Gateshead Council

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 26 February 2018 at 5.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

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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 22 January 2018.
3	**Information Governance and the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000** (Pages 9 - 16)
	Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
4	**Case Study - The Implementation of Universal Credit in Gateshead** (Pages 17 - 18)
	Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources.
5	**Annual Work Programme** (Pages 19 - 22)
	Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Contact: Sonia Stewart - Tel: 0191433 3045 - Email: soniastewart@gateshead.gov.uk, Tel: (0191) 433 3045, Date: Friday, 16 February 2018

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 22 January 2018

PRESENT: Councillor S Ronchetti (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillor(s): J Wallace, D Bradford, J Green, S Green, M Hall, M Henry, B Oliphant, M Ord and N Weatherley

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s): A Douglas, G Haley, M Gannon, L Green

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): John Eagle, L Caffrey, M Charlton, T Graham and K Wood

CR22 MINUTES

Matters Arising

At the last Committee it was queried what handover was given to Community Association when they are taking on responsibility from the Council. The application process for a CAT, community associations were provided with relevant copies of Water Hygiene Risk Assessment and Asbestos Survey in addition to the Council's Condition Survey.

More recently the question of fire risk assessment on properties transferred via the CAT process has been raised by Health and Safety and meetings have taken place.

All relevant community groups have subsequently been contacted by letter to highlight the importance of a current fire risk assessment for their premises.

The Council also provide a buy back service for surveys such as Water Hygiene/asbestos in addition to repairs and maintenance.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CR23 PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT A CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE

A report was presented to Committee to invite comments on the proposal to adopt a Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge and a process for gathering baseline information.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge had been developed based on the 5 Council Pledges:

- Put people and families at the heart of everything we do
- Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
- Support our communities to support themselves and each other
- Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
- Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead Council

Whilst it is appreciated that many tenders will have specific requirements that go above and beyond what is included in the document this will be the basic standard that may be applied across all markets and types of suppliers This approach has a number of benefits:

- The document signals basis standards, values and direction of travel that we would like our supply chain to comply with
- This approach covers all procurement activity regardless of markets and supplier sectors
- The information can be used to inform tender standards for specific tender processes
- Once the council has a baseline of information, if there are areas where the Council considers markets to be weak, we can consider whether to provide either direct support or signpost suppliers to organisations that can help them to improve.
- There may be opportunities to generate income, for example, if suppliers identify areas of weakness where the Council has capacity or expertise, then the Council may consider opportunities to trade with suppliers to help them to upskill, for example, health and safety or resilience planning
- We can also work with suppliers based in Gateshead to help to upskill them or educate them to enable them to compete.

It is expected that the document will be reviewed in 12 months time, once sufficient baseline information is available..

Pledge 1 – "Putting People and Families at the Heart of Everything we Do", the Committee had no comments.

Pledge 2 –"Tackling Inequality so People have a Fair Chance", the Committee had no comments.

Pledge 3 – "Supporting our communities to support themselves and each other" – the Committee had no comments.

Pledge 4 – "Investing in our Economy to Provide Sustainable Opportunities for Employment, Innovation and Growth across the Borough", - It was suggested that something should be included about wealth creation and the opportunity to re-distribute.

Please 5 – "Working together to Fight for a Better Future for Gateshead", it was queried why the Council was in the title, it was noted that this was a typo.

It was queried about using providers who are ethical in terms of paying their corporation tax etc. The Committee were advised that there is already requirements in procurement practice, however, it may be possible to add something in about tax.

The Committee were advised of suggestions made by a Councillor unable to attend today's committee in relation to slightly amended wording regarding payment appropriate to the job, and in Pledge 2 where we talk about targeted recruitment practices, the Council doesn't offer targeted recruitment practices so it has been suggested that this line be taken out.

It was suggested that we also need to concentrate on delivering best value to for the people of Gateshead.

