

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 16 October 2017 at 10.00 am in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies
2	Minutes (Pages 3 - 8) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2017
3	Implementation of Gateshead Volunteers Plan - Annual Report (Pages 9 - 66) Report of Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
4	Support of Voluntary and Community Sector - Progress Update (Pages 67 - 82) Report of Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
5	Implementation of Workforce Strategy - Progress Update (Pages 83 - 92) Report of Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
6	Work Programme (Pages 93 - 96) Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Contact: Rosalyn Patterson- Tel: 0191433 2088

Email: Rosalynpatterson@gateshead.gov.uk, Date: Friday, 6 October 2017

This page is intentionally left blank

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.....

Gateshead Council

Volunteering Recruitment Process

Final Report

CSB Consulting

CSB Consulting is a consultancy firm created at The Business Clinic of Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University. Our group is composed of Luc Cochet, Benjamin Hebert, Dan Serbanescu and Jordan Waugh.

Mission

Our firm brings fresh ideas and practical recommendations to organisations in need, by collecting and analysing primary and secondary data. Our reports aim at helping our clients to find concrete and applicable solutions to given issues.

Contents

Gateshead Council.....	1
Client Details.....	2
Brief	2
Key Duties.....	2
Executive Summary	3
Designing a process for volunteers to declare interest through registering online.	3
Outlining a system gaining all relevant information required by each potential volunteer and opportunity provider.	3
Improving the online experience of current volunteers and opportunity providers.	4
Simplifying and adapting the current presentation of volunteer roles.	5
Improving the internal administration process for the volunteering section.	6
Reviewing the services of other competitors.....	6
Research Methodology and Ethics	8
Research findings and analysis	10
Qualitative investigation	10
Quantitative investigation	12
Recommendations.....	16
Development of an Online Platform.....	16
Personal Profiles.....	16
Listing of Available Opportunities and Descriptions.....	17
Creating a Dashboard	18
Gateshead Council’s Scope of Action	19
Restructuring the Individual Recruitment Process	20
Empowerment of Community Groups	20
Conclusion	23
Appendix.....	24
Questions regarding the Gateshead Council volunteering recruitment processes.....	24
Information availability	27
Volunteering experience	28
Online application possibility	30
Demographic	31

Gateshead Council

Gateshead Council is located in Tyne and Wear, Northeast England. Bordering the borough Gateshead are Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, County Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside. With a population of over 201,000 inhabitants, Gateshead Council handles issues ranging from parking violations to recycling, libraries and much more.

Vision 2030 was founded in 2007 and since then, Gateshead Council has dedicated more resources into developing the already strong volunteering commitments. The Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team (NMV) created and implemented The Gateshead Volunteer Plan in 2013 as a means to increase volunteering in Gateshead. To achieve the increase in volunteers, NMV team actively promotes volunteering around Gateshead and works with local community groups and organisations to develop, manage and promote volunteering opportunities. Recent years have seen a steady increase in group volunteers and corporations reaching out to Gateshead Council as volunteering is a way to promote their Corporate Social Responsibility and develop team building skills. With over 1,700 registered volunteers, the volunteer plan has been a success.

Due to the growing success of a steady increase in volunteers, Gateshead Council faces increased difficulties in managing the growth and utilizing the database to increase future volunteers. Reaching out to CSB Consulting, a brief was created to aid in the creation of Gateshead Council online database volunteering, regarding the volunteer recruitment experience and the administration process.

Client Details

Gateshead Council

Civic Centre, Regent Street,
Gateshead NE8 1HH
0191 433 3000

Point of contact

Kate Marshall

katemarshall@gateshead.gov.uk

Brief

Gateshead Council online database volunteering, regarding the volunteer recruitment experience and the administration process.

Key Duties

1. Designing a process for volunteers to declare interest through registering online.
2. Outlining a system gaining all relevant information required by each potential volunteer and opportunity provider.
3. Improving the online customer experience of current volunteers and opportunity providers.
4. Simplifying and adapting the current presentation of volunteer roles.
5. Improving the internal administration process for the volunteering section.
6. Reviewing the services of other competitors and how they present them.

The expected outcome for the client is to receive a report that is strategic, adoptable and relevant to move the business forwards and encourage all the stakeholders to buy in for future investments.

Executive Summary

In this part, we will elaborate about the key issues that surround the Gateshead Council regarding the recruitment process, the internal organisation and the online user experience.

Designing a process for volunteers to declare interest through registering online.

The current position of Gateshead Council in terms of registering volunteer interest comes through two channels; online and paper format. A PDF file is available for prospective volunteers to explore, searching for their desired role. After exploring the opportunities, the prospective volunteer can access the Expression of Interest form on the Gateshead Council website in the volunteering section. The second alternative is to manually fill out a paper Expression of Interest form and have it processed by a member of the volunteering department within Gateshead Council.

The underlying issue with the process comes from the way the data is processed. Having a Council employee process the data of each prospective volunteer by interest and other specific details is time consuming, lengthening the enrolment process and adding a level of possible error when handling multiple volunteers. Digitising and creating a process in which the volunteer data is classified by interest, qualifications and other metrics would create a seamless process when registering the prospective volunteer.

CSB Consulting was informed of the needs of Gateshead Council regarding designing the process and was given free rein to brainstorm possible resolutions without being influenced by previous strategies.

Outlining a system gaining all relevant information required by each potential volunteer and opportunity provider.

After the interest of the volunteer is registered, the next step is for the prospective volunteer to supply the Council with a list of references. Referees are required based on Human Resource, Legal, Insurance issues and to receive background information on the volunteer. Certain volunteer roles expose risks which require the volunteer to have knowledge and skills applicable to the role and legal right to take part in the activity. The lengthy process is accomplished by a Gateshead employee which requires them to contact the referees and validate the information. Once this is done, the volunteer can be officially registered and then apply for a specific role of their interest.

Potential opportunity providers have a similar application process when registering with Gateshead Council. After registering their interest, an administrator must approve the request and then the provider has to complete a Volunteer Role template specifying whether it is a one-off opportunity or a recurring role. If approved, the opportunity gets inputted into the database, waiting for potential volunteers to show interest. When a volunteer is found, their information gets sent to a predetermined officer which will approve or decline the request, which itself is a lengthy process. An interview is scheduled with the volunteer and if approved, their information will be stored and the volunteer will be subject to potential training before taking part in their volunteer role.

The complicated enrolment process displays inefficiency throughout the process as an employee is obligated to contact the referees and wait upon their response before moving on to the next step. The whole process can take weeks due to the interactions between all the departments, which can lose volunteers due to loss of interest, no longer having the need to volunteer or going to a different organisation.

Improving the online experience of current volunteers and opportunity providers.

The current situation regarding online interaction between volunteers and opportunity providers with Gateshead Council is limited to the expression of interest form and email collaboration between the Council and volunteers. The creation of a platform to facilitate the interaction between the Council and volunteers is necessary to eliminate massive spreadsheets with volunteer information that cannot give useful information to administrators without increased effort and resources. This information is very useful in determining the correct volunteers available for the corresponding volunteer opportunity. There is a need for volunteers to have access to information regarding possible volunteering opportunities and how to access them, what documents are necessary and what the whole process looks like as well as an overall timeline from registration to volunteering. Opportunity providers also need access to see how their needs can be met, whether through logistical, capital or human resources.

Registering volunteering roles with Gateshead Council is an elongated process at the current situation. After applying to be a registered provider through the Council, the request undergoes approval. If successful, the provider is given a Volunteer Role template for each volunteering role they demand, also specifying the type of volunteering role, whether a long term or a one off role. If the role is approved, it is posted on the role section of Gateshead Council database.

When a registered volunteer applies for the role, an email is supposed to be sent out within 2 days to acknowledge the interest and a request for references is made. If the process is fulfilled, an administrator sends the volunteer information to a volunteer coordinator, who will evaluate the fit of the volunteer based on prior roles and skills. If that volunteer is approved, the provider has to arrange an interview with the volunteer and determine if they find the volunteer fitting for the role. A detailed checklist has to be followed to determine the suitability of the volunteer with information such as training and legal requirements. If the applicant is successful, a letter of confirmation is sent out. If the applicant is still interested, he/she needs to sign the letter to move further along the process. An induction process covering information such as the role profile, supervision, health and safety, risk assessments, insurance and training takes place before the applicant commences the volunteering. If the role lasts longer than one month, an induction review must be completed to ensure the volunteer is satisfied with the role and that they are fully trained. It is important to note that the current process is exceeding the system's capacity and having a profound impact upon applicant delays.

Simplifying and adapting the current presentation of volunteer roles.

The process to register volunteer opportunity roles is fairly complicated and can be time consuming. The current presentation of the available volunteer roles is presented in a document which is uploaded on the Gateshead website. This PDF document contains information regarding the opportunity, the role which the volunteer could partake in, any support while undertaking the tasks and if any possible training might be required. Opportunity updates are not always current and some opportunities might not exist anymore, whether already have taken place or no longer planned. The extensive document is cumbersome as refining the volunteer opportunities is not possible and one must scroll through all listings to find something relevant to themselves. Volunteers can apply to roles that do not exist and then the process has to take place again if they still want to volunteer for a different role. Offering a method to upload and specify the current standing of available volunteer roles is much needed to eliminate the chance of volunteers dropping out due to inefficiencies caused by outdated information or lack of detail in the specifications regarding the opportunity.

Improving the internal administration process for the volunteering section.

Gateshead Council currently manually update their database which consists of all the volunteers, their contact details and references. One administrator is in charge of extracting the data from the Expression of Interest form and inputting it into the Excel database the Council created. From this database, the administrator contacts the potential and registered volunteers to interact with them regarding their inquiries or needs for upcoming volunteering roles. The administrator is also in charge of contacting referees that were given by the potential volunteers and determining the fit. The administrators' next task is to allocate the volunteer a role in their interested field and send over the contact information to the corresponding volunteer provider. With one administrator handling so many tasks, response time can vary case by case and communication with multiple volunteers simultaneously can be a daunting task when exchange of documents and information is occurring. Offering a way where the administrator tasks are greatly reduced can provide the potential volunteer more flexibility in presenting their qualifications in a manner that would give them more flexibility and reduce the back and forth communication between the Council and the volunteer. Simplifying the process can positively affect the volunteer process and reduce the likelihood of events not receiving volunteers, volunteers dropping out of the registration process or losing interest.

Reviewing the services of other competitors

Newcastle City Council has a similar service providing information to volunteers. The close proximity to Gateshead is an important factor in comparing the services. Newcastle City Council has a dedicated website for the volunteer centre which displays volunteering opportunities in the area of Newcastle. To be a volunteer, one has to send an email in order to potentially make an appointment. All online registrations are redirected towards the platform do-it.org (see below). Beyond that, Newcastle City Council does not seem to have a hands on approach to volunteering.

The Council of Hartlepool also has an independent website for volunteering that displays all relevant information, opportunities or contact information. To register as a volunteer, an online form has to be filled out, which includes 3 parts: personal information, preferred sector to volunteer in (healthcare, teaching, IT ...) and the personal skills and qualifications of the candidate. All the information requested is relevant to the volunteer role, however no references are necessary.

As far as the Council of Durham is concerned, there are some volunteering opportunities displayed by category, even though in every category there only is a general description of potential jobs. If one tries to find out more about the opportunities, he/she ends up on a page with general information.

No link to register or instruction on how to apply are displayed, only a login for people having an account with the Council is available. This website gives information to potential volunteers, however would not be suitable for Gateshead Council as they require a system where people can register directly online, as well as having access to all the relevant information they need.

Regarding Middlesbrough, all the volunteering opportunities are listed on their website, application is submitted by completing the online expression of interest form or through a direct contact.

In Cumbria, the Council of Carlisle, Kendal, Workington and others are all merged on a single website. They organise events in each city where potential volunteers can meet the organisations. In order to apply for a volunteering opportunity, they require to contact them directly and an appointment will be made to complete the registration.

Do-it.org is a UK platform listing “over 1 million volunteering opportunities that are posted by volunteer centres, national/local charities and voluntary groups” (Do-it Trust, 2017). Any individual can create a profile and search for any opportunity depending on the criteria. For instance, the location, interests, skills already acquired or wishing to, activities wanted and availability. The user can save openings he/she finds interesting and subscribe to organisations that could potentially post desired opportunities. When one wants to volunteer for a particular offer posted, he/she can “register his interest”, which will show the applications requirements and send his/her details to the organisation. Many Councils such as Leeds, Westminster or Durham collaborate with this platform by uploading all their volunteering opportunities. Another outcome is the “volunteering CV” that displays the number of hours volunteered, verified completed activities as well as the number of organisations the volunteer had participated within, which can be made public.

Regarding the online volunteering recruitment process of NGOs, some are using their own platform such as Greenpeace with Greenwire, a hub where new and potential volunteers connect and share events, photos, videos and news, working as an internal social media platform. Doctors Without Borders offer volunteer opportunities using an online expression of interest form via Google or applying through them directly. Organisation such as Amnesty International or WWF work the same. Finally, there also are some other platforms such as One World 365 or NGO abroad that work as do-it.org but for NGO’s volunteering opportunities.

Research Methodology and Ethics

Before any primary research commenced, a review of the documentation provided by the Gateshead Council was initially investigated. After, secondary research was conducted to establish the adopted volunteer practices of other private, public and voluntary organisations, which provided a clearer understanding of the market conditions and the issues at hand. This was achieved through viewing various websites, news articles and the political agenda/policies set by the UK Government.

The primary research conducted within this report used a mixed methodology approach, which focused upon both quantitative and qualitative research, whilst also acknowledging the importance that this study was based upon internal issues, therefore the data collected was about those involved or who had completed the recruitment process. The quantitative research involved the distribution of an online survey (see appendices) via the email listings at Gateshead Council. The survey itself was aimed to capture the insight of the recruitment process of the volunteers by the Council and its website, whilst also emphasising the experience the potential volunteer received from the beginning of the process to the end. Furthermore, the survey was developed and analysed through Qualtrics, a University affiliated software. Beginning with some basic information about volunteering status before proceeding to a combination of open and closed questions about the recruitment process/experience, whilst also keeping the survey to a maximum of five minutes to maximise participation/completion.

The results received from the survey helped direct the questioning for the qualitative research. In terms of the qualitative research, interviewing was chosen as the sampling method, ensuring the following groups were represented:

- Individual volunteers
- Group volunteers
- Corporate volunteers
- Employee's working within the Gateshead volunteer recruitment process

Each group had unique questions specifically designed to focus upon the different relationships they have with the recruitment process/Gateshead Council. Every interview completed was recorded by audio equipment, in order to create a written transcript of each session, which would later be analysed through grouping and coding techniques. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner that gave the interviewer the flexibility to expand on any important information given by the participants for a greater

understanding. The interviews themselves were conducted through a combination of telephone calls and face-to-face meetings.

Throughout the duration of the primary research all participants involved within the study provided consent, whether that was accepting the terms and conditions on the initial page of the online survey or agreeing to a telephone/face to face interview via email beforehand. Moreover, at no point were participants under the age of eighteen or within a vulnerable state to complete the survey or interview throughout the research process. Safeguards were put in place to ensure the security and anonymity of participants under the 1998 Data Protection Act, whilst also making all/potential participants aware that under no circumstances were they obligated to complete the survey/interview and held the right to withdraw from the study at any given point.

Research findings and analysis

Qualitative investigation

In order to find out more about the recruitment process and the experience of volunteers with the Council, we conducted interviews with four individual volunteers, one group of volunteers, a manager of a corporation sending out employees for occasional volunteering opportunities with the Council and a Council member. In designing the questions, we focused on phrasing them in a manner to avoid leading questions and thus biased results.

The first question we asked them was their motivation for volunteering. The answers pointed to free time they had available or their desire to give back to the community. One also mentioned it was because he/she cares about the environment, likes fresh air and the opportunity was recommended by a friend. When interviewing a group, we clearly understood that their main motivation was the desire to help their community and make their neighbourhood a nicer place.

