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All Members of the
Council

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Contact: Democratic Services, E-mail:
democraticserviceteam@gateshead.gov.uk

Date: Wednesday, 17 January 2024

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Gateshead Civic Centre, at **2.30 pm on Thursday, 25 January 2024** to transact the following business:-

- 1 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held 23 November 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)**
- 2 Official Announcements**
(announcements may be made by the Mayor, Leader of the Council or the Chief Executive)
- 2a Awards Recognition**
- 3 Petitions**
(to receive petitions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10)
- 4 Questions from Members of the Public**
(to consider any questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 7)
- 5 Annual Report of Director of Public Health**

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

- 6** **Gateshead Local Area SEND Strategy and SEND Improvement Plan 2023-2026** (Pages 9 - 70)
- 7** **Council Services - Restructure** (Pages 71 - 78)
- 8** **Calendar of Meetings 2024/25** (Pages 79 - 100)
- 9** **Allocations Policy update** (Pages 101 - 122)
- 10** **Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators 2023/24 - Third Quarter Review** (Pages 123 - 136)

MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

11 **Notice of Motion**

(to consider any notices of motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.1)

11a Notice of Motion - Two-Child Benefit Cap (Pages 137 - 138)

11b Notice of Amendment - Two-Child Benefit Cap (Pages 139 - 140)

11c Notice of Motion - Gateshead Pride (Pages 141 - 142)

12 **Questions**

(to deal with any questions submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.1)



Sheena Ramsey
Chief Executive

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 23 November 2023

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR

Councillors: J Adams, V Anderson, R Beadle, D Bradford, M Brain, L Brand, C Buckley, P Burns, L Caffrey, B Clelland, P Craig, W Dick, S Dickie, P Diston, A Douglas, D Duggan, J Eagle, P Elliott, S Gallagher, M Gannon, A Geddes, F Geddes, J Gibson, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, T Graham, J Green, L Green, S Green, G Haley, M Hall, S Hawkins, K Henderson, G Kasfikis, H Kelly, L Kirton, J McCoid, J McElroy, M McNestry, J Mohammed, L Moir, R Mullen, B Oliphant, A Ord, C Ord, M Ord, I Patterson, S Potts, D Robson, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turner, K Walker, J Wallace, H Weatherley, D Welsh, A Wintcher and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors: D Burnett, K Dodds, C Donovan, P Maughan, J Turnbull, D Weatherley and Ramsey

CL47 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023 AND 26TH OCTOBER 2023

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the meetings held 21 September 2023 and 26 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

CL48 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced with great sadness that Alderman Gordon Spring had passed away. Council held one minute of silence to remember Alderman Gordon Spring.

Council recognised 5 members of Unity staff from the Teams Centre for their commendable work in saving the life of a service user. Council expressed its gratitude to John Martin, Mark Martin, Paula Marshall and Tara Farley.

Council recognised and commended the work and quick thinking of Anar Hunter, a member of staff from Care Call who performed lifesaving first aid on a service user before handing over to the emergency services.

Council thanked all staff being recognised for their quick thinking, teamwork and resilience.

CL49 PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

CL50 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Stephen Kelly submitted the following question:

“Councillors may be aware that a pedestrian crossing and adjacent ramp have been installed on Cushycow Lane in Ryton to provide access to the neighbouring new development of 283 houses. This has resulted in the loss of 6 car parking spaces for local residents. This was carried out without any meaningful consultation with the residents effected.

The ramifications of this action are far reaching and distressing to residents, especially those with a disability.

Affected residents were consulted on the planning application for the 283 new houses, and barely noticeable in it was the proposal to remove 2 parking spaces on Cushy Cow Lane. However, following approval of planning permission for the new development, the highway works have undergone a design revision as a result of a road safety audit process.

This has resulted in the loss of a further 4 parking spaces, but no further public consultation was carried out as the change was classed as a non-material amendment.

Has the Council assessed the impact of this decision on accessibility to people’s homes for those with a disability; what assessment has been made of the possible impact on the environment caused by the loss of gardens to car parking spaces; what impact will the loss of parking spaces have on congestion on Cushy Cow Lane and what alternative parking arrangements have the council considered for residents?”

Councillor John McElroy responded to the question.

CL51 THE GLASSHOUSE PRESENTATION

Council received a presentation from Abigail Pogson, Managing Director of the Glasshouse providing an update regarding the work of the charity.

CL52 CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2028 - THE STRENGTH OF GATESHEAD IS THE PEOPLE OF GATESHEAD

Consideration was given to the report seeking agreement of the Corporate Plan 2023-2028.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To agree ‘The strength of Gateshead it the people of Gateshead’ as its Corporate Plan 2023-2028.
- (ii) To agree to commence engagement on the Corporate Plan priorities for 2023-2028.
- (iii) To agree to receive an annual report reviewing performance against the agreed priorities within the Corporate Plan.

CL53 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 – 2028/29

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2028/29.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29 and the medium-term financial context as reported.

CL54 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - PERFORMANCE TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Consideration was given to note the Treasury Management Performance for the six months to 30 September 2023.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Treasury Management Performance for the six months to 30 September 2023 be noted.

CL55 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2028/29

Consideration was given to a report for Council to approve the Capital Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To agree the Capital Strategy Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29.

CL56 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24 - SECOND QUARTER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report setting out the latest position on the 2023/24 Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the second quarter to 30 September 2023.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To agree all variations to the 2023/24 Capital Programme as reported.

CL57 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report for the approval of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the proposed scheme as reported.
- (ii) To delegate powers to the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital to provide regulations to give effect to the scheme, including publishing full details online.

CL58 NOTICE OF MOTION - GO NORTH EAST AND UNITE INDUSTRIAL STRIKE

Councillor R Beadle moved the following motion:

“This Council notes the continuing damage being done to residents, businesses and those who travel to or through Gateshead for employment, study, or leisure by the Go North East Unite industrial dispute.

Council believes:

1. That the role of political leadership is not to take sides in this dispute but to seek its resolution
2. That the Council leadership should challenge both Go North East and Unite to agree to binding arbitration, including the option of pendulum arbitration.”

Councillor M Gannon moved the following amendment:

“Para. 1. Delete GNE. Replace with Go North East.

Delete all after Paragraph 1

Replace with:

Whilst recognising that the current dispute is between a private company, Go North East and its workforce, in which the council is not directly involved, we are concerned that the Gateshead Liberal Democrat group believes that the council leader should “not take sides”

This council supports that position taken by the leader of the council, which is firmly “on the side” of the residents of Gateshead and of the wider region.

In particular, we support the leader of the council’s repeated statements to both sides in the dispute to seek a negotiated resolution.

We further support the position taken by the leader of the council, in his role as chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, to ensure that Go North East does not receive any further public funds for concessionary fares and secured services which are not delivered by the company during the current dispute.

We further support the representations made by the leader of the council, in his role as chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, to the North East Traffic Commissioner, to use its regulatory powers to investigate Go North East’s failure to comply with its licence obligations and where appropriate issue sanctions.

We further support the representations made by the leader of the council, in his role as chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, to the Rt Hon Mark Harper, Secretary of State for Transport, asking what action he intends to take to resolve the current dispute and deal with the failure of market to deliver bus services in the North East.

The current dispute clearly demonstrates that the current deregulated bus services, “free market”, model is broken and does not serve the public interest. Private operators serve the interests of their profits and shareholders, not the public interest.

This council calls on Go North East to put the interests of Gateshead residents and those of the wider region above those of the company and its shareholders and to resolve this dispute as soon as possible.

Whether through negotiation or arbitration, we call on the parties to resolve their dispute.”

The substantive motion was defeated.

On the amendment being put it was duly carried.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

Delete all after Paragraph 1

Replace with:

Whilst recognising that the current dispute is between a private company, Go North East and its workforce, in which the council is not directly involved, we are concerned that the Gateshead Liberal Democrat group believes that the council leader should “not take sides”

This council supports that position taken by the leader of the council, which is firmly “on the side” of the residents of Gateshead and of the wider region.

In particular, we support the leader of the council’s repeated statements to both sides in the dispute to seek a negotiated resolution.

We further support the position taken by the leader of the council, in his role as chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, to ensure that Go North East does not receive any further public funds for concessionary fares and secured services which are not delivered by the company during the current dispute.

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The current dispute clearly demonstrates that the current deregulated bus services,

“free market”, model is broken and does not serve the public interest. Private operators serve the interests of their profits and shareholders, not the public interest.

This council calls on Go North East to put the interests of Gateshead residents and those of the wider region above those of the company and its shareholders and to resolve this dispute as soon as possible.

Whether through negotiation or arbitration, we call on the parties to resolve their dispute.

CL59 QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted.

Mayor.....



COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

Gateshead Local Area SEND Strategy and SEND Improvement Plan 2023-2026

Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is for Council endorsement of the new SEND Strategy and associated improvement plan.
2. It provides an update on the outcome of the recent Local Area SEND inspection and the partnership response to the recommendations that followed.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- i. Endorse the Local Area SEND Strategy as set out in appendix 2 to the report.
- ii. Note the areas for development following the Local Area SEND inspection in May 2023;
- iii. Note the progress of the SEND improvement programme so far and its impact for children and young people with SEND and their families; and
- iv. Endorse the focus and priorities for the programme for 2023-26 to embed and accelerate change, responding to the Local Area inspection for SEND as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

For the following reasons:

- i. To improve SEND services across the Local Area and respond to feedback from families, carers and young people with SEND.
- ii. To appropriately respond to the Local Area Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection outcome.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Gateshead Local Area SEND Strategy and SEND Improvement plan 2023-2026

REPORT OF: Helen Fergusson, Strategic Director, Children's Social Care and Lifelong Learning

Purpose of the report

1. This report informs Cabinet of the new SEND Strategy and associated improvement plan as well as providing an update on the outcome of the recent Local Area SEND inspection and the partnership response to the recommendations that followed.