RESOLVED – (i)   That the Committee's comments be noted.
(ii)   That the approach to gathering baseline information be approved.
(iii)   That the content and approach be reported to Cabinet for approval.

CR24   ANNUAL REPORT - CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE 2016/17

A report was presented to Committee on the analysis of complaints and compliments recorded by the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company in the year ended 31 March 2017.

The Council sees comments, complaints and compliments as an important part of being open and honest and using the feedback to improve services.

At the year end 31 March 2017, 307 complaints were recorded and 754 compliments were recorded. 18 complaints were the subject of an independent review by the Chief Executive of the Council and the Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company undertook 20 reviews.

A number of points can be noted arising from the statistics for 2016/17:
- 307 complaints were recorded in 2016/17 compared with 387 in 2015/16 a decrease of 80.
- 754 compliments were recorded for the year 2016/17 compared to 723 in 2015/16 – an increase of 31.
- The number of complainants requesting a review of their complaint by the Chief Executive decreased by fourteen to 18 in 2016/17. The Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company carried out 20 reviews in 2016/17 compared to 14 in 2015/16.
- 73.3% of all complaints were recorded against the category of quality of service.
- The proportion of complaints found to be fully justified decreased from 41% in 2015/16 to 36.9% in 2016/17.
- In addition, the proportion of complaints found to be partially justified increased from 13.6% in 2015/16 to 15.6% in 2016/17.

- Most importantly, the Council's managers used the information gained through the monitoring of complaints to improve the provision of services.
- The computerised recording system made it easier to track and respond to complaints. However, this system now requires an upgrade that reflects the new structure of the Council and provides improved statistical interrogation and analysis.
- There has been a decrease in the number of complaints recorded by the Council during 2016/17. Additionally, there has been an increase in performance of the percentage of complaints resolved within target timescales for the both the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company from 82.7% in 2015/16 to 85.2% in 2016/17.

During 2016/17 the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) investigated 17 complaints. Of these 7 were closed following a detailed response from the Council, 2 were not upheld and 8 were upheld partially or fully.

In 2016/17 of the 307 Step 2 complaints 38 progressed to Step 3 and 23 to the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.

The Committee was informed that it is recognised that the system requires an upgrade and work is currently being undertaken with the implementation of the Council's new digital platform to include a new system for managing complaints. It is hoped that the new system will improve how complaints are managed and analysed and have an ability to identify themes.

It was queried whether the new system will be able to identify those who make multiple complaints. The committee was advised that whilst the Council do have persistent complainers, each complaint could be about different service areas and issues and therefore may still be counted as separate complaints even if they are from the same person.

It was queried whether the information is also taken to the Housing Company. The Committee were informed that the complaints information relating to the Housing Company goes to the Housing Company Board meeting.

RESOLVED - That the report on complaints and compliments be endorsed.

CR25   **VOLUNTEERING IN GATESHEAD - A NEW APPROACH**

The Committee received a report and a presentation on a project being undertaken in partnership with Open Lab (Newcastle University) and PaCT Lab (Northumbria University).

Gateshead Council's Volunteers Plan has been in existence since 2013 and in that time the numbers of residents participating in volunteering has steadily increased.

The system for the management of volunteering projects has remained unchanged and now requires updating. Initial research into volunteering was conducted by Northumbria University on behalf of the Council which concluded in September 2017 that the system for administering volunteering was too bureaucratic and a "digital platform will have profound benefits for the organisation".

The Gateshead Volunteering Project 2018 is a one year collaboration between Gateshead Council, Open Lab and PaCT Lab.

The Project Aims to:

- Understand the experiences and processes of being and supporting a volunteer in Gateshead;
- Design new activities and digital tools to better support volunteering;
- Build, deploy and evaluate working versions of digital tools;
- Do all of the above in collaboration with volunteers and volunteer coordinators, and other relevant stakeholders within and external to Gateshead Council.