Moreover, we wanted to understand the needs of the current/potential volunteers and why they chose to volunteer with Gateshead Council, for example why they started searching for opportunities and why they decided to do it with Gateshead Council. One of the individuals registered after meeting with one of the coordinators at a local event. He/she chose Gateshead Council because of the specific position he/she wanted. Another one simply searched online for volunteering opportunities in Newcastle and Gateshead and chose the latter one, because contrary to the first one, it had the position he/she wanted. One volunteer started because he/she was in the Council's emailing list from other services and received an email advertising volunteering. We can see that the reasons are different, this is positive since this means that several sources of recruitment seem to be working for Gateshead Council.

Regarding their views on the recruitment process, one declared that it was "straight forward, very easy" while two others said that it was a long process, one even describing it as very strenuous. They both justified this with the number of stages they had to go through. One volunteer explained that he had to call several times, did not hear from the Council for more than two weeks and it was a challenge to get completely registered. As they said, such a long and demanding process could discourage some potential volunteers, the other one corroborates this fact as he/she had a friend who, found out about the process, got deterred to the point that he/she actually did not even start it and gave up volunteering altogether. It is then clear that the recruitment process needs to be reviewed and rethought as it is not giving entire satisfaction and even doing the opposite of its purpose.

Following up on this feedback, we tried to find out more about their ideas on what could make the process easier. The answers mainly showed that a shorter application process would greatly help.

It was also advised that automatic emails should be generated when stages are completed to acknowledge the progress of the application and avoid delays.

The current system in place with local groups of volunteers is very structured and every single action or decision they want to make needs to be run through the Council. Although having its benefits, this system is showing its limits from the groups' point of view. Indeed, groups of volunteers advised that it would be in everyone's best interest to give more power to the local groups working with the Council. From their perspective, the current organisation of the Council does not allow them any freedom of action or decision which is, in some cases absurd. For instance, they spotted that something should be repaired using mortar and they were asked by the Council to give samples of different types of mortar so the Council could pick which one they should use. This particular example perfectly illustrates how the system is time consuming and the process of decision sometimes not adapted to the relevance of the situation. As mentioned in an interview, building on this idea of relevance, the people in the Council should work in a more practical manner. This implies the process needs improvement.

It was recommended that "the level of responsibility on these sites should be transferred from the Council to these groups". By doing so, there would be a time gained as this system is highly functioning on paperwork, bureaucracy and unquestioned processes sometimes not adapted. Moreover, not only does this system require more time and energy from volunteers for the same results, but it also leads to frustration. It has even been admitted that sometimes they just "go ahead and do it" and then tell the Council that it has been done instead of waiting for their instructions, filling their forms or asking for the procedure to follow.

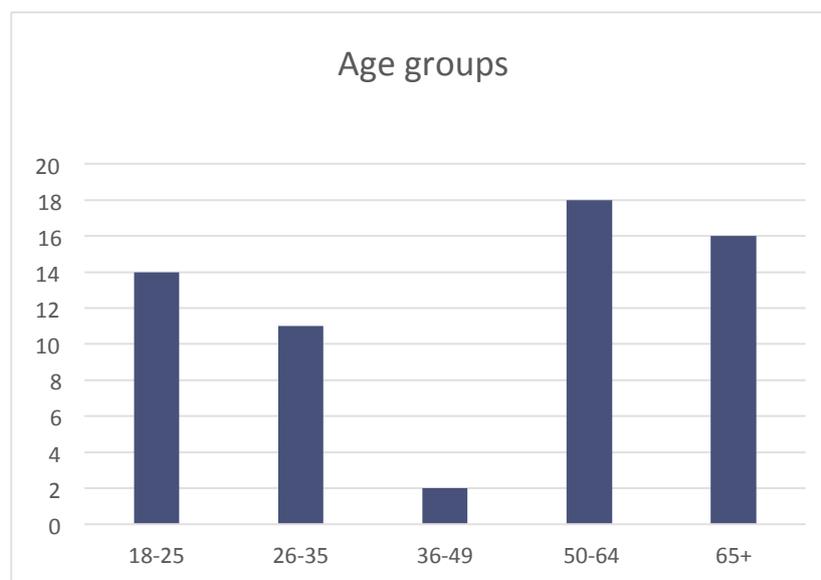
Finally all the participants involved agreed that an all online application process would definitely be helpful. Regarding implementing a platform with offers and a personal profile, they mainly agreed that it would improve their experience as volunteers since finding new opportunities would be made easier. However one person mentioned that it might not be helpful to their personal situation or other pensioners like him/her who do not require career development i.e. writing it in their CV. Moreover, the Council itself desires to enhance their online services and facilitate the volunteers' online experiences. Designing an online platform would respond to many of the previously stated issues and has been an avenue to consider.

To summarise, many of the people we talked to agreed to say that in itself, the volunteering experience they had been through with the Council was positive citing they “really enjoyed it”. The critics were mainly focused on the processes in operation at the Council, whether it concerned their recruitment process or their functional system.

The system/process is currently depicted as time-consuming by many and leads to frustration or even discouragement among members or potential volunteers. The main area of improvement will be to provide a service to modify their current practices or design new processes that will enable a significant ease of use and gain of time.

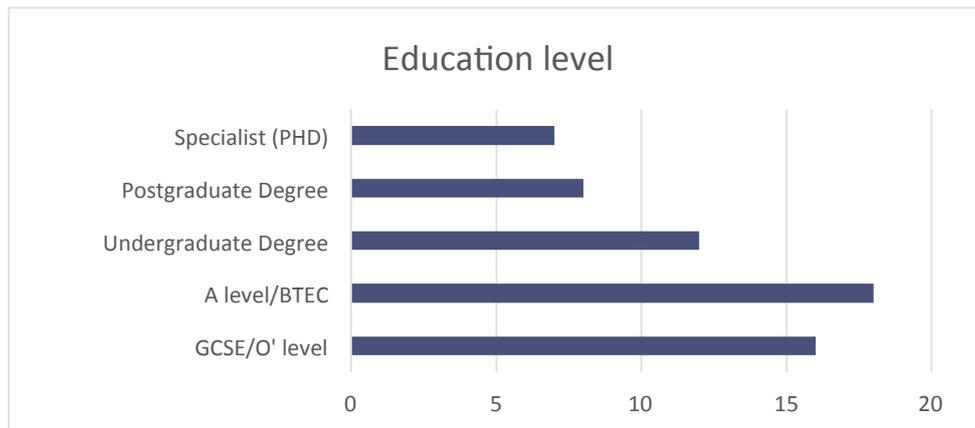
Quantitative investigation

Thanks to demographic questions, we had a clear representation of the sample of respondents. 103 people took the survey but only 61 respondents fully completed it. Even though several questions were responded 74 times, we chose for the sake of accuracy and reliability of our survey’s analysis to focus on the responses of those 61 respondents that completed the full survey, and discarded the remaining.

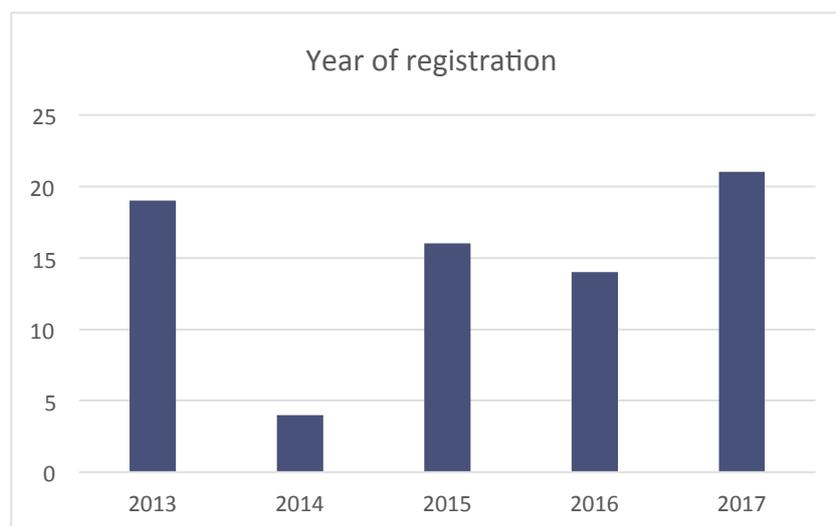


Out of the 61 respondents, 37 are female and 24 male. The age range of the respondents is the following: 41% have 18 to 35 years of age, 3% have 36 to 49 years of age and the 56% remaining are over 50 year-old. 34 have completed an A-level/BTEC or lower grade of school; 12 have undergraduate degrees, 8 completed a postgraduate degree and 7 a PhD. In terms of current employment status, 52% are not employed and among them, 69% are retired and 19% are students. 48% of the respondents are employed, half of them full-time and the other half part-time. 65% of the employed respondents are professionals, the remaining are either manual unskilled and skilled workers or others. These diverse situations, educational background and employment status give a rather mixed sample that

should give results that are relevant as they come from different types of respondents, as highlighted by the graph below.



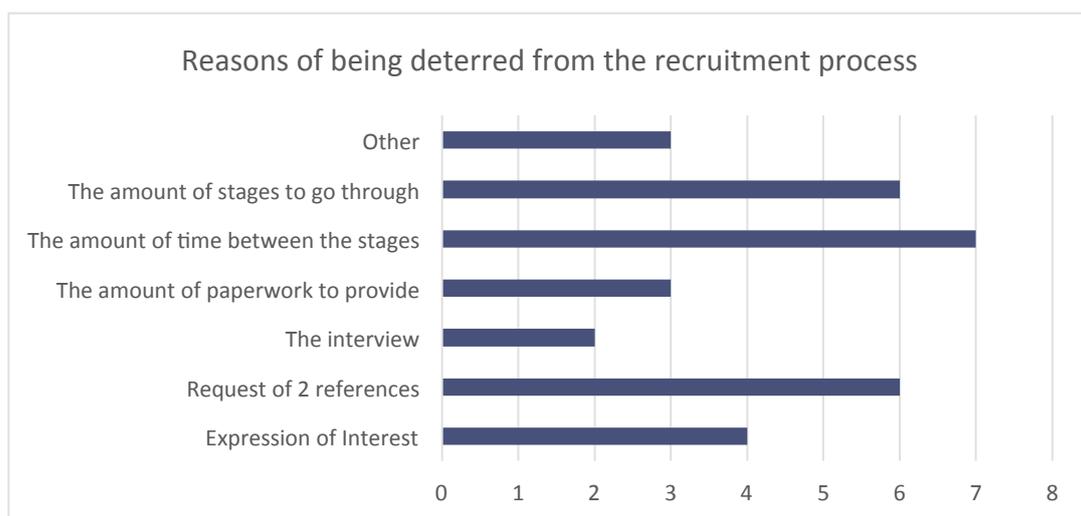
The first question was about the volunteers' year of registration and displayed various results as illustrated by the graph below. Furthermore, 43 respondents are still volunteering whereas 18 are not anymore. We asked them for what reasons they volunteered in the first place and 37% replied that they wanted to give back to the community and help people. The rest were just enjoying working for the Council, others were seeking personal rewards or just enjoyed working with others and having good company. Among the former volunteers, 39% couldn't carry on because of other commitments. The rest of them had either a lack of specific opportunities or were struggling with the Council, which made them quit. As a result, volunteers resigned for personal reasons rather than a real dissatisfaction with the Council.



In terms of the information available regarding the volunteering opportunities at Gateshead Council, the respondents were mainly satisfied with 92% of them finding that information relevant and 88% useful. 87% of the respondents found the information regarding the

different volunteering roles they were searching for. This highlights information is available from the Council’s volunteering section.

When it comes to satisfaction of the respondents towards Gateshead Council’s recruitment process, 72% are satisfied or highly satisfied whereas 28% are either neutral, dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied. 70% of the respondents found the process simple and 18% complicated. However, there were 20% that found it too long and 7% found it short. In addition to that, some volunteers or potential volunteers were discouraged by the length of the recruitment process, as one respondent said: “I was repeatedly asked for references and then ignored. The process took months and I got nowhere”. In fact, out of the 61 respondents, 25 were recruited after two weeks or more, which is nearly half of them. As a result, 25% of the respondents were deterred by the process, because of the amount of time between the stages and the amount of stages to go through during the whole process, such as the request of two references.



Around 74% of the volunteers who took that survey were offered their preferred volunteer role and 26% were not. However the respondents were mainly satisfied with their volunteering experience. 76% of them declared being satisfied or highly satisfied against 16% neutrals and 6% dissatisfied volunteers. About the experience of working with the Gateshead Council, the satisfaction remains high but not as much as for the volunteering experience itself. Indeed, 30% of the respondents were neutral or dissatisfied.

17 of the 61 respondents responded to an opened question asking them about any recommendation they would have to improve Gateshead Council’s volunteering process. Their recommendations covered several aspects of the survey’s questions, such as the speed and length of the process that takes too long between the stages, according to the respondents. Several volunteers pointed out the complexity of the process, in particular the amount of paperwork needed such as the references, and thought those requirements

should be only given and tailored according to the volunteering position that has been assigned. One volunteer also mentioned the possibility of a one off meeting, that would “save a lot of time and paperwork”, as he/she mentioned.

Finally, several respondents shared their views on a potential online application process for the recruitment of volunteers. Their feedback highlighted the potential benefits in terms of information, such as sending electronic acknowledgments at every stage of the recruitment process, with explanations and indications of what is expected and when. Moreover, as detailed by a volunteer, an online application could make the process much more straightforward with the possibility of uploading all required personal details and documents. The option for any external volunteering organisation to advertise directly on the app would “reduce the need for lengthy brokering by the Council”. As a matter of fact, when we asked volunteers if an online application would be appealing to them, 79% responded positively. However, the percentage of positive reply is, for obvious reasons, much higher among the 18 to 35 year-old (92%) than among the +50 year-old (65%), even though the later remain predominantly in favour of an online application.

Recommendations

Development of an Online Platform

Based on feedback, benchmarking and the Council's needs, it has been determined that resources and attention should be allocated to developing an online platform with the following features:

- Personal profiles
 - List of available opportunities and descriptions
 - Dashboard
 - Reviews and recommendations
-

Personal Profiles

In order to simplify the process of registering as a volunteer and applying to volunteering opportunities individually, current and potential volunteers will be able to create their online profile on the Gateshead Council website. This profile will contain their personal details, their geographical area of availability, field(s) of interest, time span of availability (days per week/month or hours per day/week/month or obligations).

They should also be able to detail their working/volunteering experiences, relevant skills, and education either by uploading their CV or by listing the above information in a designated section. A potential feature such as extracting information out of the volunteer's LinkedIn profile would achieve the above fulfilment more efficiently as well as legitimising their efforts.

After setting up their profiles, volunteers will be able to upload any documents required: CV, letters of recommendations or any other compulsory forms related to health and safety. This eliminates the need for the correspondence regarding the list of referees and thus a step of the current process of registration. The collection of documents will also enable the volunteers to apply to future roles without the need for going through the whole process again. For the Council, this collection of documents creates a database where everything is in the same place.

Profiles will be available for individuals but also for corporations, community volunteer groups and opportunity providers so all the actors can interact with each other.

Having this online profile will allow them to have access to different features depending on the type of profile.

- Opportunity providers will be able to
 - Post volunteering offers
 - View individual and volunteer groups profiles
 - Receive notifications/emails when there is a matching profile
 - Contact other profiles through the platform

- Individual volunteers, groups and corporations will be able to
 - View volunteering offers
 - View opportunity providers' profiles
 - Receive notifications/emails when there is an opportunity corresponding to their interests and/or skills
 - Contact other profiles through the platform

The implementation of such a platform would have several benefits for Gateshead Council. First of all, it would help them build their database with all the information entered directly by volunteers themselves through the platform. The Council would only have to access it instead of having to compile everything as they are doing now. This would help the Council remove the need to input data, freeing up time for other tasks.

To better guide the registrations and applications through the platform, emails will be automatically generated after specific actions. Volunteers or providers alike would like to be notified by email after successfully registering, applying to an opportunity/receiving an application or when a matching offer is posted or a relevant candidate comes out.

In regards of the data protection, the members' personal details such email, phone number and address will not be displayed on the platform without their express consent.