Background

2. The Gateshead local area SEND strategy 2023-2026 was co-produced with all partners in January 2023 and has been the catalyst for the development of the subsequent Gateshead SEND Improvement Plan. The strategy sets out the vision and priorities for integrated and multi-agency SEND services in the local area over the next 3 years, with the aim of improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. This requires educational settings, health commissioners and providers, Gateshead Council's social care and education services; voluntary and community sector partners working together with children and their families to meet needs,
3. The SEND Strategy is ambitious about improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and the whole system approach that is needed to achieve the step change required to respond to the views and aspirations of parents, carers, young people and professionals and their desire for change. The associated improvement programme is designed to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND and this report outlines what the programme of work has achieved so far and the proposed focus for 2023-2026 to embed and accelerate change as well as responding to the recent Local Area SEND inspection findings.
4. The SEND Strategy and Improvement Programme is aligned with Gateshead's THRIVE agenda and Health and Wellbeing Strategy which seeks to reduce inequalities and more specifically to realise the Council's ambition that everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them to succeed in life. The Local Area SEND Strategy 2023 - 26 emphasises that better long-term outcomes for children and young people are achieved when:

- Their needs are identified and met early in their life and early in the emergence of the issue
 - When children and young people feel included in their local communities and schools
 - When children can be educated closer to home
 - When services are integrated and well coordinated
 - When specialist help and support is timely and easily accessible
 - When children, young people and their families are actively involved in decisions which affect and shape their lives.
5. The Strategy and improvement plan formed the basis of the local area's self-assessment which was completed to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in the delivery of support services for children and young people with SEND and was shared with the SEND inspection team as part of the local area inspection which took place in May 2023. Since the inspection, the improvement plan has been revised and amended to reflect the recommendations from the inspection and the plan forms the basis of an extensive programme of transformation work over the next three years.

National Policy Context

6. The Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3) provides the legislative framework for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014) which lays out the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to provide for those with special educational needs.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

Current Local Context

7. Since the pandemic, Gateshead has seen a significant rise in the overall number of children and young people identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is particularly the case for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or requests for assessment for an EHCP. This has placed all SEND teams in the Council under significant pressure. This rise in demand, alongside financial pressures, has also placed challenges upon the wider workforce connected to those delivering to children with Special Educational Needs, including those in the health, care and school sectors. The pandemic has particularly impacted on the number of children and young people who are identified as having autism, and those with social, emotional and mental needs.
- 38,498 children (0-17) live in Gateshead and 16,653 young adults (18-25).
 - 16% children & young people have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (4859)
 - 11.9% pupils have SEND support (3618)
 - 4.1% have an EHCP (1241)

(Source – special educational needs in England 2021/22 publication)

Changes since 2021

- 19% overall increase in need for children with SEND between 2021 and 2023 and a 13.5% increase in new EHCPs issued.
- Of the new EHCPs issued, there has been a 70% increase between 2021 (588) and 2023 (1002) for C&YP with **Autistic spectrum conditions**.
- 36% increase between 2021 (1597) and 2023 (2178) for C&YP with **Speech, Language & Communication needs**.
- 32% increase between 2021 (764) and 2023 (1009) for C&YP with **Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs**.
- We have more children with an EHCP children placed in special schools than comparators nationally (53% in Gateshead compared to a national rate of 32%).
- We have significantly more special school places than our contextual neighbours and they are all currently full. This indicates a need to fundamentally rethink the way in which children with SEND can be supported within our local school system.

The Gateshead SEND Strategy (see Appendix 2)

8. A wide range of partners have been involved in the development of the SEND strategy. Consultation, engagement, and co-production has been undertaken with children, families, young people, schools, other education partners, health colleagues and social care colleagues.
9. Our vision in Gateshead is for all children and young people with SEND to thrive, have appropriate provision, feel positive about their next steps and believe in themselves. We put families at the heart of everything we do.
10. A period of consultation was completed from 15th February 2023 to 15th March 2023 for the SEND Strategy. The consultation feedback was very positive. 189 respondents accessed the online survey together with comments received from the Parent Carer Forum, and two emails suggesting minor wording changes. In addition, separate consultation events were held which were attended by 61 young people.
11. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they 'Strongly agree/Tend to agree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree or had no view on the following areas:

	% Strongly Agree	% Tend to Agree	% Tend to Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% No View
The Vision for SEND	69.4	23.5	2.73	1.09	3.28
Priority One	79.72	15.38	2.80	2.10	0
Priority Two	74.13	19.58	4.20	1.40	0.70
Priority Three	80.14	15.60	3.55	0.71	0
Priority Four	81.69	16.20	0.70	1.41	0

The Local Area Inspection for SEND Services in Gateshead (see Appendix 4)

12. Between the 5 May and the 26 May 2023, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly inspected arrangements across education, health and care services to understand how well members of Gateshead's Partnership work together to improve the experiences of children and young people with SEND.
13. The inspection found many positive areas of practice across the local area which included:
 - Leaders are determined to provide high-quality education and support for children and young people with SEND
 - Leaders have invested in Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools (ARMS) provision to meet changing needs
 - Delays for CYPS are mitigated against with the provision family events, support workshops and support from the emotional well-being team.
 - Children and young people in residential settings out of Gateshead have their needs met effectively. They are supported well, and systems are in place to ensure they are safe.
 - The fair-access protocols work well, which results in children and young people attending well and has reduced the risk of permanent exclusion.
 - The parent carer forum actively contributes to strategic developments. They feel confident that their views and concerns are listened to.
 - SENDIASS support parents well, giving impartial advice on EHCP's and tribunals.
 - Children's and young people's views are sought and shared with leaders, facilitated by the involvement worker and youth ambassador.
 - The virtual school team play a crucial role in supporting children and young people with SEND who are in our care. They have provided training across schools and health to understand the impact of trauma on school attendance and well-being.
 - Across the partnership, there is a combined strategy for workforce development. This is responding to the growing number neurodevelopmental and SEMH needs among children and young people.
 - Multi-agency working through early help and CWD teams make a positive difference for children and young people with SEND.

- The dynamic support register is well established, with a strong multi-agency team providing individualised support.
 - Specialised speech and language teams support young people up to the age of 19, with a smooth transition to adult services and specialist providers.
 - Timely EHCP assessments and amended plans within the statutory 20-week process.
14. These findings were reflected in Gateshead's accurate self-assessment.
15. The inspection also identified several areas for focused improvement which led to 5 specific recommendations as well as some additional areas for focus:
- Leaders in health should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for services clearly identify the support that children and young people and their families will receive while waiting. These plans should contain ambitious timescales for improvement and clear monitoring and evaluation procedures.
 - Leaders in health should ensure there is clear oversight of children and young people as they move through the emotional well-being and mental health support systems in the area. Leaders should provide clear and consistent information to children and young people, families and professionals on the pathway.
 - Strategic leaders across education, health and care should ensure that they provide clarity and consistency of expectations on the level of contribution from all agencies to continue to improve the quality of the EHC assessment and review process.
 - Strategic leaders should continue to improve the transitions from child to adult services in health, education and care. They should ensure that the strategy for preparation for adulthood starts from the earliest years, particularly for children with complex needs.
 - Leaders within the SEND service should improve communication between health, education, care and parents and carers to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families. They should further develop the role of the SEND caseworkers to strengthen communication. This should include tailored communication for parents and carers new to the country or who speak English as an additional language.
16. The inspection team also identified the following areas which the partnership must address:
- Provision for children and young people with physical needs with opportunities for academic qualifications
 - Strategic plans across education, health and social care for children born with complex needs
 - Social work assessments to provide a holistic view of children and young people's history and lived experience. This includes ethnicity, language, religion and culture
 - Reduce waiting times for some children who are waiting for support through the short breaks service

- Improve the 18-25 offer in health, so that it is just as supportive as the offer pre-18.
17. This led to an overall inspection outcome which found that Gateshead's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and have asked the partnership to work together to address the following areas for improvement:
18. In response to the inspection findings, within 30 working days of the publication of the inspection report, Gateshead SEND partnership was required to update and publish its SEND Strategic Priority Action Plan so that the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and the CQC integrate with the Partnership's existing plans. This has been completed and from this Priority Action Plan a more detailed Delivery Plan has been developed. The delivery plan has 4 priority areas linked to the SEND Strategy and Areas for improvement from the inspection. The 4 priority areas are:
- *Priority 1: To have a transparent approach to identify children and young people's needs which is understood by parents, carers and professionals, so that the right support is in place at the right time.*
 - *Priority 2. To actively engage with children and young people and their parents and carers, so that their vision of 'Our choice, our voice' is heard and supported during strategic planning.*
 - *Priority 3: For health, social care, and education services to work together to commission the best support for children and young people's needs, and to keep all children and young people safe.*
 - *Priority 4. To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps.*
19. Each priority area has an agreed workstream and identified group members to ensure progress against each area (see Appendix 3 and the summary provided in appendix 1 attached for further details). Each priority is scheduled to be shared quarterly at the SEND Board.
20. The Local Area will have a further inspection of SEND services within three years.

Conclusion

21. Local partners, the DFE and CQC have endorsed the improvement plan and are confident it will support improvements against the key areas identified within the inspection. In addition, the plan is aligned to our vision for all children and young people in Gateshead and we are confident that the plan will:
- Ensure the local area partnership are able to meet the needs of children and young people and their families in Gateshead as issues emerge and intervene early

- Children and young people and their families will be clear of the vision for SEND in Gateshead and feel that they are continually influencing the vision and service improvements
 - Children and young people and their families will be clear on the strengths in relation to practice with children and young people with SEND in Gateshead and will be fully informed on the areas for development.
22. The improvement plan is monitored via the SEND Strategic Board, which is chaired by the Director of Children's services. Each priority area lead updates the board on progress in their area. The Strategic Lead for SEND and Inclusion monitors the progress of the whole plan and is supported by a Project Officer. Local Authority and Health senior leads will meet with the DfE/NHSE to report progress and will update the published plan every six months
23. The local area partnership will be supported in this programme of work by a SEND advisor from the DFE.
24. Progress reports will be provided into Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six-monthly basis with an annual update to Cabinet and Council to provide assurance of progress against the inspection action plan.