The participants include, volunteers, the Council, the Voluntary and Community Sector, and other stakeholders include, the Community Centre Network, Emergency Resilience Planning, environment and friends of groups, school volunteers and governors, volunteer operated library services, community links, community safety, children's centres, The Gateshead Housing Company and Northumbria Police.

The project structure is designed over four phases - Discover, Design, Develop and Deliver. The team will be running some focus groups and workshops and will be speaking to those who volunteer currently.

It is hoped that by April a design brief will be in place and by June a potential working version of something.

The OSC were asked to consider the following questions.

- Have we got the aims of the project right?
- What would make the biggest difference to volunteering in Gateshead?
- What else may help?
- Who else should we involve?
- What else should we consider?
- Where else should we investigate?
- Your experiences of volunteering, 'helping out'?

It was suggested that we learn from our partners and from what other organisations, for example Beamish do in terms of recruitment of volunteers.

It was noted that a lot of people may not be on a digital/social media platform – this is something to think about when developing a system.
It was suggested that both a bottom up and a top down approach is something which may be needed.

It was suggested, that perhaps what is needed is to speak to people who aren't currently volunteering. It was noted that this might be difficult.

It was suggested that removing barriers is a big thing to encourage volunteers as people are put off by the legislation involved, for example, DBS checks, grant applications, health and safety regulations. It was also suggested that barriers for

some people who are not using social media.

It was suggested that the project team speak to those involved in the Our Gateshead website. It was noted that a meeting is already in place.

It was suggested that volunteering could also be used as a means of people gaining competencies and skills which may lead them into paid employment.

It was also noted that there is an issue where some groups have been set up for a particular reason and start to flounder due to lack of funding but also because they may not be needed for the same project as they were set up for but they could be re-constituted to help in some other area or on some other project.

RESOLVED - That the comments of the Committee be noted in taking the project forward.

CR26   **ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was submitted to Committee to note or if Committee had any additional items they would like to have brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED - That the work programme be noted.

Chair………..…………….…..

![Gateshead Council logo]

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Report –Information Governance and the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

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

Summary

This report provides the Committee with an overview of arrangements for Information Governance across the Council. It also provides details of the Council's use of covert surveillance and offers assurance that when authorising covert surveillance the Council is compliant with the requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

Information Governance

Introduction

1. This is the third annual report to the Committee regarding the Council's Information Governance framework. It aims to provide the Committee with the legislative context within which the Council manages a range of sensitive information and personal data, compliance with relevant guidance and good practice, and the Council's performance in this area over the last twelve months. It is, therefore ,intended to form an important part of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Framework, alongside other annual performance reporting.

Background

2. Public trust in the way public services handle and share data is increasingly important, particularly in the context of greater digital storage and transfer of information. Service users expect easier access to services and a 'one stop' delivery experience. They want to be in control of their interactions with council services and for those services to be delivered at lower cost, more quickly and based on individual needs. This lies at the very core of what all local public services strive to do, and in Gateshead is captured within our policy objectives as set out in the Council Plan 2015-20 and our Digital Strategy.

3. Success in this area depends on many factors, but effective and secure exchange and management of information is vital for both good service delivery, and for compliance with an increasingly onerous and prescriptive legislative framework at both a national and European level. The public and regulatory bodies must have

confidence in the way that any data we hold is treated, taking privacy and confidentiality into account, and that it is kept safe from misuse. Without that assurance service users are unlikely to engage, services will be less efficient and much poorer as a result, and we face stiffer penalties if found to be failing to meet our legal responsibilities..

4. In 2010 the Local Government Association produced data handling guidelines for local authorities. Those guidelines, which were revised in 2014, set out the steps that every local authority should take to monitor and control the management of information and to mitigate the risk should personal information be lost or data protection systems fail. The Council's approach to information governance is based on these guidelines.