Listing of Available Opportunities and Descriptions

Issues with the display of volunteer roles have been mentioned as a potential improvement. To resolve this issue, we recommend that providers of volunteering opportunities should be able to post and manage their offers on the platform pending the approval of the Council. Current needs and availability will be automatically updated based on the fulfilment of the roles if done through the platform or by a member of the organisation in other cases. By only having to approve roles real-time, Gateshead Council will save the back and forth

correspondence with the providers. The current process is time-consuming for all parties and can deter providers as some events are time dependant.

The list of volunteering opportunities can be accessed by volunteers and the application process for the particular role can take place directly on the platform itself. This process will eliminate the need for a Gateshead Council administrators' approval for each volunteer's application. Furthermore contact will be made straight between the provider and applicant, also relieving the Council from this task.

At the moment, all the different volunteer roles are described in a single PDF file where you have to scroll and search for the individual roles you want to know more about, which is laborious. To facilitate this process, we suggest that each role is described on an individual webpage. To assist the query, roles will all be sorted by their category (education, skilled labour, health...) so volunteers can find the information they are looking for easily. Furthermore, the search can be refined by location, skills needed, availability required or simply by keywords. To achieve this result, the descriptions need to be standardised i.e. the same template should be used for all the roles, indicating:

- Job title
- Job rating (ease of application, see in Restructuring the Processes – p. 20)
- Organisation
- Time (duration, days of the week, number of hours)
- Location
- Mission description
- Personal requirements (skills needed, experience, certification(s), age)
- Support provided
- Contact details

Volunteers should also have the ability to save the opportunities in a list accessible on their dashboard or share them through email, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

Creating a Dashboard

An added value to the platform would be the addition of a dashboard. This page would recapitulate all the volunteering missions realized by the volunteer. It would show the number of hours volunteered, the organisation they volunteered with, potential offers and the reviews they received. This dashboard is only accessible and to be used by the registered user.

To enhance the sense of community on the platform and encourage interactions between members, there should be the possibility for all members to be reviewed and recommended. In order to be fair, the reviews and recommendations would work reciprocally.

Volunteers would be able to rate organisations regarding the experience they had as much as the organisations' ability to rate volunteers and groups of volunteers on their implication, attitude or reliability during the mission. That feature might require a systematic moderation from the Council before being displayed online.

Potential offers could be suggested based on the experience the volunteer has withheld within the volunteering experience and the volunteer has the ability to directly apply from his/her dashboard.

Gateshead Council's Scope of Action

Council's scope of action would now include:

- Moderating offers: opportunities will be posted directly by the providers but the Council will still be able to review and delete or modify them if necessary
- Detailing roles: as it is currently available, the different roles will be listed and explained in details in a designated section
- Posting information regarding events hosted, news from the Council, changes in the processes or on the platform
- Updating the content
- Managing traditional applications: in person or phone expression of interest

Restructuring the Individual Recruitment Process

As highlighted by some volunteers on the survey as well as during interviews, the main deterrent of the volunteering recruitment process is the amount of stages they have to go through, as well as the amount of time spent between those stages. Emphasis has been made on the pointlessness of asking for references, in particular for a volunteering opportunity as simple as picking up the litter or cutting the grass. As a result, in order to respond to that congestion of steps in the recruitment process, we propose to classify every volunteering job according to its ease of application:

- A1: roles only requiring registration
 - E.g. Litter picking
- A2: roles requiring basic training and/or instructions
 - E.g. Grass cutting, painting
- A3: roles requiring specialised skills and references
 - E.g. ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) volunteer support project
- A4: roles requiring a Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) check and/or certification
 - E.g. Jobs involving children, disabled or caretaking

Consequently, the more responsibilities and engagement within the job opportunity, the higher the requirements for the Council. The objective is to ease and speed the recruitment process, in particular for jobs as simple as litter picking for which only the minimum requirements should be asked such as a generic Immigration check and requesting acknowledgement of limited liability on behalf of the Council. References shall only be asked for roles with responsibility and ethical considerations, such as interacting with children or skilled work, which obviously requires maximum precautions. This classification should result in an improved volunteer retention rate and ease the recruitment process of less-skilled jobs.

Empowerment of Community Groups

Currently within the Council, volunteers are required to follow a very systematic process to get any task approved. Bureaucracy has a significant effect upon the Council's operation and the volunteer's ability to achieve tasks within a timely manner. This complicated web of communication, creates a lot of difficulty for the employees of the Council but also for the volunteers on the ground. For instance, a volunteer from a local community group highlighted those issues when he/she explained how slowed down he/she was by all Council's procedures, in order to get anything approved. The idea of potentially switching some responsibilities to local communities, fulfilling the operational capabilities excited

him/her greatly. Indeed, he/she explained how local community groups know better about the area itself and consequently about what work needs to be completed.

This is not the only demonstration of how the communication process has caused significant delays for projects delivered by volunteer community groups. For example, we interviewed an individual in charge of a group of volunteers who gave us an example of the difficult communication process between the Council and local communities. As referred to in the qualitative section, a metal sign needed to be repaired. They needed some mortar of different colours and were advised to make several biscuits of different types of mortars, of different colours in order for them to pick the one to apply. As a person in charge of a local community, he/she should be able to proceed by himself/herself and should know the right mortar to use on a metal sign, he/she spotted damaged and planned to repair. Moreover, this very issue is still unresolved due to the lengthy procedures and numerous authorisations needed through different departments of the Council, demonstrating the frustration of the community group leader.

Therefore, in an attempt of reducing this complicated procedure and authorisation process, we suggest passing responsibility and accountability towards the volunteer community groups, with the hope of creating a philosophy of empowerment that can continue for years to come. Not only will this have a significant impact upon reducing time delays, additional time will be saved within the Council workforce. Cross-department interference will be prevented, allowing the staff to follow and implement other leads, which could have a monumental impact upon the Council's productivity and efficiency level.

How would this work? Understandably this ideology and culture of empowerment does not happen overnight nor would it be guaranteed to work. However, by selecting a few groups in different areas across Gateshead, which are loyal and trustworthy to the Council, there is the opportunity to offer these community groups the option to take accountability over the decisions within their designated field/area over a trial period. In terms of accountability/responsibility, it is important not to overburden the community groups all at once. For example, if it were a community group involved with the maintenance of a park, only offering control of a small section before offering more, which can be determined through regular reviews and evaluations with a member of the Council. Other areas of accountability may involve budget allocation for the materials and equipment over the course of a year or the training and development of other volunteers within the group.

Monitoring the transfer of responsibility from the Council to community groups can be done in a number of ways. Firstly, reviewing the community groups at periodical points within the year, starting with relatively short intervals such as quarterly or perhaps monthly, until the Council's inspection achieves all requirements before proceeding to extend to an annual inspection in time and meeting performance standards. Secondly as mentioned before in this section, allow the group to manage a small segment/area before proceeding to allow

the group total control over an entire community, which can only be achieved once adequate/sufficient evidence of competence has been provided.

Thirdly, creating a mentoring scheme that can be associated to the Council or a private entity, which allows the group to work with professionals, improving the necessary skills and experience expected by the Council in order to be considered competent to manage the community activity in the future.

In addition to the timing and efficiency benefits resulting from a potential empowerment, some financial costs could be prevented. To highlight this issue further a volunteer with a strong experience in grass cutting using mechanical equipment, who had to clean a cemetery in his area asked permission from the Council. Instead of being granted permission, the volunteer was required to register to a class on how to cut grass. Furthermore, not only had the volunteer previously learnt the skills and techniques necessary before the training course, but the training cost the Council £250. A sum of money that could have been saved if any background and experience checking had been taken into account. On top of that, the certification that he had to acquire in order to maintain the cemetery had not been presented to him, even 5 months after the training.

As pointed out by several people, handling external groups of volunteers and the operation of such activities could be eased by the improvement of the communication process between the Council and community group volunteers. Ideally, this would consist of having only one point of contact between the Council and the community group, which is currently hindered through numerous levels of bureaucracy and cross department interferences. Therefore, the nominated Council member for a designated group would have the authority to make decisions for any request the community group approaches with, whether or not the decision involves permissions, equipment, volunteers or funds. That individual would be in charge of all the local communities in a specific area of Gateshead and would have to fulfil any requirement those communities or the Council would have set. As a result, the communities would not have to get in touch with any department within the Council other than the nominated Council member for the group, which increases the productivity and efficiency for both entities without requests being lost within an enormous bureaucratic system. In fact, the nominated Council employee in contact with the group would be, among other tasks also in charge of assessing the level of empowerment given to the community groups by the Council. This enables those involved within the Council to assess how well managed, organised and sustainable each community group is, whilst also being in a position to judge the amount of operational and financial responsibility the community groups deserve.

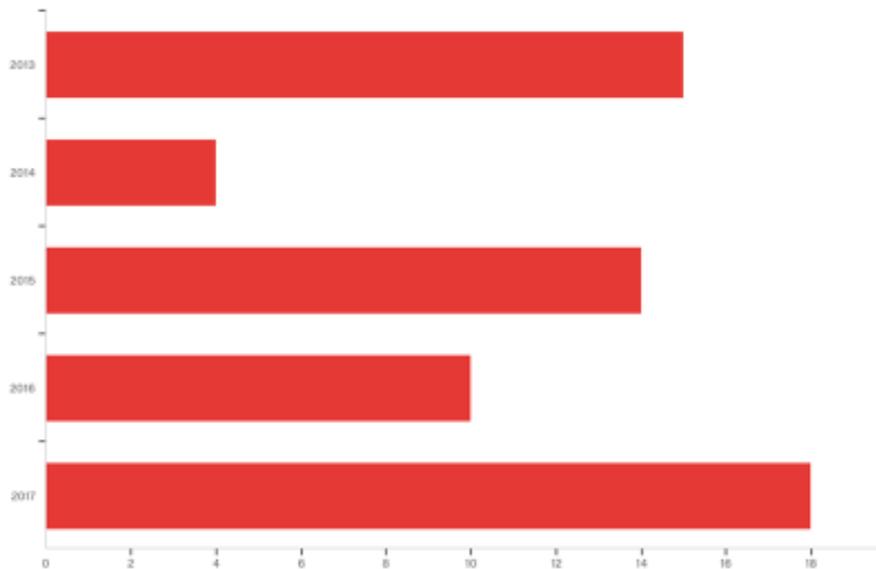
Conclusion

Ultimately, the current recruitment process of volunteers at the Council is outdated. The very process aimed at propelling the Council to become a national leader within volunteering has now become a hindrance. Designed in 2013 to achieve the Council's vision and operate within an environment that is now almost 5 years old, the current process is unable to handle a vast flow of applications and if the same practice continues, issues of sustainability will arise. Employees of the volunteering division are forced to concentrate upon processing the vast amounts of applications, causing delays and frustrations to many applicants before the volunteering has even started. Therefore, creating a platform will improve the efficiency of the recruitment process, whilst allowing employees the time and freedom to pursue other ventures, such as empowerment schemes like the one mentioned within this report. Finally, a digital platform will have profound benefits across the organisation, although until bureaucracy is addressed within the Council, the same question may be asked in another 5 years if the Council fails to maintain and change to the environment around them.

Appendix

Questions regarding the Gateshead Council volunteering recruitment processes

Q1 - When did you first register as a volunteer at Gateshead Council?



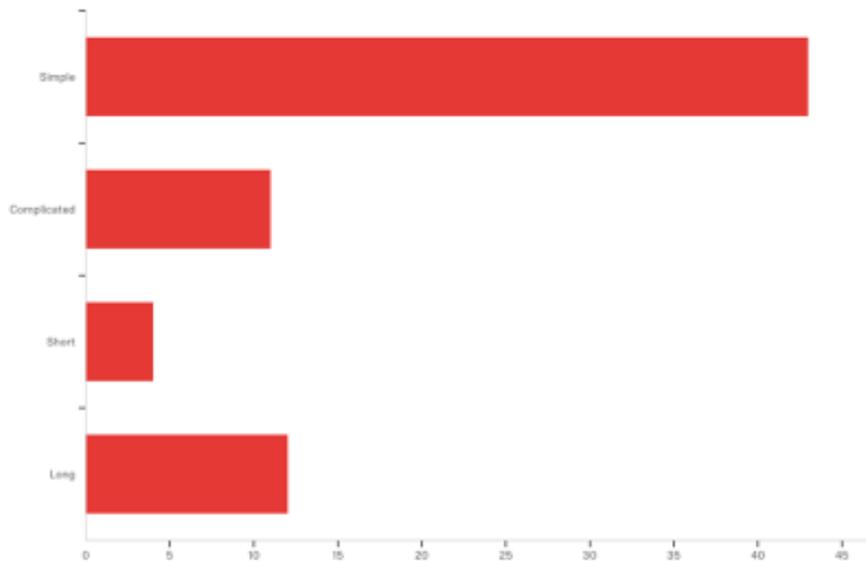
Q2 - How long did it take you to complete the registration (from the Expression of Interest to the volunteering)?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	1-3 days	47.54%	29
2	One week	11.48%	7
3	Two weeks	8.20%	5
4	More than two weeks	32.79%	20
	Total	100%	61

Q3 - I am satisfied with the recruitment process.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	36.07%	22
2	Agree	36.07%	22
3	Neither agree nor disagree	16.39%	10
4	Disagree	6.56%	4
5	Strongly disagree	4.92%	3
	Total	100%	61

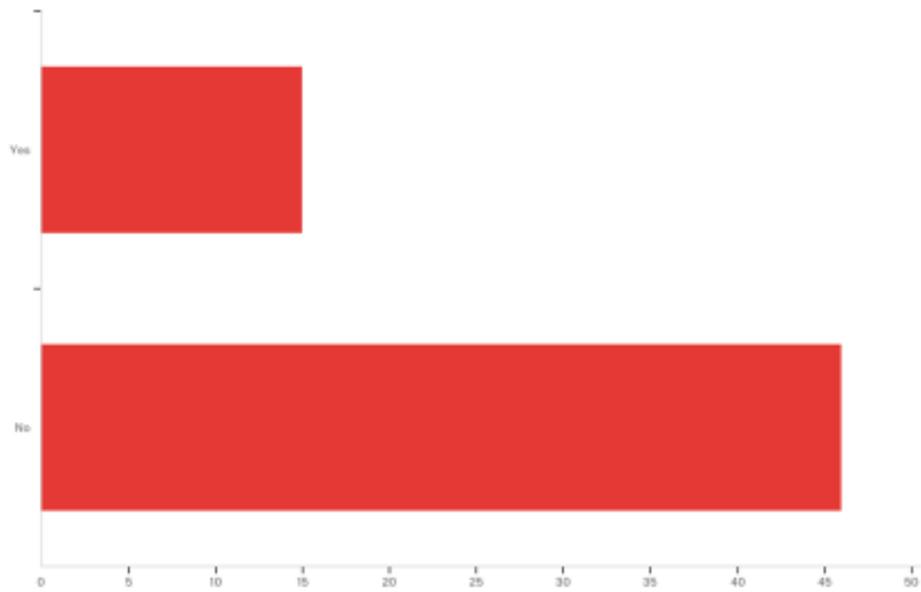
Q4 - How would you describe the recruitment process (Tick all relevant boxes)?



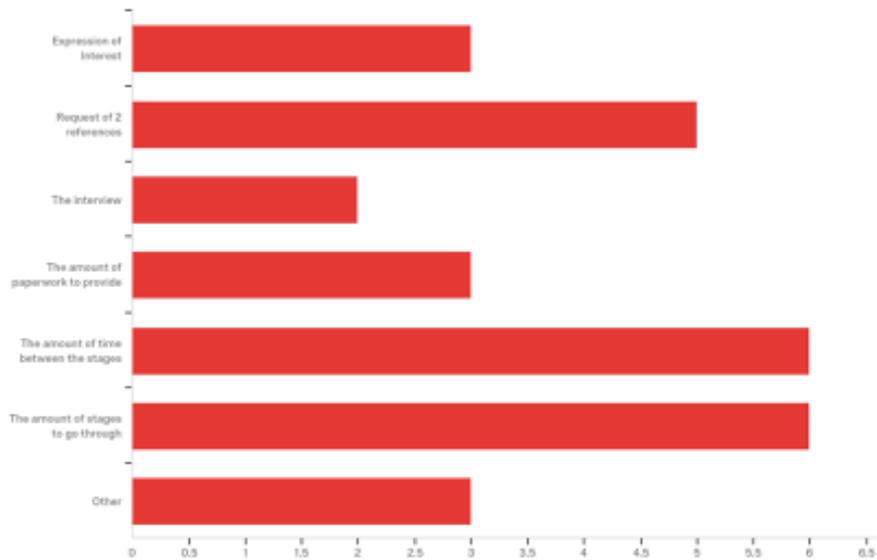
Q5 - Was the information available regarding the application process relevant?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	91.80%	56
2	No	8.20%	5
	Total	100%	61

Q7 - Did the process deter you in any way?



