

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

**Monday, 4 September 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillor John Eagle (Chair)

Councillor(s): P Foy, J Wallace, D Bradford, L Caffrey,  
T Graham, J Green, S Green, M Hall, M Henry, B Oliphant,  
M Ord, S Ronchetti and J Kielty

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): N Weatherley

**CR7 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes held on 26 June 2017 be approved as a correct record.

**CR8 RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING FRAMEWORK - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received an update report on the work on the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework and the work undertaken over the last six months.

It was noted that over the last six months there have been a number of incidents, with acts of terrorism dominating the landscape. Following the Grenfell Tower fire incident it is expected that there will be a lot to review as further information becomes known and the Public Enquiry is underway. In terms of Gateshead, work has been undertaken to check similar buildings and also to look at what Gateshead's response would have been if a similar incident had occurred in the area. It was noted that a Members Seminar has been arranged for 2 October 2017 to feedback on Gateshead's response.

As a result of the changing landscape, locally and nationally, it has been appropriate to review the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework. It was noted that the purpose of the Framework is to determine the future focus for Gateshead and to ensure arrangements are in place to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and major incident situations.

Committee was advised that there are a number of emerging issues in relation to Resilience and Emergency Planning, for example; coordination of pre-planned operations led by emergency services, coordination of responses to modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation, increased scrutiny of event plans and work to understand the implications of an increase in the terrorism threat level.

Committee was provided with information on the incidents and operations that the Emergency Response Team has been involved with over the last six months. The incidents included police led operations, power cuts, disposal of hand grenades and tower block communication issues. In addition it was reported that the Emergency Response Team were involved in Jeremy Corbyn's high profile visit to Gateshead. The team led the planning for this large scale event with the Police running their Tactical Command from the Major Incident Room in the Civic Centre, it was noted that this worked well and is to be used as an exemplar for other areas.

It was reported that work is continuing with organisations and event organisers following publication of Government's new Crowded Places Guidance and the increased threat level. In addition, the Resilience Team is reviewing its counter terrorism plan and also developing a new Pandemic Influenza Plan in preparation for the beginning of the national winter planning season.

Over the last six months the North East Counter Terrorism Unit held a session for Councillors on the threat from terrorism and what to do if involved in an incident. The Resilience Team also undertook a Strategic Incident Controller exercise with the Leadership Team. It was also reported that a multi-agency training exercise was held overnight at the Metro Centre. The exercise tested the skills and response of all agencies to a terror attack within the shopping centre, it was acknowledged that on the whole the exercise was successful. The Emergency Response Team also took part in Exercise Black Kite, led by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Team, which tested responses to a terrorist related incident resulting in a building collapse. This exercise also tested the use of Resilience Direct, the secure web-based platform for the information sharing amongst all emergency responders and agencies. Committee was advised that the Council is also taking part in a multi-agency exercise in October, Border Reiver. This is being hosted by Police Scotland and has been developed with the Home Office, Scottish Government and Northumbria Police, this will be a large scale test of UK and Scottish contingency plans.

It was reported that a new Engagement Officer has been appointed by the Environment Agency to work with Gateshead, which will increase coordination and resilience from flooding. The Team has also worked with volunteers in Blackhall Mill to develop a pilot community emergency plan, it is hoped this will be adapted for all other areas of Gateshead.

Thanks were given to the Team for their work on the Blackhall Mill Resilience Plan and it was acknowledged that the quality of response has been excellent. It was questioned whether other neighbouring local authorities are as engaged as Gateshead. It was confirmed that Gateshead is part of Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF), which covers the Northumbria Police footprint, and Gateshead is more active than some and holds the role of Deputy Chair of the Tactical Business Management Group, whilst chairing the Communities and Training and Exercising Group. It was acknowledged that Gateshead officers continue to volunteer within the LRF so that Gateshead can continue to be proactive. It was noted that Gateshead take the lead to influence and work closely with other local authorities, therefore good working relationships have been established across the region.