5. The Council recognises that there must be a systematic and planned approach to the management of its information. This will ensure that from the time a record is created, until its disposal, standards and handling will be consistent across the organisation and that the record can be tracked throughout its lifecycle to ensure it serves the needs of the Council and its stakeholders, and complies with relevant legislation.

6. The way the Council manages its information is also crucial to maintain effective and efficient business operations. Information management is about providing an integrated records and information system to ensure quick, efficient and consistent access to records across the organisation. Public sector organisations have more demands than ever before to be open and transparent. The introduction of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, on 1 January 2005 and the government's transparency agenda means anyone can request information from the Council. This can be achieved quickly and efficiently if effective information management systems are in place.

7. The Council has an Information Charter and an Information Strategy. The strategy provides a framework which enables the Council to manage its information efficiently, recognising its value as a corporate asset for the delivery of effective, appropriate and transparent services.

8. With the approval of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has been ratified by the European Parliament and comes into effect in the UK on 25 May 2018, there is a move away from seeing the law as a box ticking exercise, and instead to work on a framework that can be used to build a culture of privacy that pervades an entire organisation.

9. The Council formed an information rights working group in March 2017 to start preparing for GDPR implementation. A lot of work has been done. So far:-
    a. All information assets are being captured in information asset registers
    b. Privacy notices have been prepared for children's services, schools, elections, councillors and staff. Templates are being prepared to roll out across the rest of the Council
    c. Web pages are being updated to include contact details of the Data Protection Officer which is a new statutory role which public sector organisations will be required to have

d. Information asset registers also contain the legal basis for processing and the retention periods
e. Consent forms are being revised to be GDPR compliant
f. Data collection forms and systems are being re-engineered to comply with data minimisation and privacy by design
g. All data controller/processor agreements are being reviewed
h. Forms and procedures have been devised for privacy impact assessments
i. All schools have received training
j. Training for governors is scheduled in March
k. A members seminar is scheduled for March
l. Staff in procurement, I.T, web design , and legal have been trained
m. Roll out of training to all remaining employees starts in February
n. Data sharing and handling agreements are being drafted for all of our trading companies, including GHC

10. **Internal Audit** are responsible for conducting an annual information audit. The aims of the audit are to ensure services are complying with the Information Governance framework that has been put in place.

11. An essential part of the information management role is protecting records from elements such as floods, fire, theft and loss. The Council follows the National Archives Records Management Recovery plans standard for the management of government records. This standard is a best practice benchmark for all organisations creating or holding public records.

Information Storage
12. Storage of the Council's paper based records is reviewed annually in line with retention periods and records are destroyed or transferred to archive if required.

Risk Assessment
13. Information governance is included in the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

Data breach reporting

14. Data breaches can be reported to the Information Rights Officer or via the incident reporting mail inbox.

The Senior Information Risk Owner, (Mike Barker), is informed in the event of a data breach and the Information Rights Officer provides advice to the service concerned about what remedial action they need to take.

The Siro makes a determination whether the incident has to be reported to the Information Commissioner in line with the Information Commissioner's guidance on data breach reporting.

The incident reporting inbox is an inbox which internal audit access and can investigate in relation to serious breaches.in 2017 there have been 7 reported breaches.

Month	Data breach	outcome
Jan 2017	Duty manager sent an email to service users without using the BCC facility so all service users received everyone else's email address. 100 service users affected	2 complaints received and dealt with. Staff member provided with training.
Feb 2017	A Child Protection Plan was sent out to the wrong address.	The original documentation was retrieved – service user made aware
March 2017	Report sent to the wrong address	The original documentation was retrieved – service user made aware
March 2017	Closure letter out to 66 individuals across Gateshead which included a client's personal details	Client informed
March 2017	A Child Protection Plan was sent out to the wrong address	The original documentation was retrieved – service user made aware
12/06/2017	Paperwork containing information about one service user lost	Service user informed , staff member trained
10/08/2017	Report disclosed containing the address of a service user	Service user informed, report retrieved

Should a complaint be made to the Information Commissioner or a breach is reported to the Information Commissioner by the Council, the Information Rights Officer liaises with the Information Commissioner to reach a satisfactory outcome. There have been no complaints in 2017.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

Background

15. This is the second report in relation to the Council's use of RIPA. It was recommended in the new codes of conduct produced by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner at the end of last year, that Councils should report their use of RIPA to elected members at least annually.