Q8 - If yes, at what stage were you deterred (Tick all relevant boxes)?



Information availability

Q5 - Was the information available regarding the application process relevant?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	91.80%	56
2	No	8.20%	5
	Total	100%	61

Q6 - Was the information available regarding the application process useful?

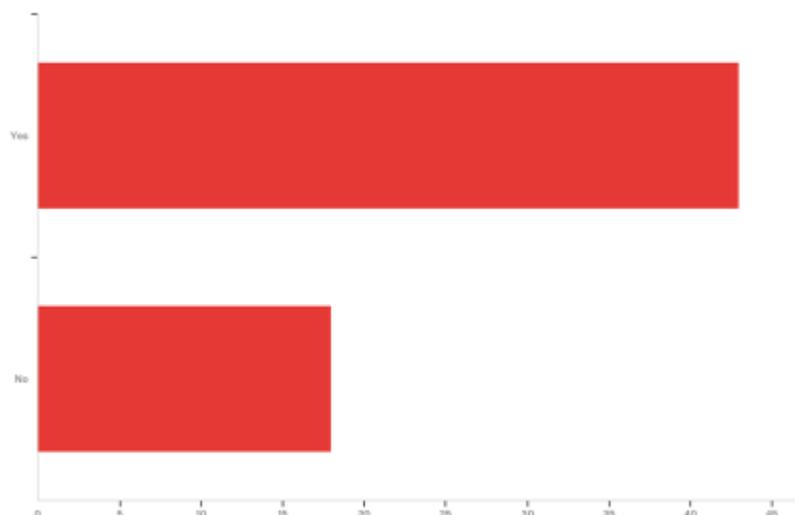
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	88.33%	53
2	No	11.67%	7
	Total	100%	60

Q19 - Did you find the information regarding the different volunteer roles?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	86.89%	53
2	No	13.11%	8
	Total	100%	61

Volunteering experience

Q10 - Are you still volunteering?



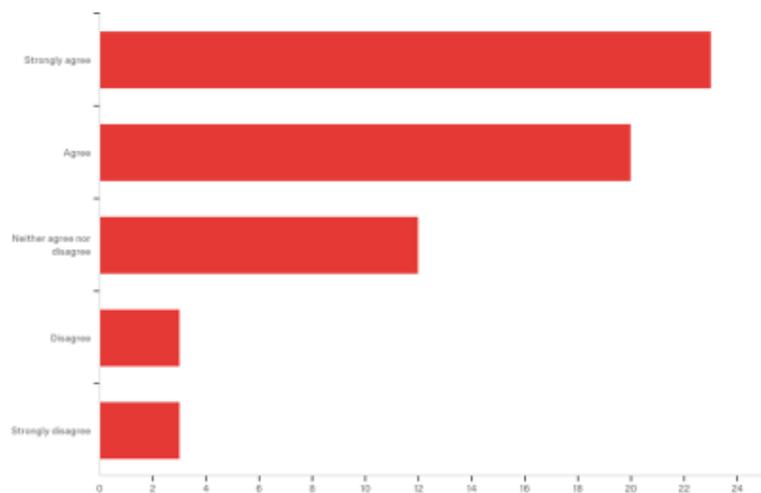
Q11 - If yes, please highlight one of the following reasons (Tick all relevant boxes):

#	Answer	%	Count
1	I enjoy working with the Gateshead Council	24.29%	17
2	Personal rewards	22.86%	16
3	I want to give back to the community and help people	47.14%	33
4	Other	5.71%	4
	Total	100%	70

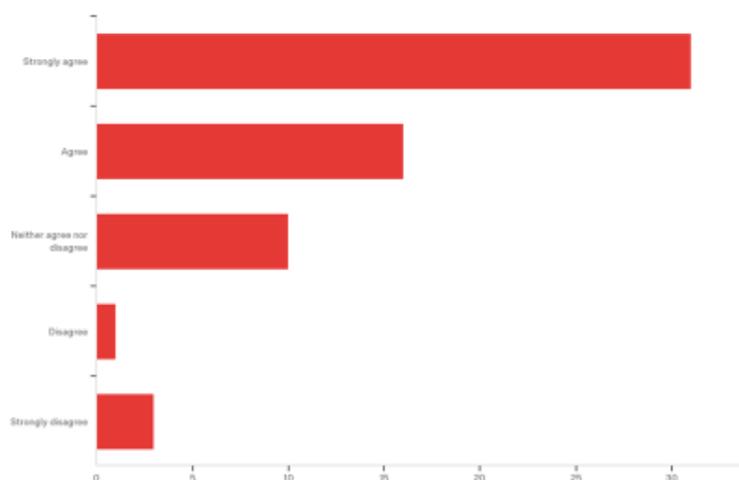
Q12 - If no, please highlight one of the following reasons (Tick all relevant boxes):

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Time constraints	11.54%	3
2	Other commitment	26.92%	7
3	I had a bad experience	11.54%	3
4	The organisation	15.38%	4
5	Other	34.62%	9
	Total	100%	26

Q13 - I find Gateshead Council easy to work with.



Q14 - I found the volunteering experience enjoyable.



Online application possibility

Q15 - Would an all online application process system be appealing to you?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	78.69%	48
2	No	21.31%	13
	Total	100%	61

Demographic

Q27 - What is your gender?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	39.34%	24
2	Female	60.66%	37
	Total	100%	61

Q28 - Which category below includes your age?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	18-25	22.95%	14
2	26-35	18.03%	11
3	36-49	3.28%	2
4	50-64	29.51%	18
5	65+	26.23%	16
	Total	100%	61

Q29 - What is your highest grade of school completed?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	GCSE/O' level	26.23%	16
2	A level/BTEC	29.51%	18
3	Undergraduate Degree	19.67%	12
4	Postgraduate Degree	13.11%	8
5	Specialist (PHD)	11.48%	7
	Total	100%	61

Q31 - Current employment status.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Part-Time	24.59%	15
2	Full-Time	22.95%	14
3	Not employed	52.46%	32
	Total	100%	61

Q32 - If not employed:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Carer	3.13%	1
2	Homemaker	6.25%	2
3	Unemployed	3.13%	1
4	Student	18.75%	6
5	Retired	68.75%	22
	Total	100%	32

This page is intentionally left blank

TITLE OF REPORT: Volunteer Plan – Annual Update

REPORT OF: Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment

Summary

Corporate Vitality Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously agreed that that this Committee should receive an annual update of the implementation of the Councils Volunteers Plan 2013-17.

This report provides information about the number of volunteers, the types of volunteer roles, case studies (appendix 1) and the impact of volunteering in Gateshead's communities. The report also includes priority areas for future action.

Introduction

1. Vision 2030, the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy, sets out six big ideas to help achieve the vision for Gateshead. One of the big ideas is Gateshead Volunteers, enabling everyone to make a recognised contribution to their community. Gateshead volunteers has been a council priority since 2007 when Vision 2030 was agreed and is founded upon a strong history of volunteering in Gateshead, creating stronger communities.
2. Vision 2030, Gateshead Volunteers, seeks to achieve the following outcomes:
 - a. The voluntary and community sector thrives within Gateshead
 - b. Vibrant, sustainable communities through a culture of supporting community and voluntary sector organisations in the delivery of local services
 - c. Volunteering recognised as important in career development
 - d. Volunteering frameworks that help volunteers develop their skills
 - e. Gateshead known as a national leader in promoting and supporting volunteering
 - f. Social responsibility is achieved through local businesses participating in supporting volunteers.
3. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/2017-2020/2021 states that the Council will continue to seek to mitigate demand pressures within services by capacity building within communities, including, where appropriate, work with partners and volunteers.
4. The Council Plan 2015-2020 identifies "Gateshead Volunteers" as one of our six big ideas focused on people and places.

5. Gateshead Council Volunteers Plan 2013-17 provides a strategic and structured approach to volunteering in Gateshead. The plan ensures that volunteers are supported effectively in areas such as training, skills, expenses and health and safety so that the principles of volunteering are not undermined.

Progress to date

6. The volunteer plan (2013) originally identified five objectives to be achieved, these included:
 - Enable everyone to make a recognised contribution to their community and become the volunteering capital of England
 - Deliver economic growth and wellbeing
 - Volunteering activity adds value to local service provision, enabling neighbourhoods to have services that would not otherwise be provided and enhancing core public services.
 - Increase formal volunteering from 18% to 25% by 2017
 - Increase informal volunteering from 34% to 40% by 2017
7. Since the volunteers plan was first launched in 2013 there has been an increase in volunteering from 4,426 to 8,065, an 82% increase. This is the estimate of volunteers in each volunteering area (paragraph 16 refers) that provides an estimate of volunteering activity using the intelligence available.
8. Registered Council volunteers have increased from 50 to 1,687 which is a 3274% since the volunteers plan was launched in 2013.
 - 2013 – 50 centrally registered volunteers
 - 2014 – 490 centrally registered volunteers
 - 2015 – 891 centrally registered volunteers
 - 2016 – 1,417 centrally registered volunteers
 - 2017 – 1,687 centrally registered volunteers.
9. Corporate Volunteer Days continue to grow in demand, 1,190 volunteers have taken part in corporate and group volunteering activity. Throughout 2016/2017 the estimated economic value to the Gateshead community of corporate and group volunteering activity is estimated at £123,863. (Examples of corporate and group volunteering are described further at paragraph 28).
10. The Residents Survey 2012 (sample of 3,800) set out two main aims for the Volunteers Plan:
 - To increase formal volunteering from 18% to 25%
 - To increase informal volunteering from 34% to 40%
11. The Residents Survey in 2016 (sample of 906 residents) demonstrated the targets set for informal and formal volunteering have been achieved. Although based on a smaller sample (survey in 2013 based on 3,800) the information is still valid as the results have been weighted.

- Formal volunteering target of an increase to 25% achieved 51.9% this is a 188% increase on the target
 - Informal volunteering target of an increase to 40% achieved 67% this is a 97% increase on the target
12. Volunteering continues to grow and as it becomes better understood, there is now an opportunity to create a new plan and approach in 2018 which would include new partnerships, new processes, a new system and new volunteering principles whilst recognising current and forthcoming budgetary challenges for the council and the communities within Gateshead.
13. Officers continue to monitor activities within communities and volunteering, recording the number of volunteers now occurs regularly. Communities in Gateshead continue to develop and evolve and therefore Volunteering demands continue to increase. As the volunteer plan ends there is a need to develop new systems, embrace technology and approaches to ensure that volunteering support meets the future demands placed on the council.

Volunteer Recruitment

14. Since 2013 there has been a single point of access to volunteering with Gateshead Council. All documentation and an outline of the process are available online:

<https://intranet.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2163/Recruitment-of-volunteers-into-the-council>

15. The Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team currently support over 100 groups and organisations from Gateshead's VCS around the development of volunteer roles and matching of suitable volunteers. There isn't another organisation that currently provides this support. The number of voluntary and community groups requesting support and accessing our service continues to increase. Currently there are over 200 volunteer roles available for individuals to choose from. All of these volunteer roles can be found on the Gateshead Council website in the link below. Support is tailored to the needs of each community organisation making a request.

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/People%20and%20Living/Volunteering/opportunities.aspx>

16. The current estimate of the number of volunteers across council services and within the voluntary and community sector is as follows:
- Community Links – 60
 - Countryside & Environment – 500
 - School Governors – 1,200
 - General School Volunteers - 900
 - Community Centres – 800
 - Youth Offending Team – 25
 - Youth Council – 30
 - Children Centres – 50
 - VCS Organisations and others – 1,000
 - Sports – 400

- Heritage, Events & general Culture - 500
- Libraries – 800
- Employee Volunteers – 50
- Private Sector Employee Volunteers – 250
- Jewish Community 1,500

Total – 8,065

17. The above numbers enabled a basic baseline figure of volunteers to illustrate the initial shape of the sector. Prior to this (2013) no information existed on the VCS. Following the Volunteers Plan implementation there is gradually knowledge being added to.

Further engagement with Trade Unions & partners

18. The TUC and Volunteering England produced a joint Charter entitled Strengthening Relations between paid staff and volunteers. The Charter makes it clear that volunteering is distinct from paid work. The Council's Volunteers Plan principles endorse and supports this. All Gateshead Council volunteer roles compliment and do not substitute those performed directly by paid staff.

19. The distinction between paid workers and volunteers is set out in the charter. Volunteering is any activity or role in the community for which someone undertakes a specific task but receives no payment. Volunteers freely give their own time to a task without financial recompense.

20. All volunteer roles are developed with the Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team, therefore all necessary checks are made to ensure that this is a suitable and viable volunteer role.

21. As volunteering increases working in partnership is becoming increasingly important to ensure effective and efficient working. The Council is also careful to ensure that there is clear delineation between volunteers and employees of the council. This ensures that volunteers and officers can work together. Gateshead Council's own definition of the two are:

22. Employee – a paid role in which an individual undertakes specific duties within their job description which contributes to the statutory function of Gateshead Council.

23. Volunteer – an unpaid role which adds value to the Councils statutory function by undertaking non statutory tasks.

24. As services continue to develop and provide volunteer roles, employees and volunteers continue to work alongside each other. The council coordinates much of this work through a steering group of officers where regular opportunities and information is disseminated and shared.

Gateshead Volunteers Month

25. Gateshead's fifth Volunteers' Month, took place in June 2017. The aim of Volunteers Month was to:

- Celebrate the positive contribution made by existing volunteers
 - Recruit more volunteers
 - Enable local people to contribute to their community
26. Throughout June, 106,189 hours were recorded on the volunteer totaliser which equates to £1,380,457 economic value. This is a 5% rise from last year.
27. £9,880 was allocated to 33 groups and organisations across Gateshead from the Volunteers' Month Grant Scheme which in a positive move was administered by the Community Foundation in 2017. Various events were held during the month long activities. These included community celebrations, festivals, volunteer days, training sessions and award ceremonies that gave recognition to the commitment made by Gateshead residents as well as other activities.

Group volunteering and Corporate Volunteering

28. To enable group volunteering to take place, a recruitment process has been utilised successfully. This enables volunteer activities to sit within the council's protocols and insurance policy for volunteering. This therefore avoids processing large numbers of individual requests.
29. The most popular group volunteer opportunities at present are environmental projects or decoration type tasks. These enable the teams of volunteers to undertake a task where the end result creates a visible and tangible impact in a community or within a building.
30. It is also predicted that more technical support projects will continue to become popular. This will involve groups of volunteers providing support with projects such as website development, social media, supporting preparation of books and accounts and other areas where particular skills can be offered.
31. The demand for group volunteer opportunities continues to grow with requests from external organisations steadily increasing. An economic investment of £123,863 has been calculated for Gateshead in 2016/2017. Each individual volunteer has an economic value £104 per day. This equated to 1,190 individual volunteers across the projects.
32. Examples include:
- Virgin Media, painting the main hall and outside at Barley Mow Centre & helping out at Chopwell Park amongst other volunteer days.
 - Costa Coffee sending volunteers to help out at Windy Nook Primary school including supporting the pupils to clear their pond area,
 - Gateshead College students supporting the AGM of Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly being held in Low Fell, this included hospitality tasks and customer services.
 - Young people from NCS (National Citizenship Service) involved in a large community litter pick around the Angel of the North
 - Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team helping out at Ferndene park and painting park benches.