Recommendations

25. Cabinet is asked to recommend Council to:
- (i) Endorse the Local Area SEND Strategy as set out in appendix 2 to the report.
 - (ii) Note the areas for development following the Local Area SEND inspection in May 2023;
 - (iii) Note the progress of the SEND improvement programme so far and its impact for children and young people with SEND and their families; and
 - (iv) Endorse the focus and priorities for the programme for 2023-26 to embed and accelerate change, responding to the Local Area inspection for SEND as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To improve SEND services across the Local Area and respond to feedback from families, carers and young people with SEND.
- (ii) To appropriately respond to the Local Area Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection outcome.

CONTACT: Suzanne Dunn

extension: 8606

Policy Context

1. The SEND Strategy and Improvement Programme is aligned with Gateshead's Thrive agenda and Health and Wellbeing Strategy which seeks to reduce inequalities and more specifically to realise the Council's ambition that everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them to succeed in life.

Key Programmes of work linked to the four main priorities of the SEND Strategy

Priority 1: To have a transparent approach to identify children and young people's needs which is understood by parents, carers and professionals, so that the right support is in place at the right time.

1a) The Gateshead Thresholds Document

2. In order to support our overarching ambition of improving the experiences of inclusive practice for children, there is a need to develop an easily understood and consistently embedded approach to the identification of children's special educational needs which is used across the local area by every school; every health and social care professional and which makes sense to parents and carers and to which they have had input in the design. This is a key piece of work which underpins much of the rest of the programme of SEND improvement work. The work supports our vision of intervening early to ensure that children are provided with the right support at the right time and that the EHCP process is not the only route to support for children.
3. A SEND Consultant has been commissioned to lead on the review of the current Gateshead 'graduated approach' to the identification of children's needs and to work with all partners to coproduce a document which will be called the Gateshead SEND Thresholds.
4. The document will lay out the nature of a child's needs and the type of intervention and support which should be offered to that child and through which service. It will offer clarity about the services available to schools where a child has an additional need and where it is appropriate for services to refer for more specialist intervention and support.
5. The document has been developed alongside a wide group of stakeholders including parents and is currently being piloted in round 40 schools to test efficacy. A comprehensive programme of training will be rolled out in the new year to all professionals working with children and young people with SEND and it is intended that this new way of working will go live in September 2024.

1b) Pathway of support for children born with complex needs

6. Colleagues within the Education, Schools and Inclusion and the Data Team are working together to develop a database system which will support the strategic planning for children born into Gateshead with complex needs to ensure that there is sufficiency of provision to meet need into the future.

7. The Strategic Lead for SEND and Inclusion is working with Special School leaders to complete an analysis of the needs of children within their school populations and how these have changed over the last 5 years to support sufficiency planning for the future.

1c) Quality Assurance and Monitoring of SEND Support Provision

8. To ensure the right support is in the right place at the right time, the Quality Assurance and Monitoring strand of the SEND statutory team has been strengthened with additional capacity. This team are going to be central to the monitoring of the Gateshead SEND Thresholds in schools as they complete the monitoring visits of SEND in all of our educational settings. They will also be the point of contact for any family, professional who have concerns in relation to the provision for SEND C&YP in Gateshead. It is imperative that we strengthen the SEND Support monitoring process to ensure that we are identifying need early and supporting in a child's current school to ensure there is no escalation of need. As part of the implementation of the SEND Thresholds, we are trialling a SEND Support panel to support schools in meeting the needs of learners at this earlier stage.

Priority 2. To actively engage with children and young people and their parents and carers, so that their vision of 'Our choice, our voice' is heard and supported during strategic planning.

9. Two key areas for improvement have been identified in this priority area linked to improving the experiences of families experiencing the needs assessment process and the role of the SEND casework team in facilitating relational practice across the partnership and with families.

2a) Review of SEND casework team

10. A complete service review has been completed of the SEND Team. Capacity has been added to reflect the increased demand for EHCP assessments and to ensure a more relational approach can be provided by the team through a more iterative process of advice, support and guidance for families.
11. In addition, the functions of the team have expanded to have not only responsibility for the statutory assessment process but also to ensure appropriate oversight of support to children with SEN support needs - again in support of the vision to ensure every child get gets the right help at the right time in a timely way.

2c) Improve feedback from parents, carers and young people within the EHCP assessment and review process

12. The SEND Service Manager, Designated Clinical Officer and Designated Social Care Officer are working in collaboration to review the processes and procedures in relation to the collation of the views of all professionals involved with a child to inform the needs assessment with a view to improving the overall quality and the experience of families.

Priority 3: For health, social care, and education services to work together to commission the best support for children and young people's needs, and to keep all children and young people safe.

3a) Reduce waiting times for children who need Therapy services

13. A significant amount of work has gone into reducing the waiting times for children across children's therapies since the SEND inspection. Children's Bladder and Bowel and Physiotherapy now have wait times of under 18 weeks for both assessment and treatment which represents a significant improvement for Bladder and Bowel who had waits of up to a year and physiotherapy where a small number of children were waiting for over 18 weeks. This is reviewed regularly by Commissioners and the provider.
14. Speech and Language Therapy waiting times have also reduced for assessment and a detailed piece of work to capture the treatment started time has commenced. At present no children wait longer than 18 weeks for a SALT assessment with times in the special schools being less than this. This is partly due to changes in the way that services are being delivered including the introduction of further group work sessions and integration with the Portage pathway to support early intervention.
15. Occupational therapy wait times remains a concern and the teams have identified work undertaken in Hartlepool and at Newcastle to support a change of model to introduce more group work which is intended to have a positive impact on the waiting list which do remain long.
16. Ambitious targets are in place to continue to drive down these waiting times to support the vision to ensure that all children receive the right help at the right time and access specialist services in a timely way.

3b) Access to Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Services

17. Work has been undertaken to understand the current mental health offer, the challenges families are experiencing in accessing services and areas for improvement. To address the significant increase in need and demand work is being completed to review the current offer and redesign the system with a focus on greater system integration and earlier identification and intervention. Proposals for transforming the offer will be completed by December 2023 which will focus upon building capacity as well as increasing access to services as early as possible.
18. In the meantime, work is being undertaken with existing commissioned services to ensure there is clear criteria and information available for children, young people and their families. Work is also ongoing with CNTW, NECS and the ICB to establish a digital dashboard to clearly show the performance of all commissioned services and provide all partners with an understanding of current wait times and performance.

3c) Commissioning of Alternative Provision

19. Additional leadership capacity within the Education Service has been created to ensure a strategic focus is being given to this area for improvement and will include the creation of a strategy for Alternative Provision in Gateshead to meet the needs of those children who need access to alternatives to mainstream education for a period of time. This process has already started with the review of the current Home and Hospital offer and with the introduction of assessment provisions to support young people at SEND Support in schools. It is intended that a pilot for the assessment provision will be established by September 2024.

3d) Developing the short break offer

20. The Short breaks offer was reviewed in collaboration with all partners and updated in March 2023. Following the review, the SEND Local Offer was updated to ensure parents knew what was available and the eligibility criteria for each short break was clear.
21. Additional short break capacity has been developed to meet increasing need and demand across the Borough.

Priority 4. To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps.

4a) Transitions across key stages within educational settings

22. The implementation of the Gateshead SEND Thresholds will ensure that preparation for adulthood starts at the earliest possible stage in a child's life and will support the experiences of transition for children from primary to secondary school. This will ensure that all children with special educational needs have a clear plan in place which supports planning for each transition for the following areas: employability & education, Independence, Community Participation and Health. All referral forms, support plans proformas and needs assessments will evidence the preparation for adulthood outcomes from September 2024.

4b) Transition planning across health services

23. Work is being completed between health colleagues and Paediatricians at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to look at broadening the age range to ages 12/13 to begin to plan for what young people would need for a smoother transition from children's to adult health services. A template has also been devised to identify any health needs which may cause an issue for a smooth transition and work is being carried out to embed this process within schools so they are aware of support available from health services. Future work is to be progressed for the 0-4 years cohort and supporting the transition between nursery and school.

4c) Transitions within Social Care services

24. Ages and Stages - The refreshed Ages and Stages document is established and in use within the ASC Transitions Team following refocusing work undertaken this year and communicated during the last team development session. The document has been shared with CSC colleagues to embed across the service area and CSC colleagues are looking to roll out training/practice short across the service area for practitioners, ASC Transitions colleagues have agreed to work with CSC colleagues where necessary to support this relaunch.
25. Supported Living Service (SLS) Transitions – This work is building on the successful model already provided in the borough. A new in-house offer for young people with more complex needs who are preparing for adulthood is being developed to support the transition from Children’s services to the Adult Social Care (ASC). The aim of this strengths-based model of support is to enable greater independence as young people are preparing for adulthood with the aim of this offer being available for an initial cohort of three young people with complex needs from Autumn 2024.
26. The council has established a comprehensive transformation project across directorates and with NHS partners to review and develop housing pathways, services and accommodation pipelines to support people with complex needs. The IASCS directorate has committed to designing and establishing a new supported living service for disabled young people transitioning to adulthood with complex needs.

Consultation

27. A wide range of partners have been involved in the development of the SEND strategy. Consultation, engagement, and co-production has been undertaken with children, families, young people, schools, other education partners, health colleagues and social care colleagues. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted on this report.

Alternative Options

28. There are no alternative options.

Implications of Recommended Option

29. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that the SEND Strategy and associated improvement plan will have financial implications in relation to improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs. Implementing the delivery plan to respond to the areas of development from the local area inspection may also have a financial impact as we need to commission new additional resource mainstream settings, assessment provisions and alternative provisions to meet the needs of young people. These costs will be met from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

b) Human Resources Implications – In order to transform SEND services in Gateshead this will have HR implications in relation to the review and restructure of existing services to ensure best value for money and services to families.

c) Property Implications - There would be no property implications to implement the SEND Strategy and associated improvement plan, we would propose to use existing space in Gateshead educational settings to base new settings.

30. Risk Management Implications – Risks to the delivery of the plan are monitored via the multi agency SEND Strategic Board and will be highlighted via regular reports into Families OSC.

31. Equality and Diversity Implications

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- Foster good relations between people from different groups
- The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.
- Maintained schools are public bodies and must comply with the public sector equality duty and set and publish equality objectives.
- A school must demonstrate that it is compliant with the duties of schools as identified in the Equalities Act and that the school positively promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils (e.g. irrespective of gender, race, disability, sexuality).