16. RIPA provides a statutory mechanism (i.e. 'in accordance with the law') for authorising directed and covert surveillance and the use of Covert Human intelligence Sources (CHIS). It also permits public authorities to compel telecommunications and postal companies to obtain and release communications data in certain circumstances. It seeks to ensure that any interference with an individual's rights under Article 8 of the European Convention is necessary and proportionate. In doing so, RIPA seeks to ensure that both the public interest and the human rights of individuals are suitably balanced.

17. Covert surveillance involves, monitoring, observing, listening to persons, watching or following their movements, and is carried out in such a way that the subject of the surveillance is unaware it is taking place.

18. There are two types of covert surveillance that the Council can use:
    - Directed surveillance – this involves observing, following or watching the subject of the surveillance
    - CHIS – this involves using volunteer adults or children to attempt to make test purchases

19. Typically this council uses RIPA in relation to benefit or council tax fraud when information is received that a claimant has someone living with them or is working and claiming benefits. Surveillance will be used to watch the property to see if there is any evidence of another person living there. If evidence is found the subject of the surveillance will be invited in for an interview under caution.

20. The Council uses CHIS (normally members of staff or child volunteers), when it receives information that, for example, a householder is selling illegal tobacco or a shop is selling age restricted products such as alcohol, cigarettes or fireworks to underage children. The CHIS will be used to attempt to make a test purchase. If the test purchase succeeds then the subject of the surveillance is invited in for an interview under caution.

21. The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 amended RIPA to restrict when councils can use RIPA. An authorisation for directed surveillance or CHIS can only be made by councils now if certain conditions are met:

    - That the authorisation is for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime
    - The criminal offence is or would be an offence which is punishable, whether on summary conviction or indictment , by a maximum term of at least 6 months imprisonment or
    - Is an offence under:
        o Section 146 of the Licensing Act 2003 (sale of alcohol to children
        o Section 147 of the Licensing Act 2003 (allowing the sale of alcohol to children)
        o Section 147A of the Licensing Act 2003 (persistently selling alcohol to children)
        o Section 7 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (sale of tobacco etc to persons under 18)

22. Covert surveillance should only be used in exceptional circumstances when necessary information cannot be uncovered by overt means – open CCTV or officers patrolling with visible body worn video cameras. The decision to use covert surveillance must take into account the issue of proportionality - the surveillance must not be excessive in relation to the seriousness of the problem it seeks to address.

    The Council must ensure that:
    - All covert surveillance exercises conducted by the Council comply with the requirements of RIPA;
    - All authorisations contain the detail of the surveillance which is to be permitted and why the authorising officer believes the surveillance to be necessary. To demonstrate the necessity of the covert surveillance all authorisations must mention all other possible means of discovering the desired information and the reason for their rejection.
    .

23. Councils are not permitted to undertake intrusive surveillance i.e. tapping phone lines or any surveillance inside private property or placing tracking devices on a subject's vehicle or person.

24. Only authorising officers can be permitted to authorise a covert surveillance exercise.

Arrangements

25. The Council's compliance with RIPA is independently audited periodically by two Commissioners; the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner and the Office of the Communications Surveillance Commissioner. The Home Office has produced a code of conduct in relation to covert surveillance. The Commissioner audits how the Council has used its powers under the Act and how well it has complied with the code of practice.

26. In addition, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 amended RIPA, meaning that before a surveillance exercise can take place, an application which has been authorised by an authorising officer, has to be approved by a magistrate before the proposed surveillance activity takes place.