It was questioned whether risks around the Great North Run have been considered, in particular in relation to the number of road junctions along the route of the run. It was confirmed that officers have been involved in security planning in terms of hostile vehicle mitigation, a plan has been written which will involve placing moveable vehicles at junctions. It was recognised that the plan is changeable and is unlikely to be finalised until nearer the time, it was agreed that an update would be included in the report to Committee in April.

It was queried whether health partners are prepared to deal with the aftermath of victims of a major incident, for example those victims suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. It was confirmed that this has not been tested in the area, however the Council had been praised in its response to Thunder Thursday in relation to dealing with people, although this was not in terms of psychological damage. It was noted that Border Reiver exercise will test all organisations, including Health organisations, so this will consider any long term issues. In addition it was confirmed that limited feedback from Grenfell is being received – this will enable any lessons to be learnt by all organisations involved in responding to this type of emergency. Committee was advised that an officer from Newcastle is part of the Grenfell Taskforce so information is starting to be disseminated and work is also ongoing with health colleagues in relation to mass casualties.

The suggestion was made that Councillors should be able to attend the daily briefings when there has been an incident or exercise. It was confirmed that a command control structure is implemented during incidents or exercises and regular briefings are delivered to Councillors with the relevant information when required. Multi-agency situation /briefing reports are coordinated through Resilience Direct (the Cabinet Office secure web-based platform for the resilience community to share information amongst all emergency responders and agencies) instead of physical meetings being held. It was agreed that this process could be explained in more detail at a future Members Seminar.

The update report was welcomed by the Committee as part of a series of good reports and it was recognised that the Council does well with the resources it has. The point was made that responding to an incident will obviously be affected by the level of resources that Councils have and that the Grenfell incident highlighted that due to outsourcing they were not able to effectively respond. It was noted that there are lessons to be learnt around pursuing efficiencies at any cost.

It was queried whether information has been received from the local authority responsible for Grenfell. It was confirmed that it is difficult to get any information directly from the affected authority. However an officer from Newcastle is working on the taskforce some issues are starting to emerge; it is expected that it will take a minimum of two years for the full picture to be established. It was confirmed that Councillors would be kept informed and officers are pre-empting a number of issues which will be highlighted at the Members Seminar. In terms of Gateshead it was confirmed that there are only two full time staff members on the team and all other responders on the Council's Emergency Response Team are volunteers, it was noted that as resources are shrinking this would continue to be monitored.

It was queried what is happening in Gateshead to ensure businesses in the area are

not operating illegally where there is evidence of modern slavery or gangs. It was confirmed that there is a dedicated police team working on modern slavery, however many of the victims do not see themselves as such and therefore do not take up the support services that the Council could provide if required. Work is ongoing with the Safeguarding Adults Board to educate victims and police and the Council have processes in place to respond to incidents of modern slavery.

It was suggested that the focus of the Resilience and Emergency Planning Strategy needs to be less on pandemics and more on being prepared for fuel shortages or IT security breaches or failures, which have a more widespread impact. It was noted that pandemic influenza is one of the top risks, nationally and locally, along with cyber attacks. It was noted that a fuel shortage plan is in place and the Council holds its own fuel stock that could last for a number of weeks if required. It was also confirmed that the work undertaken in relation to pandemic flu planning is adaptable for other types of incidents, including cyber or fuel shortages, particularly in relation to the business continuity and critical service work undertaken.

Committee recognised the work of the two officers on the team in dealing with the large amount of work over the last six months, as well as the work of the volunteers in responding to issues.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the comments of the Committee on the progress report be noted.
  - (ii) That the comments of the Committee on the revised Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework be noted, before it is presented to Cabinet.
  - (iii) That Committee agreed to receive a further report in April 2018.

## **CR9 CASE STUDY - PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES FROM LOCAL SUPPLIERS**

Committee received a report and presentation on the Council's external local spend. It was reported that the Council's procurement objectives are; to obtain the best value when procuring goods, works and services, to support and develop the local supply market to grow the local economy and to ensure that all activity is carried out efficiently, effectively and in accordance with current legislation.