The main duties under the Equalities Act are:

A school must not:

- Discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil because of their disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief, or sexual orientation;
- Harass or victimise a pupil or prospective pupil. A school must not discriminate against a person in relation to the following activities:
 - Admission to the school;
 - The provision of education to pupils;
 - Access to any benefit, facility or service;
 - Exclusion from school; by subjecting a pupil to any other detriment.

32. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications from this report.
33. **Health Implications** – There are no direct health implications linked to the SEND Strategy and associated improvement plan.
34. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - There are no climate emergency and sustainability implications from this report.
35. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications from this report.
36. **Ward Implications** - The SEND Strategy and associated improvement plan covers all wards in Gateshead.



SEND

Our Priorities 2023-2026



Content



- Foreword
- Where we are now
- Purpose of the strategy
- Our Vision
- Link to Inclusion Strategy
- Our Context
- Our Four Priorities
- Co-Production
- Acronyms



Foreword

Helen Fergusson, DCS

Councillor Gary Haley, portfolio holder for Children and Families

In Gateshead, we believe supporting children with SEND is everyone's business. Through the SEND strategy 2023-2026, we would like to share with you our vision, aspiration and priorities for continuing to build on our support and provision for children and young people and their families.

We are ambitious for our young people with SEND to reach their full potential and we want to make Gateshead a place where children and young people and their parents and carers feel included and can thrive.

Inclusion underpins our core purpose, and we are committed to giving children and young people the best start in life. We want our children and young people to develop their independence and to become confident adults leading productive lives.



Where are we now? Interim SEND Inspection March 2021

What are we doing well:

- Strength of the work delivered during the pandemic
- Disruption minimised for SEND learners during the Pandemic
- Leaders across education, health and care are doing a great job to keep things as normal as possible
- Innovative, creative and hard working workforce across the system
- Strong sense of teamwork pervades in Gateshead
- Young people are listened to and needs are being met
- Early Planning and effective delivery of transitions
- Leaders are striving to recognise and meet needs so children and young people can thrive

What should we work on:

- Joining up plans across services
- Recovery post disruption to therapy provisions
- Delays for neurological assessment pathway
- Virtual appointments for parents/carers in future
- Supporting young adults into employment and training
- Improving inclusion in all mainstream settings
- Mental health support
- Emerging speech language and communications needs post pandemic

Purpose of our SEND strategy

Who is the strategy for?

This strategy is for children and young people aged 0-25 and their families across Gateshead so that they can understand the actions that partners in education, health and care are taking to deliver inclusive services for children with SEND.

This strategy is also for all practitioners working in services across Gateshead, including all education, health and care professionals with 0-25 age provision. It sets out the expectations for working together to achieve our ambitions for children and young people with SEND.

- The strategy considers all legal duties laid out in legislation and identifies our priorities to ensure a cycle of improvement for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND, and their parents and carers, over the next 3 years.
- Children and young people with SEND includes Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support, those undergoing assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those already with an EHCP.
- The Parent Carer Forum and youth voice representation are integral partners throughout the SEND system and specifically at the strategic level
- Our aim is to have a clear consistent approach to identifying and supporting children and young people in line with Gateshead's graduated approach to education, support and provision.

Our Vision

Our vision is for all children and young people with SEND to **thrive**, have appropriate provision, feel positive about their next steps and believe in themselves.

We put families at the heart of everything we do.



Link to Inclusion Strategy

We know that the Inclusion Strategy will play a significant role in continuing to build on the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND and as such this strategy and the Inclusion Strategy have been developed alongside each other. In our Inclusion Strategy we have set out a vision where we promote the development of strong services that:

- Ensure early identification and early intervention are focussing on inclusive practice and early intervention
- Ensures high quality support services and interventions are available at the earliest opportunity to support children, young people alongside longer term system change
- Enables and promotes everyone to work collaboratively with a shared vision and responsibility to support, challenge and hold each other to account to support children and young people in Gateshead.



Our Context



Number of Children and Young People (CYP) in Gateshead Educational Settings (All ages - 2021/22 academic year)

30,432 > **4859** = **16%**
with SEND

11.9% SEN Support (3618 CYP)
4.1% EHCP (1241 CYP)

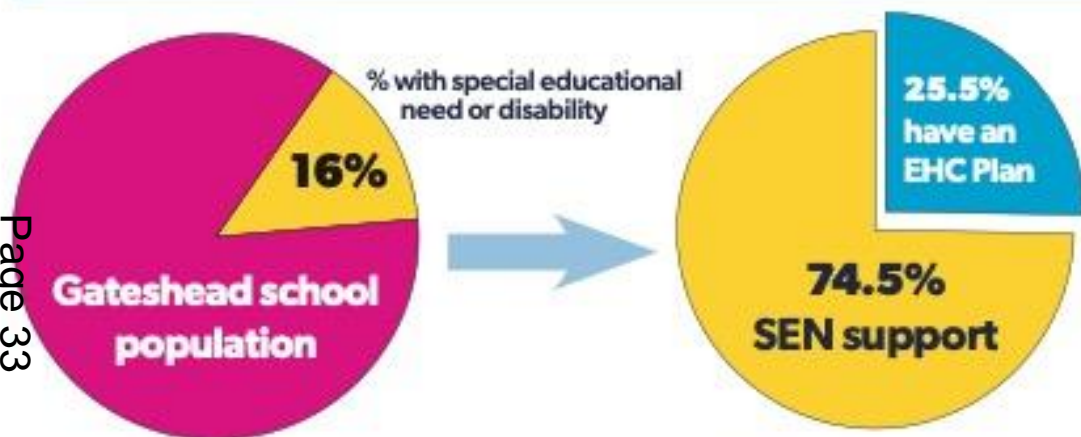
North East 17.6%

13.5% SEN support, 4.1% EHCP

England 16.5%

12.6% SEN Support, 4.0% EHCP

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In 2021/22 academic year, a total of **4859** Gateshead CYP were reported by schools to have a special educational need or disability.

Of these, **25.5%** had an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** and **74.5%** were categorised as 'SEN Support'.

Referrals INCREASED

The number of children referred to the Council's Pre-school Education, Health and Care Panel has **increased** since 2017.

2017-18
179

2021-22
306

Of the 306 referrals made...

237 children were **seen** by the Council's Early Years Assessment and Intervention Team (EYAIT)

286 children were **seen** by the Children's Development Team/Outpatients

6 of these being **overseen** by the **Early Years SENDCO**.

60 As of September 2022, there were **60 children aged 0-4 with an EHCP**. Of these, **33** are in **mainstream**, **3** are in **independent early years settings** and **24** are in **specialist placements**.

Gateshead children and young people with ...

In 2021/22 academic year...

180 New EHCP's issued
32.3 per 10k population (0 to 24)

North East 38
per 10k population (0 to 24)

England 37
per 10k population (0 to 24)

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Timeliness - New EHCP's issued within **20 weeks** (excluding exceptions)

LA, Region & England	2019	2020	2021
Gateshead	96.6	93.9	97.1
North East	69.8	75.9	71.8
Statistical Neighbours	72.3	81.8	75.9
England	60.4	58.0	59.9

... an EHC Plan

(This data also includes independent schools and Emmanuel College)

The number of statutory school-age CYP with an EHC Plan has **INCREASED** from

2017 **927** 2022 **1241**

4.1%
of CYP in Gateshead
have an EHCP

Gateshead is in line with national and regional averages.

Top 5 areas of need

Over the past 3 years, the top five areas of need reported by schools via School Census have been:

- 1 Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)** – **INCREASED** from 852 in 2017 to 1103 in 2022
- 2 Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)** – 945 in 2017 to 839 in 2022
- 3 Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)** – **INCREASED** from 586 in 2017 to 776 in 2022
- 4 Autism Spectrum (ASC Autism)** – **INCREASED** from 379 in 2017 to 744 in 2022
- 5 Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)** – from 463 in 2017 to 369 in 2022 which has significantly decreased since 2019

CYP at SEN Support

The number of school-age CYP requiring **SEN Support** has **slightly increased** from **3,471 in 2017** to **3,618 in 2022**, which equates to 11.9% of all CYP in Gateshead.

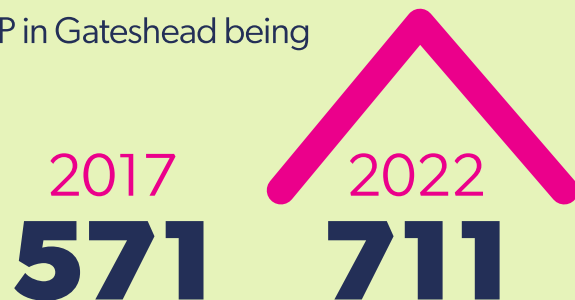
This is **slightly below** the **regional and national figures**.

Special school children and young people

The number of school-age CYP being taught in special schools in Gateshead has risen from 571 in 2017 to 711 in 2022.

This equates to **2.23%** of CYP in Gateshead being taught in special schools.

Gateshead currently has a **higher** proportion of CYP being taught in special schools **compared with national** figures.



North East 2.23%

England 1.61%

Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools (ARMS) provision

ARMS are schools which specialise in a particular area of learning need. Children and young people in ARMS usually have an Education, Health and Care Plan and are generally taught in **smaller classes** with a **higher level of support** than a normal mainstream school but will have **opportunities to mix with children in the mainstream school.**

The **ARMS provisions** have been **INCREASED** this year to accommodate more children with additional needs. This will relieve pressure on the special schools and allow more children to be included in a mainstream provision.

In Gateshead as of January 2022, there were....

248
young adults
aged 16-19
with an EHC Plan

20
young adults
aged 20-25
with an EHC Plan



Our Priorities

Our strategic approach is to **‘Make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives’.**

For children and young people with Special Educational needs this means our four priorities are:

1. To have a transparent approach to identify children and young people’s needs which is understood by parents, carers and professionals, so that the right support is in place at the right time.
2. To actively engage with children and young people and their parents and carers, so that their vision of 'Our choice, our voice' is heard and supported during strategic planning.
3. For health, social care, and education services to work together to commission the best support for children and young people’s needs, and to keep all children and young people safe.
4. To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps.