33. Corporate and group volunteering enables team building amongst employees while operating in a different environment. It also enables an organisation to give something back to their own community of Gateshead.
34. When requests come into the Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team businesses are matched with a community group or organisation that requires volunteering assistance. In some cases this requires the creation of a bespoke package in partnership between all parties so that all expectations and needs as well as health and safety protocols are met.
35. This support is provided by the Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team and includes risk assessments, officer support on the day and follow up support as well as other areas that are deemed necessary.
36. Opportunities are available to organisations ranging from one off small group activities through to day long activities; however officers recognise that there is the potential to create longer term agreements depending on the needs of the parties involved.
37. Discussions continue with Virgin Media for example regarding how their volunteering opportunities can be embedded within Gateshead communities using their corporate employee volunteer commitment. Virgin Media currently request support with as many of their 500 employees as possible to be supported with a mixture of different group projects throughout the year.

Gateshead Council Employer Volunteering Scheme

38. In May 2014 the Gateshead Council Employees Volunteering Policy was refreshed enabling employees to request up to 15 hours paid time to volunteer in Gateshead over a 12 month period. This needs to be matched by at least 15 hours pro rata of employees own time. The scheme also enables teams of employees to take part in taster sessions and enabling them to have a half day paid leave to participate in a group project. The policy can be found on the intranet using the link below.

<https://intranet.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2038/Employer-supported-volunteering-scheme>

39. There are currently 60 employees registered as volunteers through the scheme. This is made up of individual volunteers as well as teams of volunteers. This is a 73% increase from 2016. In early 2017 the forms used to process the requests were amended following feedback from active volunteers. Additional changes will be made if it is deemed necessary to open up the policy further.
40. Employees are involved in various volunteering projects, these range from one to one support projects through to employees participating in a wider group. These also range from individual volunteer roles where employees claim their paid leave to develop further, to those that volunteer as part of a team of volunteers as a “one off” taster session.
41. Individuals who claim paid leave to further their volunteering tend to already have a specific volunteer role that they are already delivering. However, if not, employees

can also be supported by Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering to identify a suitable volunteer role within the VCS of Gateshead.

42. The group projects that make up the taster sessions as part of the employee scheme are delivered in places such as community buildings but also in parks and open spaces. Many of which are undertaken in partnership with local community organisations working on community projects that benefit the wider community of Gateshead.
43. Further discussions with Senior Management Teams will focus on how to increase employee volunteering and to understand the barriers that prevent council employees from taking part.
44. There are also current proposals to include information around the Employee Volunteering Policy as a standing item on team briefs and other communication channels that go to all employees. This is with the aim of increasing participation from employees into the community of Gateshead.

Environmental Friends of Groups

45. Throughout Gateshead there are a number of different Friends of Groups that support the community and enable them to form informal Friends of groups to support with the maintenance and upkeep of Gateshead's open spaces and parks
46. There are currently an estimated 25 Friends of groups at various locations throughout Gateshead. With an average of 15 members per group this is an estimated 375 volunteers. These groups all have their own individual aims and objectives as well as support needs. Development with these groups is supported by the Volunteer Coordinator for Countryside & Environment as well as the Development Officer for Volunteering within Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering.
47. A reoccurring barrier for these groups began to develop around public liability insurance. As the volunteers making up the Friends of Groups would be delivering activities within open spaces and parks (where there are likely to be members of the public) Public Liability Insurance is a necessity. This is not only to protect members of the public but also the volunteers themselves.
48. As the whole purpose of the Friends of Groups was to enable an informally founded group an immediate barrier existed. Rather than the Friends of Group becoming a formally constituted group and applying for their own Public Liability Insurance policy (which the majority of groups did not want to do) the FOG's were registered as groups of Gateshead Council volunteers as opposed to individual volunteers.
49. A procedure has been established and developed to enable Friends of Groups to register their volunteers and to receive tailored support around tasks within designated open spaces, equipment that is required, necessary training and any additional volunteers as well as any other area identified.
50. All Friends of Groups work to their own individual programme of tasks and activities supported through the Volunteer Coordinator for Countryside Rangers and Environmental activities.

51. With the refreshment of the Volunteers Plan leading up to and during 2018 this area of work will be further researched and responded to.

Northumbria University Students

52. Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering have been working with the Business Clinic based at Northumbria University. The team supported four students with a project to go towards the final mark of their Master's Degree.

53. The four students formed CBS (Creative Solutions for Business) Consultancy and evaluated the current volunteer recruitment process within Gateshead Council, over a three month period, to identify any improvements needed.

54. The final report was presented to Neighbourhood Management Team & Volunteering in September 2017 and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

55. The main findings from the report concluded that the current volunteer recruitment process has some issues including:

- being outdated (being first implemented in 2013)
- is unable to deal with the fast flowing increase of volunteers
- will be unsustainable in the current format
- putting administration pressures on the one officer supporting the process

56. The main improvement identified is for the process to move to an online platform which would have profound benefits throughout the organisation.

57. This report and its findings will now feed into the work with Newcastle University students discussed below.

Newcastle University Students

58. Newcastle University are working with Gateshead to develop a bespoke online system for volunteer recruitment.

59. Open Lab is a cross-disciplinary research centre at Newcastle University, and is one of the world's leading research centres into human-computer interaction. This includes academics from the fields of computer science, design, engineering and social and health sciences.

60. Digital Civics is the application of technology to solve real-world problems, in areas ranging from health and social care to education and politics.

61. Open Lab's Digital Civics Initiative is a five-year activity funded by the EPSRC for which the Council, along with Newcastle City Council and Northumberland County Council, is a key partner. The partnership is multi-sector and includes organisations including Orange Labs, Microsoft Research, the Royal Town Planning Institute and Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE).

62. Open Lab is engaged in projects locally, nationally and internationally, for example supporting the Red Cross in the engagement of young people in local volunteering.

This work builds on Open Labs work in communities which has been embedded into parts of East Gateshead.

The aim of the new system will be to:

- Empower individuals to apply and take responsibility for their volunteering requests
- Empower community organisations to take responsibility for their volunteering needs, advertising, recruitment and selection
- Reduce the time taken for Volunteer applications to be processed by council officers
- Reduce the time taken for volunteers to be aligned to volunteer opportunities
- Create a system that provides users spatial information regarding volunteering activity and opportunities
- Create a system that can provide users with information based on theme, age, activity, skills, competency and time required
- Create a system that can manage the increase in volunteering requests that can be monitored by officers and users
- Use the system as the focal point to the next Volunteers Plan for Gateshead

Future Actions

63. There are a number of priority areas for future action which have been identified in the delivery of the Volunteers Plan:

- Create a new Volunteers Plan.
- Create a new management system to record volunteers, employee volunteers and volunteer hours contributed by voluntary groups as well as Council services, are collated in one location in partnership with Newcastle University.
- Continue promotion of the Employee Volunteering Scheme.
- Identify opportunities for group volunteering projects for teams
- Explore arrangements for joint working with other agencies and external organisations.
- Consider how volunteers can add further value to current services provided by Gateshead Council.
- Continue to develop and promote the corporate volunteer opportunities.
- Continue to provide lead support for volunteering with the Voluntary & Community sector as well as for council service projects and roles.
- Develop closer working relationships with Trade Unions regarding the creation of further volunteering opportunities.

Recommendations

64. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Note and comment on the progress of implementation of the Volunteers Plan
- ii. Consider the future actions as set out in paragraph 63.

Volunteer Case studies 2017

Example 1. Move to Improve week (March 2017)

Remaining physically active in older age may offer opportunities for maintaining or increasing independence. Daily routines involving walking to local shops may mean less reliance on others while at the same time promoting social and community interaction as well as combating social isolation. Physical activity helps to improve emotional and mental well-being and is associated with reduced symptoms of depression.

Working with the Gateshead Housing Company and all 38 Sheltered Accommodation Schemes across Gateshead, Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering delivered a "Move to Improve" week from Monday 20th March – Sunday 26th March 2017 with the main aim of improving the physical and mental health of residents as well as combating social isolation by developing key links between schemes.

The week long programme encouraged the development of individual activities by working with the Sheltered Accommodation Scheme Officers and responding to the needs of the residents.

A full online programme of events was promoted throughout the period leading up to and during the delivery of the week. This was also open to all members of the public. Scheme officers continuously promoted the events at the start of each day and asked for as many residents as possible to declare events that they would like to take part in. Transport issues were also worked through and officers worked across schemes to enable attendance by all.

Gateshead Leisure activities were also encouraged with free swimming sessions provided on set days throughout the week.

Some activities included: Bingo sessions, CPR Training, Fire Service awareness sessions, knitting groups (including a huge project to knit as many blankets for Babies ITU at QE hospital & Twiddle toys for dementia patients), men's health groups, Boccia league games, gardening projects and health talks amongst a whole range of other activities that residents identified for themselves. Included below are some photographs of the activities as they were delivered.

Organisations such as Thrive and Tyne & Wear Archives attended the schemes to deliver activities with the residents. Photos are included below.

The programme relied upon volunteers to be delivered successfully and has encouraged further involvement from residents and volunteers as a follow on.

In total the week long programme offered **187** activities which **1,720** people took part in.



Diabetes information session



Thrive Gardening session at Birtley Villas



Knit and Knatter group with their blankets and items for babies ICU at the QE hospital.



Rowlands Gill Tyne & Wear Archives Project with the tiles made by the residents detailing the history of Rowlands Gill

Example 2. Fill the Gap events (summer 2017)

Throughout the summer holiday period in 2017 Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering along with partner services and organisations, delivered another Fill the Gap programme.

The programme involves a number of key play activities and events being delivered across Gateshead in a variety of locations and dates to ensure that children have access to support and food throughout the school holiday period. This is aimed at those children who would usually utilise the free school meals to ensure that they receive at least one source of food a day.

One of the Council's registered volunteers, Leanne Forster, applied to become a volunteer with this particular activity.

Leanne volunteered for the full programme of activity for Peace of mind and attended sessions every Monday for 4 weeks at St Joseph's Church Hall. Leanne volunteered for an estimated 40 hours throughout the programme. This has the economic value of £520.

The event was aimed at the families of asylum Seekers from the central area of Gateshead and some of its surrounding areas. The events were supported financially by ward councillors from the Bridges Ward of Central Gateshead.

Leanne supported the event by assisting with the art and craft activities, helping with lunch, setting up and putting away after the event and more importantly mixing with the families on the day. Every event was attended by around 50 people (with many different languages) this included around 30 children. Leanne was a great help and developed a good relationship with the group.

Leanne also supported 3 sessions at St Mary's Heritage Centre. The events were aimed at supporting children who are young carers. The event was a joint effort by Gateshead Neighbourhood Management Team, St Mary's Heritage Centre and Gateshead Carers Trust. The event involved up to 18 children from age 6-11 and staff from Gateshead Carers Trust every week. Leanne was involved with supporting the children on guided walks along Newcastle/Gateshead quayside, various arts and a crafts throughout the weeks as well as helping the children feel comfortable and happy during every session. Gateshead Carers Trust reported that Leanne had been a fantastic help during the events with Leanne wanting to spend more time at Gateshead Carers Trust/Young Carers as a volunteer in the future.

Leanne also helped out at the Celebration event at Gateshead Leisure Centre on 1st September. Leanne has recently applied for a job and the team have provided the potential employers with a character reference.



Leanne Forster volunteering at the Peace of Mind event.

Example 3. Comfrey Project

The Comfrey Project is a registered charity which works with refugees and asylum seekers on allotment sites across Gateshead with the aim of improving their conditions of life and general wellbeing. Included below are 2 examples of volunteers from the project and the impact it has had on them:

Mr S

Mr S, 50, originally came from Pakistan and has been part of the Comfrey Project for five years.

Mr S enjoyed coming to the Project as he liked the physical work. Digging for exercise, he said, was good for his body and he felt in better physical and mental shape after having done three hours hard work in the garden. Mr S not only worked in the garden, but also cooked for others at the allotments, his curries becoming very popular.

Raising two teenage children as a single parent, Mr S used his time at the Project to improve his English language skills while awaiting a decision on his asylum claim. Unfortunately one of his children was returned to Pakistan on his eighteenth birthday, but his 16 year old daughter, who wants to be a soldier or in the police force, is a volunteer at many community events, and an Army Cadet.

Hard working, generous, kind, with time for everyone, Mr S and his daughter received their right to remain earlier in 2017 and Mr S is now working full-time while going to college in his spare time.

Mrs J

Mrs J came to the UK as a refugee in 2010, and has been at the Comfrey Project for seven years. She has a teenage daughter and son, and one small child under ten.

Mrs J comes from a family of restaurateurs and chefs in Sri Lanka, and immediately took to organising the daily lunches of our gardeners, working from the small sheds at our allotments or the kitchen at Windmill Hills, our community garden. Cooking with donated foods or produce grown in our garden, often with no prior knowledge of what is available until she arrives on site, Mrs J organises a kitchen and a number of volunteer cooks to produce fresh, home cooked, vegetarian food for up to forty participants.

Over the past seven years, Mrs J has prepared over fourteen thousand lunches, always with a smile, and with utmost professionalism. Having received her right to remain in 2004 she has now set up her own Sri Lankan catering business, supplying snacks and catering for community events.

Example 4. Volunteers Month (June 2017) volunteers

During Volunteers Month 2017 the TyneWear Skills project received a small grant of £300 to deliver a volunteer open event to aim to increase the number of volunteers active at the organisation. The below are quotes from two young people who volunteered as a direct result of volunteers month.

"I started volunteering with the charity during volunteer's month. The charity has supported me to gain level 2 qualifications and gain vital experience of working with young people with a variety of needs. I am now really enjoying my role as a youth worker working with a fantastic organisation that works across the North East."

Rebecca - aged 21

"I started to volunteer with the charity to give me experience. I was made very welcome from the first session and it is something different every time I volunteer. The group members are great and I find the whole experience very rewarding. "

Lewis - aged 20

Example 5. Volunteers Month (June 2017), Woodgreen.

Residents at the Sheltered Accommodation Scheme based at Woodgreen in Bill Quay, were successful in their application to the Community Foundation for a Volunteers Month Grant of £300. The Scheme keeps chickens on the site that are looked after by the residents. This is through the Hen Power Programme.

With the funding that was awarded the residents held a volunteer day and encouraged friends and families of residents (as well as any additional volunteers who were interested) to help improve the site around the scheme. Tasks included painting the Chicken coops, painting some of the fences and handrails, tidying up the gardens, placing new gravel down and other general tasks. Members of the Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team supported the group.

All involved were very positive about the event. Included below is a photo of part of the activities. The tiles pictured were created by the residents themselves.



Example 6. Paul Murray, The Birtley Hub

The Birtley Hub is a valuable resource centre for the local community in Birtley. They offer ; free internet access and computer use, low cost printing and photocopying, free I.T assistance and technical support, help to individuals with job searches and CV writing, information about local services and will point you in the right direction when needing advice.

The Hub also has a café area offering very reasonably priced refreshments and arranges trips, social events and activities. The Hub itself relies upon invaluable volunteers to deliver the high level of community support that they do. One of these volunteers is Paul Murray.

Paul has volunteered with the group for 3 years. He travels all the way from central Gateshead 3 times a week to volunteer with the organisation. Anything that needs doing Paul is always there. He is constantly busy and actively seeking for things to do. Paul has a Learning Difficulty but this has proved to be no barrier for him. He is a valuable and extremely hard working member of the team at Birtley Hub.



Example 7. Leeds Building Society (Corporate Volunteering) June 2017

Leeds Building Society sent a total of 14 employees over to Gateshead to deliver two separate volunteer days.

The first team attended Kays Cottages (Sheltered Accommodation Scheme) in Windy Nook to undertake some basic gardening type tasks. Even though the weather wasn't very good the team of employees got stuck in and undertook some litter picking, edging, sweeping and general clearing.

Included below is a photograph of these employees.



The second team's volunteer day included employees of Leeds Building Society attending the Kateregina Sheltered Accommodation Scheme in Birtley. Volunteer roles on the day included assistance with the monthly lunch club, clearing away dishes, calling bingo numbers, assisting with the raffle and hoovering the lounge etc. after the event.