27. The Investigatory Powers Tribunal can hear complaints from any person aggrieved at the conduct carried out in challengeable circumstances within one year. The tribunal can award compensation or can quash or cancel any authorisation and can order the destruction of records of any information obtained by exercising any power.

28. The Act designates various roles to officers, these roles are held by specific Council officers as follows:
    - Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) – this role is held by the Service Director, Legal and Democratic Services. SRO is responsible for:
        o Ensuring that all authorising officers are of an appropriate level of seniority and have had training

- The integrity of the process in place within the public authority to authorise directed and intrusive surveillance and interference with property or wireless telegraphy;
- Compliance with Part II of the 2000 Act, Part III of the 1997 Act and with the codes of practice
- Engagement with the Commissioners and inspectors when they conduct their inspections, and where necessary, overseeing the implementation of any post inspection action plans recommended or approved by a Commissioner

- RIPA Co-ordinating officer - this role is held by the Litigation Manager and Information Rights Officer. The role is responsible for:
  - maintaining the central record of authorisations
  - collating the original applications/authorisations, review, renewals, cancellations
  - oversight of the submitted RIPA documentation
  - organising the RIPA training programme
  - raising RIPA awareness within the Council

29. Authorising Officer - these roles are assigned to service managers or above who have been trained to authorise requests for directed surveillance and the use of CHIS.

     RIPA does not:
     - make lawful conduct which is otherwise unlawful
     - prejudice or disapply any existing powers available to the Council to obtain information by any means not involving conduct that may be authorised under this Act. For example, it does not affect the Council's current powers to obtain information via the DVLA or to get information from the Land Registry as to the ownership of a property.

Statistics

30. Gateshead Council uses its power under RIPA when it is appropriate to do so.
    - In 2017 the powers were used four times – three for counterfeit goods being sold via Facebook and one for the sale of animals on facebook without a licence. An application was made to use RIPA in relation to sale of cigarettes to underage children, but the district Judge refused to authorise the surveillance.
    - In 2016 the powers were used twice – both for illegal tobacco sales.

    - In 2015 the powers were used five times - on four occasions for illegal tobacco sales and once for counterfeit goods.
    - In 2014 the powers were used four times - on two occasions for counterfeit goods, once for benefit fraud and once for illegal tobacco.
    - In 2013 the powers were used 5 times – on four occasions for illegal tobacco sales and once for theft.

<u>Inspection</u>

31. In July 2016 the Council was re-inspected by the Surveillance Commissioner and found to be fully compliant with the requirements of RIPA

Recommendation

32. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse the information in the annual report, and satisfy themselves that the Information Governance is operating satisfactorily and that the Council uses the powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act appropriately.

Contact: Deborah Hill   EXT: 2110

Gateshead Council

TITLE OF REPORT: Case Study – The Implementation of Universal Credit in Gateshead

REPORT OF: Darren Collins, Strategic Director Corporate Resources

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SUMMARY

This report updates Corporate Resources OSC on the implementation of Universal Credit within Gateshead and the issues arising to date.

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Background

1.   The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced a number of changes:

- Universal credit to replace 6 main benefits
- Housing Benefit reductions for under-occupation
- Cap on overall benefit of £26,000 (£18,200 for single persons)
- Council Tax Benefit replaced by Local Council Tax Support Schemes
- Disability Living Allowance replaced by Personal Independence Payments
- Responsibility for Discretionary Social Fund transferred to local authorities

2.   Universal credit has been implemented in Gateshead in 2 phases. In 2015 "Live" service was introduced, followed by the rollout of "Full" service in October 2017. All Universal Credit claims are made via an online application resulting in a single household payment paid monthly in arrears.

Implementation to Date

3.   Universal Credit "Live" service was implemented in June 2015 for a limited client group; single, non-householder, no children, new Job Seeker Allowance claimants.