Priority 1

To have a transparent approach to identify children's needs which is understood by families and professionals:
Right support,
Right Place,
Right time

Key actions are:



- **Develop** an **Inclusion Support Structure** across Gateshead for all stakeholders so that staff with the relevant expertise can be used to ensure more children and young people are able to remain in mainstream provision
- **Review** and **refine our multi agency support to children in schools to improve attendance and reduce exclusion**
- **Build on the Audit and Quality Assurance Process** for EHCPs to ensure a high-quality plan for all children and young people
- Produce a **Gateshead Quality Provision Toolkit (Ranges)** document
- To build on and develop effective **information sharing practices** with all families and professionals
- To **develop workforce development plans** for all partners working with children and young people with SEND to **support our skilled workforce**

When we get this right, it looks like:

For Children and Young People:

- Children and young people will make progress in school because they feel safe and have the right support for them to be able to flourish
- Children and young people are well prepared for adulthood to maximise their life chances

For the system partnership:

- Streamlined referral processes so that children and young people are supported in a timely manner and in the right way
- All children and young people's needs are accurately assessed in a timely and effective way and high-quality support plans are developed
- Inclusive provision with all practitioners seeing themselves as leaders and champions of children and young people with SEND



Priority 2

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To actively engage with children, young people and their families so that their vision of “Our Voice, Our Choice” is heard and supported during strategic planning.

Key actions are:



- To **build on** the **current offer from SENDIASS** so that even more families are aware of what is available in the local area, and embed a co-produced **Young Person’s Hub** within the Local Offer
- To continue to **develop** innovative and inclusive approaches to gathering feedback from all parents/carers and young people which make a difference
- To **build on** and **develop** the **digital inclusion offer** to support **engagement** and **information sharing** with our children and young people
- To continue to **build on** and **evaluate** the **existing strong parenting offer**
- To **build on** and **evaluate** the **Learning Disability Three Year Plan** and **Autism Strategy Plan**
- **Expand the Vision Friendly Schools Award**

When we get this right, it looks like:

For children and young people:

- All children, young people and their parents and carers feel safe and heard without having to repeat their situation and needs
- All children, young people and their parents and carers know what services are available to them; how to access them and can influence service improvement
- All parents and carers feel they are respected, valued and empowered to meet their children's needs with the right support

For the Partnership System:

- Our workforce across education, health and care are committed to working together to deliver coordinated services to children and young people at the right stage of their development
- Services routinely seek children, young people and their parents and carers views to influence improvement as part of our continual cycle



Priority 3

Health, Social Care
and Education
Services work
together to
commission the
best support and
keep all children
and young people
safe

Key actions are:



- To **strengthen early identification and intervention** to support good mental health for children and young people
- To **evaluate, review** and build upon **our therapy offer**
- To continue to develop the **ARMS provision across Gateshead** to meet the needs of children and young people within mainstream settings
- To develop our **offer of alternative provision**
- **Review the Short Breaks offer** to ensure there is wide ranging support in place to meet the diverse needs of children and young people and their parents, carers

When we get this right, it looks like:

For children and young people:

- Children, young people, parents and carers are assured that services are integrated and working together to meet needs
- Children and young people who experience anxiety and mental health issues will be supported so that they can attend school regularly
- Children young people will have timely access to therapy services
- Children and young people will enjoy a range of social activities

For the partnership System:

- Joint Commissioning underpins our work, and the system works collectively to meet families' needs as early as possible
- Equitable, accessible and timely services across the borough, informed by experiences of people using our services
- Effective monitoring of commissioned provision to ensure high quality services and ensuring that provision is good value for money



Priority 4

To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps

Key actions are:



- To **improve attainment and progress at KS4** for children and young people with SEND with a focus on writing skills
- **Robust Transition processes across** education, health and care **are in place for all key stages** to ensure that children and young people are fully prepared and supported
- Build on our **targeted training offer** to support the development of independent living skills for young people with SEND
- Partners **to continue to support internships and apprenticeships** for young people with SEND
- **Transitional workplace training packages** to be developed to ensure children and young people are fully supported

When we get this right, it looks like:

For children and young people:

- Children and young people have a clear pathway to achieving their goals, know who will help them on this journey and have a sense of achievement
- All children and young people with SEND feel included - happy, heard, valued and trusted by those around them
- All children and young people are supported by those who know them best to reduce anxiety, have good mental health, feel confident and achieve their own potential
- All children and young people with SEND are guided onto clear and flexible pathways of support into adulthood

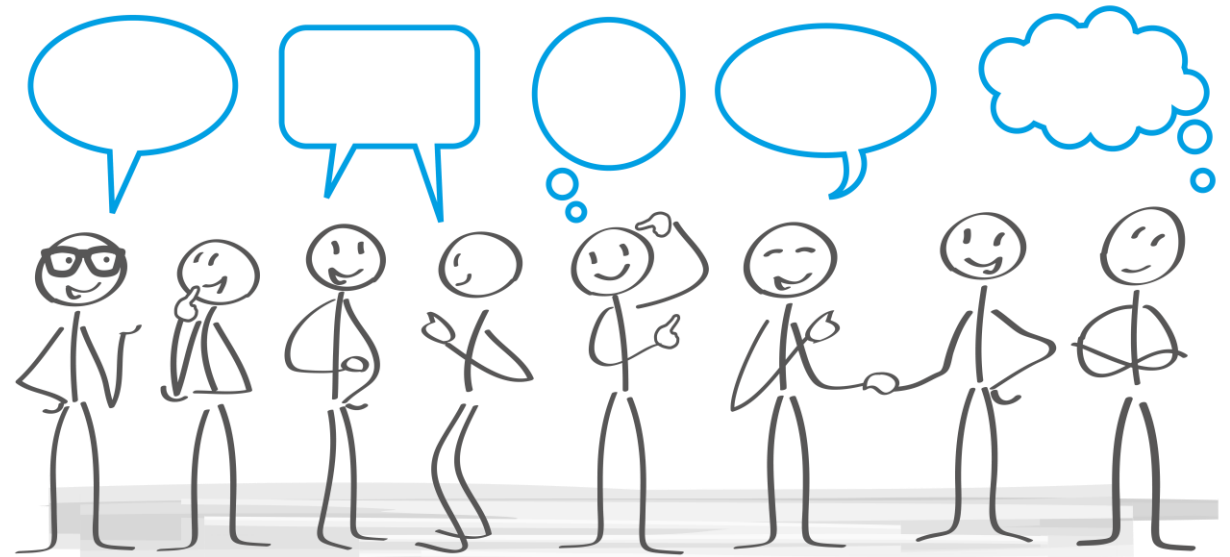
For the partnership system:

- Practitioners are skilled and confident to support children and young people with SEND
- Practitioners in children and adult services will work together to improve young peoples experiences of transition into adulthood



Who have we consulted with?

- Parents and Carers
- Children and Young People
- School Leaders
- Teams across Education
- Teams Across Health
- Teams across Social Care



Acronyms

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ARMS	Additionally Resourced Mainstream School
ASC	Autistic Spectrum
CYP	Children and Young People
DCS	Director of Children's Services
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EYAIT	Early Years Assessment and Intervention Team
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LDD	Learning Disability/Difficulty
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
PCF	Parent Carer Forum
Parent/Parental	This term includes Carers
SALT	Speech and Language

SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDSCO	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Needs
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Needs
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
STAMP	Supporting Treatment and Appropriate Medication in Paediatrics
STOMP	Stopping The Over Medication of Children and Young People

Inspection of Gateshead's arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities



SEND

Gateshead's Response to the Areas for
Development identified by Ofsted and the
Care Quality Commission

July 2023

Introduction

Our vision in Gateshead is for all children and young people with SEND to thrive, have appropriate provision, feel positive about their next steps and believe in themselves. We put families at the heart of everything we do.

Our strategic approach is to 'Make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives'.

For children and young people with Special Educational needs this means our four priorities are:

1. To have a transparent approach to identify children and young people's needs which is understood by parents, carers and professionals, so that the right support is in place at the right time.
2. To actively engage with children and young people and their parents and carers, so that their vision of 'Our choice, our voice' is heard and supported during strategic planning.
3. For health, social care, and education services to work together to commission the best support for children and young people's needs, and to keep all children and young people safe.
4. To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps.

Following a local area inspection of Gateshead's services for young people with SEND in May 2023, the local partnership between Gateshead Council and the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) will be updating its strategy to ensure young people with SEND in Gateshead have equal opportunities to thrive – from accessing educational support and care services to specialist health care.

Ahead of the inspection taking place, the partnership took steps to address concerns shared by parents and carers of young people with SEND, as well as young people accessing SEND support services themselves, with a consultation in February on how to strengthen support for these children and young people. During the Local Area SEND Inspection, inspectors praised the partnership for its "determination to provide high-quality education and support to all children and young people with SEND" and acknowledged the strength of the work done with local parents, carers and young people to continue to improve services. The Gateshead SEND Strategy 2023-2026, written in January 2023, addresses the inspector's recommendations which include reducing wait times for health services and offering clearer guidance on EHC assessments, while continuing to improve transitions from child to adult services.

This document sets out the Gateshead local area collective response to the findings of the recent inspection of arrangements for children and young people with SEND. It outlines the collective commitment of the partnership in Gateshead to our children, young people and their families to provide an honest account of the changes needed in our local area so that we can deliver this vision and address the findings of the recent SEND inspection.

Inspection findings

Between the 5 May and the 26 May 2023, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly inspected arrangements across education, health and care services to understand how well members of Gateshead's Partnership work together to improve the experiences of children and young people with SEND.