The employees really enjoyed both volunteer days and plan to do future events in 2018. The residents involved also had a very positive experience and are very grateful for their time and effort put into both projects.

Example 8. Handelsbanken Gateshead, June 2017

Handelsbanken Gateshead sent 8 of their employees along to Gateshead Older People's Assembly based in Deckham Gateshead for a volunteer day in June 2017. The volunteers were attending the organisation to clear their community allotment and enable service users to access the site following the initial clean-up day.

The full volunteer day consisted of; clearing the allotment site, weeding and removal of items currently on the land, cutting of grass and bushes to make space for the allotment, clearing of soil area to make way for fresh allotment items to be added into the space, and painting of small fenced area around the boundary of the allotment.

Both Gateshead Older People's Assembly and the Handelsbanken volunteers were very positive about the volunteer day.

Example 9. John Home, Young volunteer, July 2017

John is 20 years old and based in Whickham. John applied to become a registered volunteer in July 2017. John was keen to get involved in a volunteer role within the Central Library.

John is going to University to study to become a primary school teacher. His previous Teacher, Kath Flint, from Whickham secondary school explains:

"John is a fantastic student, whose work ethic is outstanding and really reflects just how passionate he is about extending his knowledge and learning in general. His enthusiasm is always clear within every lesson and his determination to succeed."

Kath continues to explain that John *"is an inspiration and should be celebrated."*

John's own determination in finding ways to develop his own skills has led to many work experience placements as well as additional volunteering.

Highlighting successful case studies like John's to other Gateshead students (and young people in general) helps to illustrate the impact volunteering can have on an individual, and makes the goals of volunteering more realistic for young people.

Example 10. Chris Murray, Barnardo's Volunteer, May 2017



Retired teacher Chris Murray first saw her volunteering role in Gateshead Council News and felt it was just what she was looking for. Chris worked in adult education for most of her career and for the last 10 years in dyslexia. The role she saw was working for the Gateshead SENDIAS Service, run by Barnardo's. SENDIAS stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support and the service helps the parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) to understand the SEND system and what might be going on with their child. The service is also there for the children and young people themselves. Every Local Authority in the country has to have one and Gateshead LA out-sources theirs to Barnardo's who run it with the help of volunteers.

Chris explains, "I had just retired and was looking for something stimulating to do when I read about this volunteering opportunity in the local Council News. It looked perfect. I have a granddaughter with SEN and learning difficulties and know how hard it is for parents so it was something I was really interested in helping with. I also have a background in teaching. I have been doing the role for three years now and I really enjoy it. I like the flexibility and the variety. It is not the same every week. I enjoy supporting parents and I have learnt a lot, it is very interesting. I have to say that the training and support is very good and we are allowed to continue our professional development. I feel as though I am still mixing in the working world but in a more relaxed way."

The Gateshead SENDIAS Officer Elizabeth Lowery said, "Our volunteers are invaluable to the service, we simply could not provide the level of support to parents that we do without them. They build so much extra capacity into what we can offer. Chris has been an outstanding volunteer and done so much that last year we nominated her for a national Barnardo's award. She came second winning one of only two runner-up positions in the whole country. We are so grateful that she saw the role in the Local Council News three years ago and grateful for the support from Gateshead Council to promote our volunteer role."

Example 11. Friends of Group volunteering; Brighten Ryton

Environmental Friends of Groups continue to be a development stage of volunteering as discussed in paragraph 45.

In order to illustrate the positive impact the work of Friends of Groups can have, Brighten Ryton can be discussed as an example. Brighten Ryton are an umbrella community group representing a number of smaller Friends of Groups within the Ryton area. These include: Ryton Litter Action Group, Ryton Flowerbed Buddies, Ryton Heritage Group, Ryton Community Forum, Ryton Cemetery and memorial.

The group have been established since the end of 2016 and are active in a number of areas to further develop the Community of Ryton. In more ways than one Brighten Ryton came along and requested to deliver volunteering in ways no other Friends of Groups had before.

The group's main aim was to protect their heritage sites and green belts, and provide an opportunity to raise funds.

One of the main areas of identified needs of the local community was around Ryton Cemetery. The Friends of Group had identified a need for additional maintenance activities including grass cutting, and weeding etc. above and beyond the statutory provision for the area.

Working closely with volunteers from the group equipment has been provided, training delivered and processes established to cover all necessary public liability issues. This is not currently delivered in any other Cemetery within Gateshead and is a first in the borough.

Due to the joint partnership approach the group have been active in the area which has received very positive feedback from members of the public, Council members and others. While actively volunteering in December 2016 in the Cemetery the group asked 127 visitors to rate the area. A total of 126 people rated the area as either "outstanding" or "very good".

Included below are photographs to demonstrate the work of the group with before and after pictures.

Before volunteer work



After volunteer work



Before volunteer work



After volunteer work



Before volunteer work



After volunteer work



TITLE OF REPORT: **Performance Monitoring: Agreement with Newcastle CVS for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead**

REPORT OF: **Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment**

Summary

This report provides an overview of the performance of Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) between January and September 2017, under the auspices of the Agreement it entered into with the Council in June 2016 for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.

Introduction

1. In April 2016 Council agreed to enter into an Agreement with NCVS for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.
2. The Agreement covered the period until 31st March 2017 and was established as an interim arrangement following the demise of GVOC to ensure there was continued provision of infrastructure support and representation for the Borough's voluntary and community sector (VCS).
3. The interim arrangement was established to enable the Council to consider options for the provision of support and representation for the VCS in Gateshead for 2017/18 and beyond, the prime feature of which is the ambition to explore a joint procurement approach with Newcastle City Council. This was agreed as an approach to explore by Cabinet in December 2016.
4. The Agreement with NCVS was extended, as provided for with the Agreement's terms, until September 2017 whilst the two authorities explored the procurement opportunity, with Gateshead Council acting as lead partner. At its meeting on 17th October 2017, Cabinet will be asked to agree to a further extension to the Agreement until 31st March 2018 to allow a joint procurement exercise to take place with Newcastle City Council.
5. During this extended interim period, NCVS has continued to deliver advice, guidance and support to Gateshead's VCS alongside the Council's other community-facing services, and has played a key role in the Council and GSP partnership structures, and coordinated VCS participation in Council budget consultations.

6. The report attached at Appendix 1 has been provided by NCVS and sets out the activities they have provided within Gateshead between January and September 2017, and follows on from the last performance report which was presented and agreed by Committee in February 2017.

Recommendations

7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Comment on the attached report with reference to the performance and activities delivered by Newcastle CVS under the Agreement with the Council.

Anthony Alder ext. 3880

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GATESHEAD COUNCIL AND NEWCASTLE CVS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

1) Introduction

This report gives a nine month update on performance and delivery for the period 1 January 2017 to 22 September 2017 against the outcomes of the agreement. It is monitored on a quantitative basis (performance measures) and a qualitative basis (impact reports), against the three key functions of this Agreement, namely:

- Networking and Representation of the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Support and Development of the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Engagement, Marketing and Communication

There are also the obligations under contract monitoring:

- Reports are produced each quarter
- Regular meetings held with the Service Director
- Regular meetings held with responsible officer

The performance measures and targets are outlined in the table below, followed by some further detail regarding the three key functions, in paragraphs 3-5.

As the period concerned spans two municipal years, the figures for 2016/17 and April 2017 onwards are included

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS 2016/17

Indicator	Baseline Position March 2016	March 2017 Target	Position at Q4 (20th April 2016 to 31st March 2017)
Number of community groups directly engaged	109	200	321 individual groups
Increase the number of community groups accessing support for the first time	No baseline	Baseline to be established	321 individual groups
Provide advice and guidance to organisations to enable them to submit funding applications for a combined total value of between £500,000 and £1 million	£56,028	£500,000	£987,914
Number of Gateshead VCS organisations provided with funding advice	29	50	60 individual groups
Increase the number of groups actively using Our Gateshead website	2030	2,250	No way of recording accurately how many groups use OurGateshead
Number of pages viewed of OurGateshead website per year	66,682 website visits	120,000 website visits	128,973 website visits
Maintain and update a database of community and voluntary organisations in Gateshead	184,486 page views	300,000 page views	325,346 page views
Provide performance management reports for the Partnership Board, to include feedback from service users, emerging intelligence and progress on meeting the performance framework targets	n/a	Ongoing management	Provided on 9 th November 2016
Produce a State of the Sector report for Gateshead	n/a	1 (by December 2016)	Report produced and disseminated in February 2017
Produce and present a performance management report to the Council's Corporate			This took place on 13 th February 2017

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Increase number of consultation and community engagement events	0	10	14
Councillor feedback process		tbc	tbc
Service users feedback		tbc	tbc

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS 2017

Indicator	Baseline Position March 2017	Target December 2017	Position at Q2 2017 22 September 2017
Number of community groups directly engaged	321	150	102
Increase the number of community groups accessing support for the first time	No baseline	Baseline to be established	No way of accurately recording
Provide advice and guidance to organisations to enable them to submit funding applications for a combined total value of between £500,000 and £1 million	£987,914	£375,000	£56,193 (current amount pending is £138,917)
Number of Gateshead VCS organisations provided with funding advice	60	38	35
Increase the number of groups actively using Our Gateshead website	2030	2250	No way of accurately recording
Number of pages viewed of OurGateshead website per year	128,973 website visits	90,000 website visits	69,422 Website visits
Maintain and update a database of community and voluntary organisations in Gateshead	325,346 page views	225,000 page views	185,808 page views

Provide performance management reports for the Partnership Board, to include feedback from service users, emerging intelligence and progress on meeting the performance framework targets	Report made	Ongoing management	We will provide reports for the Partnership Board, date to be set
Produce a State of the Sector Report for Gateshead	Report made	One (by March 2018)	We will produce a report by March 2018
Produce and present a performance management report to the Council's Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Report made	One	We will produce a report to the Corporate Resources OSC (this report)
Increase number of consultation and community engagement events	14	8	6
Councillor feedback process		tbc	We would welcome suggestions
Service users feedback		tbc	tbc

Doing Good in Gateshead presented by Sally Young

Number of Feedback Forms returned 9 out of 11

Cllr Gannon (Chair), Caffrey, Mole, Wallace, Duggan, S Green, Haley, Bradford, Hood, B Goldsworthy, Simpson

"Good general survey"

"This is a large issue and we need to continue with it" - Cllr Mole

"Regular updates in this sector please, new ways to raise funding with new initiatives as well need to be explored - CT Bills? Options?"

The topic presented was	Uninteresting 0	Interesting in parts 1	Very interesting 10	
The content of the presentation	Too simple 0	Just right 9	Too complex 0	
The length of the presentation	Too short 0	Just right 9	Too long 0	
The amount of time left for questions	Not enough 0	Just right 9	Too much 0	
Quality of presentation	Poor 1	Satisfactory 1	Good 5	Excellent 3
What learned will be useful in my role as Councillor	Not at all 0	Partly 0	Mostly 3	Totally 6

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS

2) Background

In Spring 2016, Newcastle CVS was invited by Gateshead Council to provide support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead. The contract started on 20 April 2016, and also included management of the provision of OurGateshead, the online resource used for community groups, events and activities, which include support for health and wellbeing.

Since this time, Newcastle CVS has extended other services within the organisation to include and involve Gateshead. This includes HAREF (Health and Race Equality Forum), BSBT (Home Office funded project on Building a Stronger Britain Together) and also SkillsBridge (professional volunteering support – which had worked in Gateshead previously).

3) Networking and Representation of the Sector

Although there are three separate functions, the reality is they are all inter-related. The community intelligence that comes from the support and development work, feeds directly into the representation of the sector, and enables CVS to tailor more appropriate services to local groups in Gateshead.

Initially there was a significant demand for support for the sector as there had been minimal support from GVOC for some time. We are now finding we are working more intensively with some smaller community organisations, particularly those groups which have older volunteers, or are unclear about governance requirements and those groups which cannot access information and services digitally.

Inevitably community groups and larger voluntary organisations make different demands on Newcastle CVS; albeit all are valid. Larger, well-established organisations tend to ask for strategic information, representation and access to key leads; whereas smaller community organisations tend to ask for and need direct support such as form-filling for funding applications, help with policies and procedures and *“Being kept on the right track.”*

The Voluntary Sector Leaders Group has now been established and has met five times. It met with Gateshead Council’s Chief Executive in July and with the Interim Commissioning Lead in October. It provides information about the sector, encourages networking with each other, and provides access to key decision-makers.

Invitations have been sent out to Gateshead groups engaged in children and youth work, mental health, carers, disability to come together about particular issues, policies, and local and Government consultations. This will increase and enhance not just the knowledge, but their positive relationships with each other, which could lead to partnership working in the future.

Wellbeing and Health Open Forums take place every four months with the recent September meeting focussing on arts and culture as a mechanism to improve wellbeing and health.

An example of this networking approach is the Wellbeing and Health Open Forum and CHYP IN. These fora are open to voluntary and community organisations across Gateshead and Newcastle. Both Forums met in summer and the main item for the Wellbeing and Health Open Forum was a presentation from Julie Ross, Director of Integration in Gateshead and Newcastle about Health and Social Care Integration in Gateshead and Newcastle. The integration model for both local authority areas was shared; comments about the model included criticism of underpinning assumptions about voluntary organisations' abilities to be part of the integration model without adequate funding and minimal thought given to harnessing the capacity of the voluntary sector. The Open Forum also included a presentation about OurGateshead and a discussion about use of Asset Based Community Development approaches in Gateshead and Newcastle.

The representation of the sector, the provision of its voice and advocacy, comes mainly through representation at key meetings. The Health and Wellbeing Board has a Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group the day beforehand. An invitation is sent out to around fifteen key voluntary organisations to attend. The meeting is chaired by the CVS Chief Executive, who is the voluntary sector representative on the Board. The Gateshead Council Officer leading on Health Policy attends and briefs the group, taking it through the Health and Wellbeing Board agenda. This mechanism enables voluntary sector organisation leads to be very well-briefed on local health issues, to feed into the process and to inform the CVS Chief Executive to reflect the voluntary sector's perspectives at the Board.

The Chief Executive is a member of the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board and in July presented a report on the '*contribution of the voluntary and community sector to improving health and wellbeing in Gateshead*'. The report drew up on findings from *Doing Good in Gateshead*, the survey of the Borough's voluntary and community sector produced by Newcastle CVS. The report detailed the significant development of the sector's role in improving health, wellbeing and care, during the past twenty five years. These roles include service provider, advocate, co-producer of services and strategies, source of local and historical information, campaigner and a general force for good. Risks to the sector were also listed including assumptions about voluntary organisations capacity and willingness to fill the gap left by shrinking or cut public services and navigating the procurement and contracting environment.

There are regular meetings with senior Gateshead Council officers, quarterly meetings with the Leader of Council, meetings with Gateshead Cabinet Portfolio Holders and regular mailings to councillors and meetings as appropriate.

The Chief Executive is also a member of the Newcastle Gateshead CCG Joint Integrated Care Programme Board in which she aims to reflect the views of the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead on health issues. The voluntary sector has expressed frustrations about current NHS reviews and plans (e.g. Deciding Together / Delivering Together and the Sustainability and Transformation Plan). She engages in high level discussions to promote the views of the voluntary sector and challenge some of NHS perceptions. She meets regularly with Newcastle Gateshead CCG directors on issues such as future funding (past March 2018) for voluntary organisations, information governance, and involvement and engagement.

As a member of the Blue Stone Consortium, the Chief Executive sits on the Well Newcastle Gateshead Steering Group. This has now appointed both members of staff and is ready to start investing in arts and cultural work in Felling and Chopwell to improve wellbeing and health. This will be through a mixture of commissions and grant aid. The investment is worth around £175,000 in each area (over three years).

The CVS Chief Executive meets with external funders such as staff from Big Lottery, Virgin Money Foundation, Community Foundation (Tyne, Wear and Northumberland) and others and highlights the good work that is going on in Gateshead.