4.   To support this implementation of Universal Credit, the Council agreed a Delivery Partnership Agreement with DWP. As part of this agreement the Council together with the Gateshead Housing Company provide a range of services offering support and advice to clients including ;

- On line supported digital access
- Personal Budgeting support and referral for direct payments
- Online application process support
- Identification of housing costs
- Identification of the need for Alternative Payment Arrangements
- Various referral arrangements

Other issues

Under Occupation

5.   There were 2838 council tenants affected by under occupation in April 2013 and this reduced to 2225 in February 2017 and to 1883 in February 2018.

6.   There are now 2353 total cases in Gateshead.

Universal Credit "Full Service"

7.   Universal Credit "Full Service" was rolled out in Gateshead from October 2017 for new claims and changes of circumstances only.

8.   Migration of existing Housing Benefits claimants to Universal Credit is scheduled to be completed by 2022/23.

Free School Meals

9.   Entitlement to Free School Meals becomes effective to Universal Credit claimants only on the date of award of the benefit, not from the date of the claim. Initially this could have resulted in a delay of up to 6 weeks , during which period children who would have become entitled to free school meals would not be eligible to receive a meal. As a result of this discussions were held with schools to ensure meals were still awarded within this 6 week period. There are currently 328 Universal credit households in receipt of free school meals.

Foodbanks

10.   The use of foodbanks has significantly increased over the last year, from 1698 food parcels in 2106 to 4864 food parcels in 2017 (an increase of 186%).

Resources

11.   Additional resources have been made available within the Council and the Gateshead Housing Company to provide advice and support to claimants, partner organisations and volunteers. TGHC resources also have a presence in Gateshead Jobcentre and Gateshead Advice Centre. In addition funding has been provided to Gateshead Advice Centre to provide further resources to support and advise claimants.

12.   The presentation to committee will outline a number of case studies highlighting the impact of Universal Credit on Gateshead residents.

Recommendation

13.   The views of the Corporate Resources OSC are sought on:

* The issues arising from the implementation of Universal Credit in Gateshead.
* The actions taken by the Council and The Gateshead Housing Company, working with partners, to date in supporting this.

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Gateshead Council

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CORPORATE RESOURCES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
26 February 2018
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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

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DRAFT Corporate Resources OSC 2017/2018	
26 June 17	- 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	- Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework - Progress Update - Case Study – Procurement of Goods and Services from Local Suppliers - OSC Work Programme
16 October 17	~~Equalities Impact Assessments and the Council Plan – Progress Update~~ *No longer a standalone item, including in the Six Monthly Performance Report (November 2017)* - 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	**PART A (ad hoc policy issues)** *DCLG Consultation on disqualification criteria for Mayors and Councillors *(new issue received)* **PART B** - The Council Plan – Six Monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2017-18 - Corporate Asset Management – Delivery and Performance Report - Annual Health and Safety Performance Report - OSC Work Programme
22 January 18	**PART A (ad hoc policy issue)** - Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge *(new issued agreed at 27/11/17 OSC)* **PART B** Corporate Complaints Procedure - Annual Report 2016-17 ~~Gateshead Communities Together Annual Update~~ - Presentation / Consultation on the development of web based volunteers system *(new item)* ~~Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce~~ – issue to be slotted in - OSC Work Programme
26 February 18 (5.30pm meeting)	- Information Governance Report - Case Study – Welfare Reform ~~*Refresh of the Volunteer Plan 2018 * (new item)*~~ - OSC Work Programme

16 April 18	- Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework - Progress Update - Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2017 - Refresh of the Volunteer Plan 2018 * *(new item – moved from 26 Feb following agreement from Chair)* - Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – Progress Update **(moved from January 18)* - OSC Work Programme Review

Issues to Slot in

- **PSP Performance Monitoring – February 2018 (tbc)**
- **Sickness Absence / Health of Workforce (date tbc)**
- **Gateshead Communities Together Annual Update**