A copy of Gateshead's Inspection Letter can be found on the Ofsted website at:

Gateshead Area SEND inspection May 2023

The inspection found that:

1. Leaders are determined to provide high-quality education and support for children and young people with SEND.
2. Leaders have invested in ARMS provision to meet changing needs.
3. Delays to CYPS are mitigated against with the provision of family events, support workshops and support from the emotional well-being team.
4. Children and young people in residential settings out of Gateshead have their needs met effectively. They are supported well, and systems are in place to ensure they are safe.
5. The fair-access protocols work well, which results in children and young people attending well and has reduced the risk of permanent exclusion.
6. The parent carer forum actively contributes to strategic developments. They feel confident that their views and concerns are listened to.
7. SENDIASS support parents well, giving impartial advice on EHCP's and tribunals.
8. Children's and young people's views are sought and shared with leaders, facilitated by the involvement worker and youth ambassador.
9. The virtual school team play a crucial role in supporting children and young people with SEND who are in our care. They have provided training across schools and health to understand the impact of trauma on school attendance and well-being.
10. Across the partnership, there is a combined strategy for workforce development. This is responding to the growing number neurodevelopmental and social emotional mental health needs among children and young people.
11. Multi-agency working through Early Help and Children with Disabilities teams make a positive difference for children and young people with SEND.
12. The dynamic support register is well established, with a strong multi-agency team providing individualised support.
13. Specialised speech and language teams support young people up to the age of 19, with a smooth transition to adult services and specialist providers.
14. Timely EHCP assessments and amended plans within the statutory 20-week process.

These findings were reflected in Gateshead's accurate self-evaluation form.

Inspection Outcome

The inspection team found that Gateshead's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and have asked the partnership to work together to address the following areas for improvement:

1. Leaders in health should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for services clearly identify the support that children and young people and their families will receive while waiting. These plans should contain ambitious timescales for improvement and clear monitoring and evaluation procedures.
2. Leaders in health should ensure there is clear oversight of children and young people as they move through the emotional well-being and mental health support systems in the area. Leaders should provide clear and consistent information to children and young people, families and professionals on the pathway.

3. Strategic leaders across education, health and care should ensure that they provide clarity and consistency of expectations on the level of contribution from all agencies to continue to improve the quality of the EHC assessment and review process.
4. Strategic leaders should continue to improve the transitions from child to adult services in health, education and care. They should ensure that the strategy for preparation for adulthood starts from the earliest years, particularly for children with complex needs.
5. Leaders within the SEND service should improve communication between health, education, care and parents and carers to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families. They should further develop the role of the SEND caseworkers to strengthen communication. This should include tailored communication for parents and carers new to the country or who speak English as an additional language.

The inspection team also identified the following areas which the partnership must address:

1. Provision for children and young people with physical needs with opportunities for academic qualifications.
2. Strategic plans across education, health and social care for children born with complex needs.
3. Social work assessments to provide a holistic view of children and young people's history and lived experience. This includes ethnicity, language, religion and culture.
4. Reduce waiting times for some children who are waiting for support through the short breaks service.
5. Improve the 18-25 offer in health, to ensure a smooth transition to adult health services

Next steps

Within 30 working days of the publication of the inspection report, Gateshead is required to update and publish its SEND Strategic Priority Action Plan so that the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and the CQC integrate with the Partnership's existing delivery plan.

The connectivity between the report findings and how these relate to Gateshead's strategic priorities are set out in the following text and diagram.

The SEND Strategy was developed with four key priority areas. These are as follow;

1. To have a transparent approach to identify children and young people's needs which is understood by parents, carers and professionals, so that the right support is in place at the right time.
2. To actively engage with children and young people and their parents and carers, so that their vision of 'Our choice, our voice' is heard and supported during strategic planning.
3. For health, social care, and education services to work together to commission the best support for children and young people's needs, and to keep all children and young people safe.
4. To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps.

Within each of the key priority areas are the areas for improvement (AFI) which have been identified from the Local Area SEND Inspection. In the report, there were also other areas for improvement (OA) as detailed below. These other areas for improvement also fit into each of the key priority areas.

Colour Key



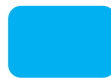
Priority 1



Priority 3



Priority 2



Priority 4

Gateshead SEND Strategic Plan

Strategic Priority
Areas from Strategy

P1

To have a transparent approach to identify children and young people's needs which is understood by parents, carers, and professionals, so that the right support is in place at the right time.

P2

To actively engage with children and young people and their parents and carers, so that their vision of 'Our choice, our voice' is heard and supported during strategic planning.

P3

For health, social care, and education services to work together to commission the best support for children and young people's needs, and to keep all children and young people safe.

P4

To ensure that children and young people are well prepared, supported and feel positive about taking their next steps.

Areas for improvement
from **SEND**

AFI 1

Leaders in health should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for services clearly identify the support that children and young people and their families will receive while waiting. These plans should contain ambitious timescales for improvement and clear monitoring and evaluation procedures.

AFI 4

Strategic leaders across education, health and care should ensure that they provide clarity and consistency of expectations on the level of contribution from all agencies to continue to improve the quality of the EHC assessment and review process.

AFI 3

Leaders within the SEND service should improve communication between health, education, care and parents and carers to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families. They should further develop the role of the SEND caseworkers to strengthen communication. This should include tailored communication for parents and carers new to the country or who speak English as an additional language.

AFI 2

Leaders in health should ensure there is clear oversight of children and young people as they move through the emotional well-being and mental health support systems in the area. Leaders should provide clear and consistent information to children and young people, families, and professionals on the pathway.

AFI 5

Strategic leaders should continue to improve the transitions from child to adult services in health, education, and care. They should ensure that the strategy for preparation for adulthood starts from the earliest years, particularly for children with complex needs.

Other areas for development
identified in report

OA 4

Reduce waiting times for some children who are waiting for support through the short breaks service.

OA 3

Social work assessments to provide a holistic view of children and young people's history and lived experience. This includes ethnicity, language, religion and culture.

OA 2

Strategic plans across education, health and social care for children born with complex needs.

OA 1

Provision for children and young people with physical needs with opportunities for academic qualifications.

OA 5

Improve the 18-25 offer in health to ensure a smooth transition to adult health services.

Accountability arrangements

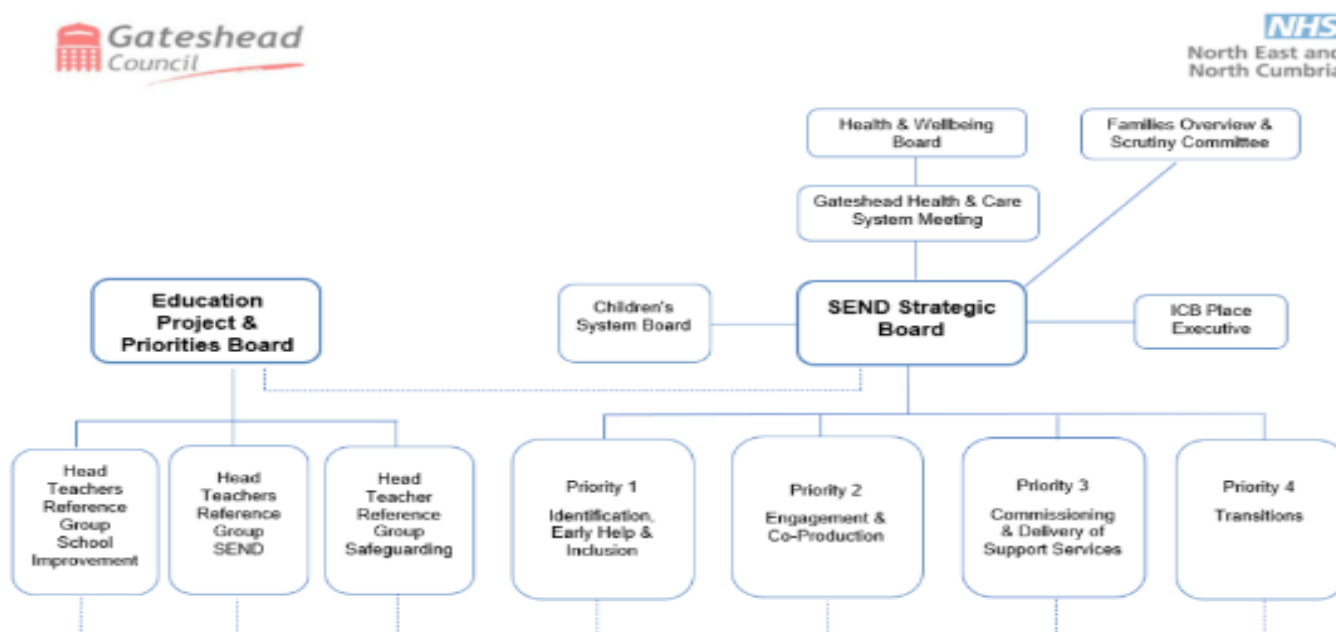
Gateshead’s SEND Partnership Board is responsible for holding partner organisations to account for the delivery of high-quality services for children and young people with SEND and will oversee the delivery of the SEND Strategic Priority Action Plan for Gateshead.

The Board is chaired by the Council’s Strategic Director Children’s Social Care and Lifelong learning and Service Director for Education, Schools and Inclusion in the role of Deputy Chair. The key organisations involved in the SEND Partnership Board are:

- Gateshead Council – Early Help Services, SEND Service, Education Services, Children’s and Adult Social Care, Housing, Public Health
- NHS Northeast and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) -- Director of Nursing, ICB Commissioning Lead, Children’s Portfolio Lead
- Gateshead Health Foundation Trust (GHNFT)
- CNTW NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary Community Sector Organisations (VCS)
- Representatives from Gateshead’s mainstream schools, designated provisions and special schools
- Gateshead Parent and Carers Forum representative
- Gateshead SEND Youth Forum
- SENDIASS

The SEND Strategic Board is ultimately accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Structure for Leadership, Governance and Partnerships



Reporting arrangements

So, there is robust oversight of the SEND Strategic Priority Action Plan and Delivery Plan for progress to be made at the right pace and in line with the desired outcomes, each priority for improvement has been allocated a Priority Owner, a named working group, parent and/or carer representative and Head Teacher representation with the following responsibilities:

The overall oversight of the SEND Strategic Priority Action Plan and Delivery Plan is completed by the Strategic Lead for SEND & Inclusion.