During May, the Chief Executive hosted and organised a visit from Sir Stuart Etherington and Bruce Gordon, Chief Executive and Treasurer of NCVO (the leading national voluntary organisation), to Gateshead and Newcastle. Sir Stuart and Bruce visited the Comfrey Project, Gateshead Citizen Advice and Gateshead Carers. At all three organisations they held private meetings with the Chief Executive / Directors and trustees and discussed finance and sustainability, as well as visiting the premises and meeting volunteers and people who used the projects. This was important as there is a tendency for national organisations to focus on larger, national and London-based voluntary organisations. Sir Stuart will be the keynote speaker at the Newcastle CVS AGM, which is being held on 13 November, in St Mary's Heritage Centre, Gateshead.

Doing Going in Gateshead was carried out in early 2017 and the results were disseminated widely. The findings have been used by a number of organisations in their funding applications as well as by officers in strategic reports.

Headlines findings from *Doing Good in Gateshead* included:

- Funding is the most pressing issue for voluntary and community organisations
- Seven out of ten respondents noted increased demand for services
- Recruitment and retention of volunteers is the second largest area of challenge
- Two thirds of respondents had developed new service areas, projects or initiatives during the previous twelve months

The report *A Changing Wind: views from the frontline : voluntary organisations in Newcastle and Gateshead working with people with physical and sensory disabilities* was issued in March 2017 and disseminated widely. This indicated key concerns around welfare reforms for people with disabilities; the increase in levels of stress on disabled people, their carers and staff who support them and also gave some positive examples of how local organisations had changed some of their services.

The report '*Voluntary Sector Trends in Newcastle and Gateshead*' was produced in July 2017 and disseminated widely and presented to a Gateshead Council members' seminar. It is a very short paper, pulling together key trends in major local, regional and national reports and identifies the Gateshead position. It is appended for information.

4) Support and Development of the Voluntary and Community Sector

The majority of the CVS resource is focussed on this part of the contract. This enables small and local organisations to thrive, develop and become more sustainable. The three support and development staff (Gateshead Support Team) are

based in the Age UK Gateshead office. Each staff member relates to the specific five areas of Gateshead, as well as working to themes, based on their individual experience. They are backed up by the full CVS staff including Funding Advice, Governance Support, Policy, and Marketing and Communications.

This work itself involves:

- setting up local charities, community groups or social enterprises
- helping organisations identify the resources they need to develop
- supporting organisations with funding applications
- providing advice on appropriate funders
- advising on governance – how to run an organisation properly
- discussing policies and procedures and working with organisations so they understand and own these
- identifying and providing appropriate training
- connecting groups together, particularly in local areas

There is a Support and Training Programme, based on the needs identified through this work. Although each group is individual, there are common needs and themes that keep emerging. Local groups often have strong relationships, and in some cases dependence, on Gateshead Council support. As the Council Budget is decreased further, CVS staff are working with groups to make them more resilient than ever, as there is less support in the whole system.

I

One of the initiatives that Newcastle CVS has introduced is inviting organisations to meet with a funder. These are invited sessions with 8-10 participants, facilitated by our staff and the funder (usually a local funder) talks about what they are looking for in applications and what they have funded. This approach can give significant insight to applicants. A recent successful event was held with the Sir James Knott Trust.

The Gateshead Support Team (the three dedicated staff members) has also become more experienced and knowledgeable. There is always access and support from the more specialist governance, policy and funding advisers, but the team are more able to deal with more complex issues. There has been a noticeable increase in the amount of support given to a smaller number of groups since July. We are not sure yet if it is 'a summer blip' or a trend.

Case Study: Gateshead Team Gym

The Gateshead Support and Development Team is supporting the community managed Team Gym Club. The club is based at the Elgin Leisure Centre and has over 100 members aged 5 – 15 years. Since an increase in the rent of 100% this club is struggling to cover its costs. Also, the current governance structure limits the Club's ability to secure grants. The support provided to date includes the following:

- Financial planning
- Advice relating to appropriate governance structure and moving from an unincorporated organisation to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Consultation with members and their parents / carers
- Advice relating to funding opportunities and support with applications

Recent funding success includes a grant of £1,000 from the Community Foundation's General Fund towards the cost of new equipment. Additionally, as a result of the Club's efforts to increase the involvement of parents and carers, there is now a group of volunteers engaged in fundraising activities. This group has already raised £500 for the Club.

In terms of long term viability various options have been considered including an increase in fees and relocation of the Club. Neither of these options is viewed as desirable given the Club's loyalty to Deckham and the people from the area that use the Club. Therefore, to address the rent issue, the Gateshead Support Team is supporting applications to funders for running costs. Applications have been made to the Gateshead Housing Fund and the Gateshead Capacity Fund. The Gateshead Support Team has helped the group to achieve a meeting with Children in Need.

Future support includes work towards British Gymnastics Association (BGA) accreditation. This accreditation will need a full review of policies and procedures.

Many of the volunteers are not used to computers and digital application forms, so there has been quite intensive support given. As more funders move towards digital systems, there is concern about the groups that can't access and use digital information. Even when written forms are accepted, some groups can't fully access all the information provided online and are at a disadvantage.

This is an example of a small community group who does a huge amount of good work in a local community which has a lot of needs. The Gateshead Support Officer has been able to establish a regular and trusting relationship over time. The amounts of money requested are not very large, but will make a huge impact on the local people who use the Club.

The volunteers involved do not want to be professionals, they do not have the time or capacity; they want to do good things locally. However governance and funding requirements mean they have to engage in a particular way and it is the role of the Support Officer to help them achieve these aims.

5) Engagement, Marketing and Communication

A key strand to the work has been to underpin it with a strong marketing, communication and engagement approach. Our key e-newsletters, the fortnightly e-inform, the monthly On the Hoof, and the monthly HAREF Ebulletin are edited to include Gateshead information and profile Gateshead activities and events. Inform, the CVS quarterly newsletter, includes Gateshead organisations and the information is appropriate for them. There is a dedicated Gateshead flier, business cards, banner stands. All the material makes it clear that CVS supports Gateshead organisations and activities. Gateshead items are regularly promoted through our social media twitter accounts and Facebook.

Each Gateshead Councillor has received information and receives the quarterly newsletter and e-inform. Some councillors have signed up to On The Hoof.

There have been multiple communications aimed at voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead; letting them know about the services offered, contact details, and specific information e.g. safeguarding, ensuring Gateshead contacts and

groups are highlighted in our general communications. There have been tailored communications on other resources – Ellison Services, the Bluestone Consortium, paid for support and development services and others which could be of value to local organisations.

There have been regular meetings with Neighbourhood Management officers about further development of OurGateshead have continued. Following on from a presentation about OurGateshead to the Senior Management Team, Mark Shilcock from the Gateshead Support and Development team has undertaken a series of presentations to council teams about scope and potential of the website.

The last eighteen months have been busy, hectic, energising, challenging and rewarding. There is a vibrant voluntary and community sector in Gateshead. Newcastle CVS hopes it can continue to contribute to the activity in the future. The highlight of our time has been the Gateshead Awards ceremony and we hope to attend the one next year.

Sally Young
Chief Executive, Newcastle CVS

Voluntary Sector trends in Newcastle and Gateshead July 2017

This paper summarises current trends within the voluntary and community sector. It draws upon several sources, most of which are reports published during the first half of 2017 that offer national, regional and local perspectives on the state of the sector.

The voluntary sector makes a significant economic impact contributing £12.2bn to the UK economy; this is similar to the GDP of Cyprus. Registered charities employ a workforce of 853,000, while civil society as a whole (other not-for-profits such as social enterprises, housing associations and mutuals) employ 2.2 million paid staff, equivalent to 7% of the UK workforce.

Across the North (North West, Yorkshire and Humber and the North East) voluntary organisations employ more people than the area's financial and insurance sector. The voluntary sector's value in the North East (measured by salaries) is £750 million. The workforce is relatively stable with 37,500 full time equivalent employees, though a 10% rise between 2010 and 2016 to 45% of staff in part-time work shows a shift in working patterns.

Volunteering also makes a significant economic and social contribution. Nationally, the economic contribution of formal volunteering is estimated at £22.6bn. In the North East 150,000 volunteers deliver 10.8m hours of work at a value of £78m to £131m. 62% of the region's voluntary organisations report that many of their volunteers are currently, or have been, service users.

The Newcastle CVS reports, *Doing Good in Gateshead 2017*, and *Taking the Temperature 2016* found only 1% of Gateshead organisations and 9% of Newcastle organisations didn't use any volunteers at all. Indeed 6% (in Gateshead) and 8% (in Newcastle) had 100 or more volunteers. Gateshead Council's website notes "*Volunteering is one of our greatest assets, with 34% of Gateshead residents regularly taking part in an activity*". In Newcastle, 23% of adults told the 2016 Residents' Survey that they had volunteered in the last month.

Grant aid remains the most important source of income, especially for the region's small and medium sized voluntary organisations. Contracts remain a significant income stream for larger organisations (incomes above £500,000) but grants are regaining importance and creating more competition within the sector. The most recent North East Third Sector Trends study continues to find social finance and borrowing of marginal interest to the sector. Less than 3% of respondents reported borrowed money to be important and only 9% of the larger organisations was planning to borrow money in the next three years.

The national picture finds 81% of earned income from the public sector is from contracts or fees. The largest slice of this (42%) goes to major charities (incomes between £10m - £100m). It is worth noting the 61% growth between 2008 and 2015 of 'super-major charities' with incomes above £100m, whose share of public sector funding grew by 9% in 2013 - 2015. However the NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac reports individual donations as the largest source of income for the voluntary sector. These comprise donations, legacies, as well as membership fees, income from shops and trading.

In the North East, 42% of large voluntary organisations earn more 61% of their income. This compares to medium sized organisations earning 30% of their income, and small organisations 21% of income. The most recent North East Third Sector Trends study finds the voluntary sector resilient and not about to '*fall off a cliff*'. However it does find distribution of income within the sector is changing though as larger organisations begin to look to grants becoming a more significant part of their income stream.

A consistent theme across many recent reports on the state of the voluntary sector is a squeezed middle as medium sized organisations face increasing competition for grant aid

from larger and smaller organisations. The House of Lords Committee on Charities reported medium sized organisations having *'problems bidding for contracts, from increasing scale of contracts to reduced focus on quality and payment by results mechanisms that disadvantage smaller providers'*.

The Third Sector Trends Study indicates 32% of medium-sized voluntary organisations in the region have used reserves for essential costs. 83% of Gateshead respondents and 80% of Newcastle respondents said that without additional income they would use all their reserves up in less than 12 months. The House of Lords (HoL) Committee describes charities as the *'eyes, ears and conscience of society'*. However it also makes clear that *'the environment in which charities are working is altering dramatically'*.

Some of the challenges facing the voluntary sector are down to its own mixed performance, for example in the take up and use of technology and digital platforms. Another area highlighted for improvement is the diversity of trustee boards. Additionally the HoL Committee states more support is needed to increase the ability of trustees to provide the leadership and direction necessary for a sustainable future.

The HoL Committee report claims that against a background of lost income (since 2009/2010) small and medium charities are struggling to adapt to changing circumstances. The Road Ahead (NCVO) and Facing Forward (Lloyds Bank Foundation) both look at the challenges for the sector and what voluntary organisations can do to adapt and respond to them.

Facing Forward is concerned specifically with small and medium voluntary organisations. It lists ten trends to watch including Brexit, a slowing economy, changing public sector and public services, digital technology, social division, public trust in charities and the Government's vision for civil society. It includes seven steps to help organisations prepare for the future include diversifying funding streams, collaboration, better use of technology and planning for the future with care. This last step means asking questions about how organisations can best meet their charitable aims with options including merger or closure.

The Road Ahead focuses on a number of structural factors some of which directly affect voluntary organisations, for example funding and charity regulation. Others have wider impact on beneficiaries and communities. These include rising prices, stagnant incomes, Brexit, political (and economic) uncertainty and the sector's relationship with Government. NCVO calls for a resetting of the voluntary sector relationship with (central) government. It notes that anti-voluntary sector rhetoric from the Government and its supporters, the Lobbying Act, anti-advocacy clauses in contracts have led to an all-time low in the relationship between the Government and the sector.

The final report from the Independence of the Voluntary Sector Panel highlights a drop in trust among the general public, largely as a result of poor fundraising practices among some very large national and international charities. The Panel also cites uncertainty about the Government's intentions towards the sector and asks whether Theresa May's ambitions to create a Shared Society and to tackle burning injustices will have more substance than David Cameron's Big Society; questions that have all been thrown into the air as a result of June's General Election.

Sources

- A Shared Society, the Independence of the Voluntary Sector in 2017, Civil Exchange, 2017
- Doing Good in Gateshead, Newcastle CVS, 2017
- Facing Forward, Lloyds Bank Foundation, 2017

- Stronger Charities for a Stronger Society, House of Lords Select Committee on Charities, 2017
- Taking the Temperature, Newcastle CVS, 2017
- The Road Ahead : a Review of the Voluntary Sector's Operating Environment, NCVO, 2017
- The UK Civil Society Almanac 2017, NCVO and Cazenove Capital, 2017
- Third Sector Trends in the North of England, IPPR North, 2017
- Third Sector Trends in North East England 2016 (key findings), Chapman et al for Community Foundation (Tyne, Wear and Northumberland), 2017

This page is intentionally left blank

TITLE OF REPORT: Case Study – the Workforce Plan

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director Corporate Services & Governance

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's views on the progress being made on implementation of the Workforce Plan.

Background

1. The Council's Workforce Strategy and Plan were devised and implemented in 2015 with the aim of ensuring we have a workforce that can support delivery of the sustained transformation necessary to achieve the services our residents want and need – services that are cheaper, fit for purpose, flexible and customer focused.
2. Essentially what we need to achieve is the right people with the right skills and behaviours working in the right jobs.
3. The Workforce Strategy is based on a number of themes – skills and behaviours, recruitment and retention, pay, reward and recognition, wellbeing and engagement and performance and change. There is a detailed delivery plan for each of the themes within the Workforce Plan.
4. The Workforce Plan has recently been refreshed to reflect the work that has already been undertaken and to ensure it continues to be relevant and appropriate. It will be continually developed in order to respond to both the future direction and shape of Council groups and services and the workforce implications resulting from the ongoing transformation agenda.
5. A key focus of the work undertaken in the last year has been to ensure that all managers, including Leadership Team, are supported to develop their skills to ensure they are providing a strong, ambitious, responsible and resilient leadership culture which enables them to lead and manage change proactively and at pace. In addition to this, our approach to employee engagement has been strengthened and terms and conditions reviewed. Detail of the activities undertaken to date are shown in Appendix 1.
6. This report will focus on providing an update on the work that is currently being undertaken.

Learning & Development (L&D) Framework

7. A key priority is to have an engaged and empowered workforce, equipped with the right skills and knowledge to deliver the best possible outcomes to our customers and confident in the responsibilities they have. To support this and respond to concerns in

the last two employee surveys of inconsistent and unfair management, a learning and development framework was introduced as a one-stop shop for managers and employees to access information on courses and other resources to support their development.

8. A range of mandatory briefing sessions were also implemented for managers to equip them with skills to deal with HR issues such as recruitment and selection, dealing with capability and competency issues, undertaking an investigation and managing sickness absence. To date approx. one fifth of managers have attended these sessions, and feedback has been very positive. However, further work will need to be undertaken to ensure that remaining managers attend these sessions.
9. We are currently working on a way to measure the effectiveness of the managers' briefing sessions.