Within the Corporate Commissioning and Procurement Strategy 2016/17 – 2020/21 there is a commitment to strengthen Gateshead's local economy. It was reported that Gateshead Business is defined as "a company or other organisation which has an office or premises within the Gateshead Council boundary to which invoices are paid as identified through Agresso". It was noted that other local authorities have different definitions of what is a local business, however currently Gateshead is not in a position to track in more detail and therefore the financial management system is used to measure.

It was reported that there is a focus on buying locally, which is contained within the Constitution, Contract Procedure Rules. In 2010 central government funding was received for the Supplier Development Programme, Gateshead businesses had more access to that funding than other areas to help them compete. Procurement supplier engagement events continue to be held when there are opportunities around upcoming tenders. Officers from the Procurement Team attend Economic Development Breakfast meeting to encourage local suppliers to bid, in addition the NEPO Portal can be used for quick quotes. It was also confirmed that work is underway to increase the amount of business to local businesses and increasing employment and training opportunities for residents. This work is led by the Economic Development Team, linked with anchor institutions, i.e. those who bring economy to Gateshead. Work is underway to establish which organisations are anchor institutions. It was also noted that Contract Procedure Rules set out that if the contract value is below £100,000 tenders can be invited from at least two local contractors.

Committee was advised that influenceable Council spend for 2016/17 is £209M. It was noted that some organisations centralise their invoice arrangements, therefore this cannot be considered as local spend as the invoice is not being paid in Gateshead. Some authorities include any businesses operating within their boundaries regardless of involvement in Council spend.

Comparisons between Gateshead's local spend and other local authorities was provided. In particular Doncaster's spend was looked at as it has undertaken work to increase its local spend, however a dedicated team is in place to do so.

The top 20 suppliers was provided in relation to Gateshead, LA7 and nationally, in terms of Gateshead the most spend is towards social care provision. Some local suppliers appear in the top 20 national supplier list, however are not considered local spend for Gateshead due to invoices not being paid locally.

Future action was outlined which includes further analysis of spend to clarify all activity, roll out of Community Wealth Building Model and implementation of an action plan to target increases in local spend as well as closer working between Economic Development and Procurement Teams.

It was suggested that in terms of quantifying spend more analysis should be done to ensure organisations are not being undervalued, for example by looking at the number of local residents employed within an organisation. It was acknowledged that this would be difficult as there are thousands of suppliers on the Council's database and there is not the capacity to go through each supplier, the Financial Management system is also not capable of analysing the suppliers to that extent.

It was suggested that information regarding number of local employees could be included within procurement forms before contracts have been awarded. It was confirmed that this would go against EU Directives as all suppliers have to have the same access and this could potentially open the Council up to challenge.

The point was made that there should be more emphasis on economic development instead of analysing statistics. It was also pointed out that there needs to be

recognition of what is manufactured and provided in Gateshead when analysing local spend. It was recognised that currently there can be no meaningful comparison between authorities due to a differing definitions and instead resources should be spend on educating, advising and supporting local businesses to compete for tenders. It was also noted that alongside this best value needs to be looked at and this may not always be local.

It was suggested that work needs to continue to encourage organisations to relocate to Gateshead.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the comments of the Committee on the information provided within the presentation be noted.
  - (ii) That the Committee agreed to the proposed further actions:
    - Officers to continue to analyse spend to classify all procurement activity;
    - Further discussions to take place within Group Management Teams to identify barriers to spending locally;
    - Roll out of a Community Wealth Building Model;
    - Formulate and implement an action plan with targets to increase local spend;
    - Develop closer working between Economic Development and Procurement Teams

## **CR10 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the 2017/18 work programme for information.

It was suggested that following the cessation of the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museum Committee an OSC should take on the role of that body, in particular in relation to the Shipley Art Gallery and Beamish Museum. It was agreed that officers would look at where this would sit in the overall OSC structure.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That Committee noted the provisional programme.
  - (ii) That Committee noted that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

**Chair.....**