Role	Responsibilities
Strategic Lead for SEND & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic oversight of the priority areas. • Champion the work of partners involved in supporting and implementing the SEND Delivery Plan. • Remove any barriers to the successful implementation of the SEND Delivery Plan at a strategic level across all organisations. • Support partners in their work to resolve any emerging risks or issues which could impact the delivery of the Plan.
Priority Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational oversight of the implementation of the agreed actions contained in the Delivery Plan. • Tracking the performance against the success measures in the Delivery Plan. • Identifying risks or issues which may threaten to derail the implementation of the Delivery Plan and working with the Strategic Sponsor to put in place credible plans to resolve any risks or issues. • Producing highlight reports on the progress made against the Delivery Plan on a quarterly basis to be presented at the SEND Strategic Board.
Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting to the priority owner. • Carry out operations in relation to the priority area actions.
Parent and/or carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the lived experiences of parents/carers. • Challenge the work of the partnership to support positive improvement and development of service for children, young people and their families. • Support clear communication with families about the progress being made by the Partnership. • Support participation, engagement and coproduction regarding the changes required to services.
Head Teacher Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the lived experiences of schools. • Challenge the work of the partnership to support positive improvement and development of service for children, young people and their families. • Support clear communication with school leaders about the progress being made by the Partnership. • Support participation, engagement and coproduction regarding the changes required to services.

They will be supported by the relevant qualified professionals to implement the activities set out in the SEND Strategic Priority Action Plan and Delivery Plan and will meet monthly to review the progress made, escalate any concerns, identify and resolve issues and risks, as well as address any ongoing performance questions.

Each Priority Leader will present updates at the SEND Strategic Board quarterly. This will include KPIs, time scales and any associated risks. The Project Manager will manage and review the risk log in monthly meetings with the Strategic Lead for SEND & Inclusion.

Measuring the difference, we have made

Progress will be monitored on a monthly basis against the Key Performance Indicators identified in the Plan using the following 'PRAGG' rating:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Action completed and embedded | PURPLE |
| • Action significantly delayed | RED |
| • Action in progress | AMBER |
| • Action on track | GREEN |
| • Action not yet started as dependent on or waiting other actions to be completed | GREY |

Softer intelligence will be used to demonstrate the lived experience of children, young people and families. This will include, but is not limited to information collected from:

- Gateshead Parents and Carers Forum
- SENDIASS
- SEND Youth Forum Feedback
- Service user questionnaires
- Case studies
- Complaints and compliments.

Communication plan

Partners including Designated Clinical Officer, Designated Social Care Officer and Service Manager for SEND will work closely with the Gateshead PCF and will meet monthly to oversee regular and transparent communications about the progress made and disseminate these wider to children and young people with SEND and their families.

The Strategic SEND Action Plan will be updated annually and will be uploaded to the Gateshead Local Offer. [Gateshead Local Offer SEND 0 to 25 Years - Gateshead Local Offer SEND 0 to 25 years](#)

General queries about the content of this document can sent to SENTeam@Gateshead.gov.uk

Issue/Recommendation		Key Actions Required	Lead(s)	Timescale	When will we know we have made a difference
AFI 1 (Priority Area 1) Leaders in health should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for services clearly identify the support that children and young people and their families will receive while waiting. These plans should contain ambitious timescales for improvement and clear monitoring and evaluation procedures.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and transform services to increase capacity and reduce waiting times for therapy services. 	Lynn Wilson – Director of Place, ICB	September 2025 (Within wider NENC ICB transformation programme)	A review of services will have been completed and transformational ways of working implemented to improve the experience for our children and young people. There will be increased capacity for needs assessments and multi-agency approach to prioritisation of those with greatest need. Children and young people will access appropriate support more quickly and before needs escalate.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and transform Emotional Wellbeing Mental Health service to increase capacity and reduce waiting times. 		September 2025 (Within wider NENC ICB transformation programme)	A review of services will have been completed and transformational ways of working implemented to improve the experience for our children and young people. There will be increased capacity for needs assessments and multi-agency approach to prioritisation of those with greatest need. Children and young people will access appropriate support more quickly and before needs escalate.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure alignment with NENC ICB wide work on transforming CYP mental health and learning disability transformation programme. 		September 2025 (Within wider NENC ICB transformation programme)	Reduced variation across the NENC ICS and more timely access to therapeutic services, measured across clinical pathways.
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced waiting times with trajectories identifying key milestones for access to support and services. 		September 2025	Measurable reductions in waiting list size and waiting times. Families report improvement in efficiency and quality of assessments and review process.
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICB review of under 5 neurodevelopmental waiting times 		September 2025	Measurable reductions in waiting list size and waiting times. Families report improvement in efficiency and quality of assessments and review process.
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive, clinically led service specification and data set for therapy services. 		September 2024	Service specifications and pathways will be in place. Improved provision of data for the effective local monitoring of metrics.
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data flows and performance reporting for therapies and mental health waiting times to improve the experience of children and young people. 		March 2024	Data flows will have been strengthened to ensure all appropriate partners share information and inform the SEND data dashboard to improve the experience of children and young people. Agreed reporting timeframe in place between LA and Health.

AFI 2 (Priority Area 3) Leaders in health should ensure there is clear oversight of children and young people as they move through the emotional well-being and mental health support systems in the area. Leaders should provide clear and consistent information to children and young people, families and professionals on the pathway.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a clarity of offer for children and young people while awaiting assessment/treatment and for pre/post diagnostic support. Improve the visibility on key performance metrics including benchmarking data which provides assurance and informs commissioning priorities 	Lynn Wilson – Director of Place, ICB	March 2024	Clear communication of services shared across the partnership with children, young people and their parent carers. Clear oversight of where Children and Young people are in the system with clear pathways and reporting in order to ensure timely access to services and support
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement clear communication processes about the service provision for professionals and children, young people and families, Ensure information is available via a range of media and utilise existing capacity to effectively share information with young people and families. 		December 2023	Parents/Carers, young people and professionals will report that they have a clear understanding of the pathways to support and the service offer which is easy to access.
AFI 3 (Priority Area 2) Leaders within the SEND service should improve communication between health, education, care and parents and carers to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families. They should further develop the role of the SEND support workers to strengthen communication. This should include tailored communication for parents and carers new to the country or who speak English as an additional language.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the SEND Statutory Services Team to develop a more responsive service to ensure it meets the needs of children, young people and families and meets the range of statutory duties. 	Suzanne Dunn, Service Director Education, Schools and Inclusion – Gateshead Council	July 24	Full-service review of the statutory SEND services team completed to refine the procedures in place for communication throughout the needs assessment. Families will report a positive experience throughout the needs assessment process.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the clarity of communication about the local offer and pathways to access services and support. 		December 23	Gateshead will have an embedded SEND communication strategy meaning; that all partners will have a secure understanding of their responsibilities in relation to communicating with children, young people and their families and when communicating and sharing information with other partners. Parents and carers will report that they have a full understanding of where to find information and to the pathways and services open to their child in the local area.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement the lines of communication and information sharing pathways to parents and young people and all partners in education, health and social care, in relation to EHCP and SEND Support documentation and reviews. 		February 25	Parents and carers will report that when liaising with health, education or social care that their needs have been heard and they have been fully informed in relation to processes/assessments regarding their child/young person. Children, young people and their families will tell us that they have felt fully informed throughout their needs assessment.

					<p>Parents and carers new to the country or with English as an additional language will report their needs have been met at every point of the needs assessment process.</p> <p>SEND assessment and review processes will have been strengthened to ensure all appropriate partners involved with a child or young person are included in the assessment and review of EHCP and SEN Support plans and are in receipt of a copy.</p> <p>Parents and carers will report that the team around their child are fully informed and involved in relation to all aspects of their special educational needs and that these are considered when decisions are being made.</p>
<p>AFI 4 (Priority Area 1)</p> <p>Strategic leaders across education, health and care should ensure that they provide clarity and consistency of expectations on the level of contribution from all agencies to continue to improve the quality of the EHC assessment and review process.</p> <p>Page 58</p>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clarity to all partners regarding the expectations of high quality contributions to EHC plans and develop a workforce training offer to support front line practitioners. <p>Develop a robust multi agency audit programme to provide assurance that the quality of plans are improving.</p>	<p>Laura Smith, Strategic Lead for SEND and Inclusion – Gateshead Council</p>	December 24	<p>Children and young people with education, health and care plans will have clear and consistent contributions from all agencies involved in their plan.</p> <p>Multi Agency audits will confirm that education, health and care plans are consistently of a good quality.</p> <p>Children, young people and their families will tell us that their plans reflect their views, care and aspirations for the future.</p>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools to embed the established "engagement of health professionals flow chart" in the EHCP review process. 		September 24	<p>Education staff/schools will have adopted the Engagement of Health professionals flow chart in the EHCP review process.</p> <p>All health professionals involved with the child/young person will be invited to contribute during initial assessment and all additional review meetings</p> <p>Families will report that during their child/young person review that they have had information from all health professionals involved.</p>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the workforce understanding of the assessments of the needs of children and young people with SEN. 		July 24	<p>Education, health and social care colleagues will have a shared understanding of the four areas of special educational need and the meaning of EHCP and SEND Support.</p> <p>Children, young people, and their families will receive a consistent message regarding special educational needs from all professionals in education, health and social care.</p>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve single and multi-agency quality assurance processes and audits to drive continuous improvement. 		September 24	<p>Gateshead will have an embedded quality assurance process for SEND, both single and multi-agency, across education, health and social care whereby outcomes drive continuous improvement.</p> <p>Children, young people and their families will know this has been achieved as they will be receiving a consistent service offer from education, health and social care in relation to meeting the special educational needs of their child/young person.</p>

