenced strand of the Capacity Building Fund, which provided up to £300 per applicant.
- The month culminated in a celebration event that took place at Trinity Square on 26th June, which included community group stalls and activities, along with information, instant volunteering and entertainment. Footfall during the event was 16,450 people.
- 56,018 hours were recorded on a volunteer totaliser on the Council's website during June. This only provides a snapshot of the level of volunteering in the Borough, but it does represent a 68% increase from last year. Using a calculation from Volunteering England these hours equate to £778,650 economic value to Gateshead.

The management of the Council's financial, human and physical resources

8. Council Tax collection

The percentage of Council Tax collected at year end 2014/2015 was 95.4%. The target for 2015/2016 is 96.5%. At the 6th month point collection currently stands at 53.7% which is slightly ahead of the 6 month target of 53.1%.

Speed of processing benefit claims

The number of days taken to process benefit claims in 2014/2015 was 8.54 days. The target for 2015/16 was set at 12 days to take into account changes introduced with the benefits system. Performance at the 6 month stage was an average of 10.45 days.

9. Employee Engagement

The Council's new workforce strategy has recognised the importance of a strong, positive culture of employee involvement and engagement. A number of new initiatives have taken place in this six month period, to make sure that employees have a voice and are able to influence decisions that will affect their work, and feel engaged by the Council as an employer.

In May 2015, the first Council wide employee survey in over eight years took place. This has proved to be an extremely important and insightful piece of work and has given employees the opportunity to have their say on a number of different issues.

39% of the workforce returned the survey. This equates to 1836 responses, the vast majority of which were returned through the Council's in house consultation portal.

The return rate is positive; however there are areas of the workforce, particular those that are outbased where the response was particularly low.

There were a number of positive messages including high numbers of respondents finding that:

- their manager was approachable,
- that customers were always a priority where they worked,
- that they were comfortable using new technologies in their job
- that people in their teams cooperated to get the work done
- that in they were clear of what was expected of them in their job
- that Gateshead Council respects individual differences
- overall they liked their job

However there were also a number of areas for improvement that have been identified through the survey such as improving

- how everyone works as One Council
- consistency of implementation of human resource policies
- overall communication
- reducing levels of stress
- better career development and levels of training and development

Following the employee survey a series of employee engagement sessions were organised with the workforce to get behind some of the issues raised in the survey and ensure that members of staff were able to shape the workforce plan and the way the Council works. The sessions were called 'Team Talk Live' and 16 took place across the borough in July and August 2015.

The Chief Executive attended every session along with members of the Leadership Team. In total over 700 employees attended Team Talk Live and were involved in lively discussions about what was going well and what could be improved. The feedback from those employees who took part was extremely positive. Some of the common themes that were put forward by employees are set out below;

- People felt that they had good teams and supportive colleagues
- Despite the challenges the Council was still delivering and functioning well
- The Council has shown an ability to change, innovate and find new ways of working
- The Council was thought to still have ambition and vision for Gateshead and generally employees feel proud to work for the Council

Future Action

All of the engagement work with employees over the summer has been captured within the newly agreed workforce plan and regular updates to employees is being

planned through a variety of channels including the intranet, team brief, global emails, video blogs and more.

10. Review of Absence in the Council

In this reporting period the Committee has continued its role in monitoring the levels of absence in the Council's workforce. On 7 September committee received the latest update.

At the end of this six month reporting period the average number of days lost to sickness absence is 4.47 days. Across the Council as a whole, stress/depression and mental ill health now accounts for 23%, remaining the largest cause of sickness absence. Post-op recovery/hospital treatment makes up 18% and back and other musculo-skeletal conditions account for 16%.

The current performance does, however, reflect an improvement on the previous six months and work continues through the implementation of the Workforce Plan, particularly in relation to promoting the health and wellbeing of employees

Future Action

As set out in the September update:-

- Work related stress surveys have been carried out using the health and safety executive tool, in Adult Social Care and Independent Living and Commissioning and Business Development.
- Stress buster sessions have continued to be offered to all employees and the lead counsellor has ran briefing sessions for managers to assist them in supporting employees to prevent sickness absence.
- A toolkit to help manage stress has also been developed and circulated to managers
- The role of the Workplace Contacts has been broadened to support employees
- A detailed report on absence management will be part of the OSCs 2016/17 work programme