Revision of the Appraisal & Development (A&D) process and Competency Framework

10. Performance management is identified in the workforce strategy as critical in ensuring we focus on the right things and that any issues around employee performance can quickly be addressed.
11. A&D is an established tool that can help all employees to perform at their best and access the right support and development. However, the employee survey in 2016 highlighted that only 47% of employees across the Council had an A&D in the 6 months prior to the survey and that managers not dealing with underperformance' was an issue that was affecting the morale of other employees. To address this and ensure a stronger approach to performance management of employees, the A&D process and the competency framework have been redesigned.
12. The revised framework is much simpler and has been developed in consultation with employees at various levels. The aim is to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to meet regularly with their line manager to discuss their performance, development needs and aspirations; they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, are supported to be at their best, are able to meet ongoing challenges and deliver the best possible outcomes for Gateshead.
13. The framework not only focuses on setting work priorities and development objectives, but also now contains a performance rating. The performance element is about rewarding employees who are performing well and getting employees to perform at their best. Managers are expected to review an employee's performance and development against their agreed work priorities, targets and competencies on an ongoing basis throughout the year.
14. The Council's Competency Framework has also been revised in line with the new A&D process and is vastly simplified from its previous version. The framework clearly identifies the competencies that employees at every level are expected to display in their job role.
15. The Council launched the revised A&D framework in April 2017, setting a deadline of the end of June for the completion of all A&Ds. However, it was recognised that this deadline was quite tight, so it was extended until the end of the summer. A report run

in early September showed that only 27.73% of A&Ds had been recorded as being completed across the Council.

16. It was agreed that A&Ds were mandatory for every employee, therefore, work is ongoing to identify in those areas where A&Ds haven't been recorded, whether they have in fact been completed and / or not recorded and the reasons for this and also whether there are any issues preventing the A&Ds from being completed or information entered into iTrent.
17. Work is also underway to devise a method for collating the information from A&Ds on what learning and development is needed for employees so this can be built into the workforce plan. Once the method has been agreed, this will be piloted in a few services to ensure it is appropriate.
18. A questionnaire was also issued to all staff to gather some feedback on the revised process and framework and to date we have had 89 responses. This feedback will be used to review the process and framework to see if any changes are needed.
19. The A&D process is also being reviewed in light of the Council's approach to talent management as well as the refresh of the Strategic Plan which could result in revised objectives for employees. In light of this review the performance rating of employees will no longer take place in December 2017. It is likely that performance ratings will be implemented from January 2019 onwards. This will give further time to review processes, make any necessary changes and then embed the new performance rating element.

Talent Management

20. In a climate of such uncertainty and where new skills are becoming more and more critical, we all recognise that understanding where and how to develop employees is critical to the Council's future.
21. One of the key priorities of the workforce plan is that all employees should have the opportunity to learn and develop. Therefore work is ongoing to develop an approach to talent management which is based on the idea that everyone has more potential than is currently being realised and the need to maximise that potential. The approach will demonstrate investment in all employees and will build on the revised A&D process.
22. We want managers to have conversations with all their employees, either during the A&D process, or as part of regular catch ups or 1:1s, to discuss what learning and development is available to them. The aim is to ensure that we provide opportunities for all employees to develop, that we maximise talent both collectively and individually and make everyone feel valued and motivated.
23. Development opportunities may well be different for members of the same team but we need managers to tailor opportunities to an individual's circumstances as it is highly likely that every single member of the workforce will have skills that are not being used to full potential.
24. This approach is intended to support the A&D process in order to identify and put rigorous development plans in place for people to ensure that talent is recognised

and supported in a way that is clear but demonstrates the commitment to nurture people in a way that is stretching but fair and consistent. It is not intended to be a shortcut to promotion. It will simply be an approach that helps define development plans and ensures managers take this part of their responsibility seriously.

25. The approach seeks to be inclusive – it gives us an opportunity to demonstrate investment in all employees. It's not about the chosen few, the elite or the upper echelons of the organisation and it's not about succession planning.
26. It will be important to have mechanisms in place to identify those "hidden gems" who work in front line services as they may have less regular access to a manager because of working patterns and team numbers, so arrangements need to be considered to ensure these people do not fall through the net or miss out because of their working circumstances.
27. It may be more time intensive to understand and develop talent in large teams or where the work is very similar, but it's important that everyone knows and understands that the Council will be taking their skills and career development seriously. We will need to ensure that everyone knows what opportunities are available so that they can initiate conversations as well as be on the receiving end.
28. In terms of the process, the first step will be an initial conversation as an extension to the A&D process. Managers within a service would then come together discuss findings so that there is a degree of moderation to help ensure fairness and consistency. This helps avoid actual or perceived favouritism, and helps identify strengths and weaknesses and gaps across the team. Stage 2 would then be the actual development conversation with the employee.
29. Work is ongoing to confirm exactly how this framework will be embedded into the A&D process and also what development opportunities there may be for employees and how we ensure they are put in place i.e. identifying what task and finish groups and stretch projects are available for employees to be involved in or secondment opportunities.
30. There is a need to think carefully about implementation and training to ensure that the approach and toolkit are widely understood and supported and that managers are able to determine the right development initiatives. It will be vital that arrangements are in place to moderate results so that the approach is applied fairly and consistently.
31. Talent Management champions have been identified for each group. These Service Directors will be responsible for ensuring that talent management is embedded within their service and for promoting this approach.
32. A cabinet report will be going in the near future to establish talent management as part of the overall HR framework. It is anticipated that training would then be rolled out between October and December.

Mentoring

33. Mentoring is identified in the Workforce Plan as an initiative to build management/ leadership capacity and to support employee development within the Council.

Mentoring is a form of training, learning and development which is long term and aims to develop capability and potential in the role.

34. Work is ongoing to further develop the Council's mentoring scheme which is available to all employees to access. The aim of the mentoring scheme is to provide employees with the opportunity to work with someone who can support them to learn or develop faster than they might do alone. Mentoring is useful for an employee who has been promoted or moved to a different role as it provides targeted support, guidance and advice from a more senior colleague with greater overall experience and expertise in a specific area or in an employee's area of work. The mentor provides insight and guidance helping employees to achieve desired goals.

Coaching

35. Work is also ongoing to further develop the coaching opportunities available to employees. We currently have a list of executive coaches who are available to work with senior managers, however, there is a need to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to work with a coach if this will support their learning and development.
36. A pool of internal coaches are to be identified who can work with employees to support them to be the best they can be and aspire to the highest possible levels of performance. The coaches will support employees to develop their skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, leading to the achievement of organisational objectives.
37. This pool of coaches will be available to work with employees for a short period of time and will focus on specific development areas / issues and how to achieve specific, immediate goals or solve immediate problems or issues and improve their own performance. Coaches are not subject experts but will work with individuals to identify the answers to their own problems.
38. The pool of coaches will receive training in coaching and mentoring skills up to an accredited level 5 of ILM.

Apprenticeships

39. Following the Government's changes to the apprenticeship system which took effect from April 2017, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, the introduction of a public sector apprenticeship target and new apprenticeship standards to replace existing frameworks, work has been ongoing to scope the current and future demand for apprenticeships within the Council.
40. To meet the target, the Council is required to start 2.3% of the workforce (160 employees) on an apprenticeship on an annual basis.
41. The scoping work has identified demand for approximately 109 apprenticeship starts for 17/18 and a further 28 for 18/19 at an indicative cost of £105,800 in year 1 and £212,500 in year 2. The numbers include the anticipated progression of 17 existing Business Admin apprentices and 2 Teaching Assistant apprentices from level 2 to level 3. The Council's levy comes to an estimated £668,669 per year including

maintained schools, therefore, the costs of these apprenticeships will be met by accessing the Council's apprenticeship levy.

42. There may be further demand for apprenticeships in the future in some areas but services are not currently in a position to commit to apprenticeships.
43. Services are being encouraged to consider what scope there is for further apprenticeships in order to fully maximise the Council's levy. Consideration should be given to whether apprenticeships would: support succession planning within the service; enable existing employees to develop skills and competencies to support and improve service delivery and give managers, team leaders and supervisors the necessary skills and competencies to ensure effective management practice.

Employee Recognition

44. The Council wants to be able to retain and recruit a diverse range of talented people. Recognition is a fundamental part of this and has an important role to play in motivating and engaging staff.
45. We want to ensure that there's a culture in the Council where employees are praised for the good things they are doing. Work is therefore ongoing to develop an employee recognition framework which recognises and celebrates the good work and performance of our employees. Ensuring that employees are recognised will help to create a positive working environment.
46. Basic recognition should be part of every line manager's role, with as a matter of course, managers thanking employees for good work and contributions, and saying "well done" when it is merited, rather than commenting only on the negatives.
47. Recognition can range from a simple thank you from a line manager, to a more formal email or letter, to a more high profile presentation or award event. The framework will detail the managers' role in recognition and will detail the formal and informal tools that can be used to recognise the great things that employees are doing.
48. Employees are to be consulted on what recognition tools should and should not be included in the framework.

Terms and conditions

49. Terms and conditions continue to be a major focus. In order to ensure that the Council has modern and appropriate terms and conditions which are affordable and competitive, consideration is to be given to what extent, if any, premium rates of pay should be reviewed.
50. Over the last few years, operational reviews have been carried out by services to reduce or remove the reliance on premium rates of pay. However, there remains further scope to review operational practices in services to further reduce the reliance on premium rates.

51. These reviews should not simply focus on premium rates of pay, as it is clear from information provided regarding the unit costs of posts, that premium rates are just one element that is impacting on competitiveness and the sustainability of services.
52. Service Directors will therefore be undertaking further operational reviews to identify ways to reduce or remove the reliance on premium rates and to reduce the overall unit costs of posts. Employees and the trade unions will be fully involved in these reviews, along with HR & Finance.

Low Pay

53. The Council is committed to addressing the issue of low pay. A revised grading structure was implemented from 1 April 2016 to address the implementation of the National Living Wage (NLW), and move further towards the UK Living Wage.
54. Further options to address low pay and move further towards the UK Living wage have been developed, which also aim to address the issue of narrowing salary differentials at the lower end of the pay structure. However, before these are implemented it is important to assess the outcome of the 2018-19 pay negotiations, which will also identify what steps have been taken to review the NJC pay spine.

Employee Forum

55. A Council-wide employee forum was launched in the autumn of 2016 to further improve employee communication and engagement and to ensure that views from the front line are part of the decision making process.
56. Employee engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being.
57. It is important that this forum is used to discuss corporate initiatives that will impact on employees to ensure that employees do not feel that workforce changes are being "done to" them rather than "done with" them.

Recommendations

The OSC is asked to

- (a) Give its views on the progress made in implementing actions from the Workforce Plan and its effectiveness in delivering the aims of the Workforce Strategy.
- (b) Consider further updates on progress on an annual basis.

Activity to Date (by theme)

Skills and Behaviours

1. All members of Leadership Team completed a 360 degree appraisal to identify strengths and areas for development. Personal Development Plans should have been developed by each individual to work towards.
2. We have developed a number of schemes, tools and guidance to support senior managers' ongoing development. These include coaching opportunities, a mentoring scheme and revised guidance on the use of action learning sets.
3. Media training workshops have been provided for senior offices who may be required, at times, to appear before the media on behalf of the Council.
4. Weekly Leadership Team meetings have been initiated enabling the timely sharing of information and learning.
5. A Learning and Development framework has been developed on the Intranet as a one-stop shop for managers and employees to access information on courses and other resources and toolkits to support their development. Within this framework a matrix of training and development courses for all managers has been developed which includes those courses which are both essential and discretionary for managers to attend to ensure they have the necessary skills to manage and support their employees.
6. A programme of in-house workshops has been delivered to develop the skills of managers. We have also provided opportunities for development through fully funded accredited distance learning programmes enabling first line and middle managers to achieve a recognised management qualification. Managers have also accessed development opportunities through the Public Service Academy short courses and master classes programme.
7. We continue to provide a range of e-learning modules on Knowledge Net to support the development of management skills in areas such as project management, time management, coaching, mentoring, managing change, managing people and performance etc.
8. We continue to deliver a wide programme of training throughout the Council to address the learning and development needs of our employees.
9. We continue to promote and enlist employees onto our courses through our learning and development directories (available on the Intranet), promotional flyers, Council Info, target e-mails and the ITrent online booking system.

Recruitment and Retention

10. The Council's approach to recruitment and retention allowances has been reviewed and reflected in the current corporate Pay Policy.

11. A corporate recruitment and retention policy is currently being developed which will ensure the right policies and procedures are in place to balance retention with the need to recruit people with new skills and expertise.

Pay, Reward and Recognition

12. Terms and conditions continue to be a major focus. Work has been undertaken to:
- Remove essential car user allowance from all posts
 - Remove protection of the working week so that all employees are working 37 hours or pro rata
 - Make changes to the Council's pay protection arrangements. 4 years protection will be retained however, the level of protection will taper over each year (100% protection in year one, 75% in year 2, 50% in year 3 and 25% in year 4). The changes will be implemented from 1 October 2017.
13. Work is ongoing to broaden the range of employee benefits available including Club Nissan giving employees up to 24% discount off new Nissan cars and the introduction of the Civic Service Sports College (GSSC) Staff Offers Scheme where employees can access a range of discount offers for leisure and sport activities, shopping and tourist attractions.
14. An employee benefits market place event took place in September 2016 which promoted the full range of employee benefits available. Further employee benefits market events will take place twice a year.

Wellbeing and Engagement

15. The 2016 employee survey took place. The turnout was slightly increased from 2015 with 41% of the workforce completing the survey. Analysis highlighted some positive trends and some areas that require further improvement. Service directors received the results relevant to their service areas and they and their managers should be working on action plans to positively engage employees and address areas of concern.
16. A range of courses have been delivered across the Council to ensure that the prioritised health and safety training needs of employees are met.
17. We have delivered a series of stress management courses for managers and stress buster sessions for employees to promote awareness of stress and how to deal with it.
18. We published a Stress Toolkit on the Intranet as a valuable information resource to provide managers and employees with guidance on how to deal with stress and promote wellbeing.
19. Courses were also provided for managers on managing and supporting employees with mental health issues and on managing employees' health and wellbeing.
20. We have developed a network of health advocates to promote health and wellbeing initiatives across the Council and delivered a range of information and briefing sessions to address issues around healthy eating, stress, smoking, drug and alcohol; misuse and physical activity.

21. We have developed a pool of Workplace Contacts to act as a point of contact for any employees suffering from a mental health problem affecting their work or anyone who feels that they are a victim of bullying and harassment in the workplace.
22. The provision of holistic therapies including Swedish massage, sports massage, reflexology and Indian head massage were reintroduced as part of the wellbeing at work agenda.
23. The Council's lead counsellor, Danny Halpin provided four sessions of mindfulness training to reinforce support that had been received by employees through the counselling service.

Performance and Change

24. The revised A&D framework was introduced in April 2017 including a performance management element. The completion of A&Ds will be monitored and regular reports submitted to SMG.

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Work Programme

REPORT OF: Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and
Governance

Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2017/18.

1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 3 April 2017 and Councillors have agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes/additions to this programme.
2. Appendix 1 sets out the work programme as it currently stands. Any changes proposed to the programme will be set out in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to
 - a) Note the provisional programme;
 - b) Note 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.

Contact: Angela Frisby

Extension: 2138

This page is intentionally left blank

DRAFT Corporate Resources OSC 2017/2018	
26 June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution/role/remit • The Council Plan – Year End Assessment and Performance Delivery 2016-17 • Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce Update • Gateshead Fund Update
4 September 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework - Progress Update • Case Study – Procurement of Goods and Services from Local Suppliers • OSC Work Programme
16 October 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities Impact Assessments and the Council Plan – Progress Update <i>No longer a standalone item, including in the Six Monthly Performance Report (November 2017)</i> • Implementation of Gateshead Volunteers Plan – Annual Report • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update • Implementation of Workforce Strategy – Progress Update • OSC Work Programme
27 November 17	<p>PART A (ad hoc policy issues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *DCLG Consultation on disqualification criteria for Mayors and Councillors *(<i>new issue received</i>) <p>PART B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan – Six Monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2017-18 • Corporate Asset Management – Delivery and Performance Report • Corporate Complaints Procedure - Annual Report 2016-17 • Annual Health and Safety Performance Report • Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce • OSC Work Programme
22 January 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateshead Communities Together Annual Update • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update • OSC Work Programme
26 February 18 (5.30pm meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance Report • Case Study – Welfare Reform • OSC Work Programme
16 April 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework - Progress Update • Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2017 • OSC Work Programme Review

Issues to Slot in

- **PSP Performance Monitoring – February 2018 (tbc)**

This page is intentionally left blank