AFI 5 (Priority Area 4) Strategic leaders should continue to improve the transitions from child to adult services in health, education and care. They should ensure that the strategy for preparation for adulthood starts from the earliest years, particularly for children with complex needs.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement a new graduated approach to identify and assess the needs of children and young people in relation to the four areas of special educational need. Preparation for adulthood targets will be set at the earliest possible stage for each young person. 	Laura Smith, Strategic Lead for SEND and Inclusion – Gateshead Council	September 24	<p>The Gateshead SEND Thresholds will have been published. All partners will have a full understanding of the SEND Thresholds and what this means for children and young people at points of transition in their lives. Children and Young people will have SMART outcomes in their EHCP and SEND Support plans relating to preparation for adulthood.</p> <p>Children, young people, and their families will report that their aspirations are heard and that they have targets relating to preparation for adulthood which support achieving their aspirations.</p>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership review, adaptation and embedding of the Ages and Stages guidance to improve the experiences of transition to adulthood for young people with SEND. 		April 2024	<p>Children, young people and their families will report that their transition needs have been planned for in advance of changes and their children have been prepared and supported for their next steps.</p>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Health Transitions multi-disciplinary process between secondary care and primary care 14 – 25 		December 2024	<p>Pilot completed and co-produced pathways and processes for multi-disciplinary teams developed and in place between primary care and secondary care.</p> <p>Audits will provide assurance of an effective health transitions pathway.</p> <p>Young people and their families will report positively in relation to their transition plans and experience into adult health services.</p>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop implement and share EHC plans with all relevant professionals in education, health and social care. 		December 23	<p>SEND assessment and review processes will have been strengthened to ensure all appropriate partners involved with a child or young person are included in the assessment and review of EHCP and SEN Support plans.</p> <p>Children, young people, and their families will know this has been achieved as they will have full representation of all professionals involved in their child's education and care in attendance or providing advice for the needs assessment and the SEN/EHCP review.</p>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Complex Needs Housing Pathway with associated commissioning and development plan. 		December 24	<p>Housing solutions are available in a planned and timely manner for all young people with complex needs within the borough.</p> <p>Young people with complex needs and their families will know that this has been achieved as they will have experienced a planned housing solution pathway in a timely manner to them being able to live independently.</p>
OA 1(Priority Area 3) Provision for children and young people with physical needs with opportunities for academic qualifications.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement a new graduated approach to identify and assess the needs of children and young people in relation to the four areas of special educational need. 	Laura Smith, Strategic Lead for SEND and Inclusion – Gateshead Council	September 24	<p>The Gateshead SEND Thresholds will have been published and all partners will have a clear understanding of how the needs of children and young people should be met within mainstream settings. The preparation for adulthood will inform decisions made during reviews for transitions.</p> <p>Children, young people, and their families will report that their aspirations are heard and that they have targets relating to preparation for adulthood which support achieving their aspirations.</p>

	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current ARMs provision available in Gateshead and using data identify the needs moving forward, particularly for key stage 3/4. 		December 24	<p>Gateshead will have an enhanced ARMs offer for young people transitioning into the secondary phase.</p> <p>Young people and their families will know this has been achieved as they will have a wider range of options for their secondary school pathways.</p>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current special schools offer and work with leaders to redefine the designations and outreach offer of each setting. 		September 24	<p>Gateshead Special Schools will have redefined designations in response to the changing needs of the population. Special Schools will have a redefined outreach offer to support mainstream settings in meeting the needs of more complex children and young people.</p> <p>Children, young people, and their families will know this has been achieved as they will have a deeper understanding of their child's special school and what they can offer. Parents of children and young people in mainstream school will have an understanding of the outreach offer from special schools and how this can benefit their child or young person.</p>
<p>OA 2 (Priority Area 2) Strategic plans across education, health and social care for children born with complex needs.</p> <p>Page 60</p>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a multi-agency system for the strategic planning and tracking for education, health and care needs for children born with complex needs. 	<p>Laura Smith, Strategic Lead for SEND and Inclusion – Gateshead Council</p>	December 23	<p>A multi-agency system will be effectively used by all partners in education, health and social care to plan provision for the needs of children and young people born or moving into Gateshead.</p> <p>Gathering and evaluation of data to identify any children with complex needs will inform future provision.</p> <p>Families will report a positive planned experience in relation to preparing their children for education, health and care provision and will understand the support being provided to them.</p>
<p>OA 3 (Priority Area 2) Social work assessments to provide a holistic view of children and young people's history and lived experience. This includes ethnicity, language, religion and culture.</p>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement an assessment, chronology and genogram training programme to improve the quality of all assessments in relation to children's lived experiences, ethnicity, language, religion and culture 	<p>Andrea Houlahan, Deputy Director CSC – Gateshead Council</p>	April 2024	<p>Children and family assessment will incorporate a holistic view and understanding of children's needs and evidence lived experiences which informs care planning.</p> <p>Audits of the quality of assessment practice will confirm that these are issues are routinely addressed within social work assessments.</p> <p>Children, young people, and their families will tell us that their assessments reflect their lived experiences and holistic needs.</p>
<p>OA 4 (Priority Area 1) Reduce waiting times for some children who are waiting for support through the short breaks service.</p>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement additional short break provisions to meet the needs of children and families. 	<p>Andrea Houlahan, Deputy Director CSC – Gateshead Council</p>	December 2023	<p>Children and young people will have their short break needs identified and there will be sufficient resources in Gateshead to meet the demands for all children in need of short break care without lengthy waits for support.</p>

	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open additional Saturday clubs to meet the needs of children and families with SEND needs. 		October 2023	More children, young people and their families will tell us that their short break care needs are being met.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current arrangements for Direct Payments and Personal Assistants and continue to increase access for families with SEND and SEN support needs. 		December 2023	Children and families will have timely access to direct payments and personal assistant in accordance with their plans and children and families' needs will be met.

Appendix 1

Priority Areas – updates to SEND Board

	Strategic Action Plan and Delivery Plan	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
September 23	X				
October 23		X		X	
November 23			X		
December 23					X
January 24		X		X	
February 24			X		
March 24					X
April 24		X		X	
May 24			X		
June 24					X
July 24		X		X	
August 24			X		X

Area SEND inspection of Gateshead Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 22 to 26 May 2023

Date of previous inspection: 6 to 10 February 2017

Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately 3 years.

Ofsted and CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Information about the local area partnership

Since the previous inspection in 2017, there have been several changes to the senior leadership of Gateshead's SEND service. These include the appointment of a new director of children's services, a new director of adult services and commissioning, a new director of education, a new deputy strategic director for children's social care and a new strategic lead for SEND and inclusion.

In 2022, the commissioning of health services across England changed. On 1 July 2022, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board became responsible for the commissioning of health services in Gateshead. This change included the appointment of a new director of nursing, a new director of place and a new executive chief nurse with lead responsibility for SEND.

Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council commissions alternative provision for secondary-age young people through a single pupil referral unit (PRU). In addition, children and young people benefit from assessment places in additionally resourced mainstream settings (ARMS). For those children and young people who need residential provision, the council commissions a small number of out-of-area placements.

What is it like to be a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in this area?

The 0 to 4 health visiting service implements the Healthy Child Programme well in Gateshead. This results in robust assessments and subsequent referrals at appropriate times. The SEND nursing team within the 0 to 19 service works to mitigate delays in services such as occupational therapy and the bladder and bowel service. Paediatricians in the 0 to 4 service work innovatively to see children with complex needs. They work with children and young people in clinics, at home or in school. This reassures parents and carers and reduces the risk of infection and transport issues.

Too many children and young people with SEND wait too long to access some health services, including mental health pathways, speech and language therapy, neurodevelopmental pathways and occupational therapy. In some instances, children who have been waiting on one pathway have to wait again if professionals transfer them to another service. This means that children and young people and their families experience further frustration and delay.

Children and young people with SEND have access to accurate school-based assessments. The high incidence needs team and low incidence needs team provide specialist support to professionals, parents and carers and children and young people. Most children and young people and their families speak positively about the support that they receive. They welcome the provision provided in ARMS and specialist settings. However, there are a growing number of parents and carers who opt to electively home-educate (EHE) their children. Some parents and carers feel that their child's needs cannot be met in their current school placements. Through the fair access panel (FAP), leaders provide effective support and guidance to these families including advice on alternative placements. Leaders monitor the number of EHE children and young people regularly and respond to any emerging trends.

Children and young people's access to the educational psychology team is inconsistent. Primary headteachers jointly commission an educational psychologist through the FAP. This means that primary-aged children who arrive in Gateshead with significant gaps in their educational history access prompt assessments. However, many other children and young people, including those in the PRU, wait too long to be assessed. Consequently, some of these children and young people do not receive specialist support as quickly as they need.

Young people at risk of, or who have been, permanently excluded access effective support and guidance. The virtual school and educational psychology team provide specialist training to staff who work with these young people. This helps to ensure that young people receive the support that they need to do well.

Young people with SEND who move into post-16 provision are supported well by their social care transition workers and the provider's specialist careers and guidance team for

SEND. Professionals encourage young people to share their views and aspirations in education, health and care plan (EHC plan) reviews. Young people are positive about the travel training available to them. They use this to access a range of educational and social opportunities independently.

Young people who are due to transition to adult social care receive their finalised continuing care plans too late. Despite effective systems for early identification and assessment of needs, the delayed finalisation of the plans means that young people and their families have little opportunity for review and consultation. Leaders have recognised this and have amended the 'Ages and Stages' document to ensure this process begins at an earlier stage.

The specialist knowledge of the Early Help team and Children with Disabilities (CWD) team means that for most children and young people, social workers complete assessments appropriately and at the right level. Children and young people benefit from established multi-agency partnership working. Social workers provide clear plans that support most families and contribute to the EHC plan assessment process.

What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Leaders across Gateshead have a determination to provide high-quality education and support to all children and young people with SEND. Leaders have invested in the continued development of the ARMS to ensure that they best meet the changing profile of needs. Post-16 young people with SEND, including those not in education, employment or training, receive a comprehensive package of support and guidance.
- Leaders mitigate the delays that some children and young people with SEND face when accessing the Children and Young People Service (CYPS). This includes the provision of family events to learn about strategies to improve sleep and occupational therapy support workshops. The offer from 'getting help' services, such as the emotional well-being team, remains in place while children and young people are on the CYPS waiting list.
- Leaders ensure that children and young people who live in residential settings out of area are in placements that meet their needs effectively. Social workers visit these children and young people regularly and know them well. The high needs panel and commissioning panel oversee each placement to help to ensure that they are suitable and safe.
- Leaders on the FAP listen to the views of children and young people and their families and match placements to their needs. The FAP team works closely with a range of professionals to ensure that children and young people attend well and have a reduced risk of permanent exclusion.
- The parent carer forum actively contributes to the strategic developments for children and young people with SEND. Representatives of the forum are confident that leaders listen to their views and concerns. Leaders commission Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services support to ensure that parents and carers have effective impartial advice on issues

such as EHC plan applications and SEND tribunals.

- The SEND involvement worker and SEND youth ambassador ensure that they share the views of children and young people with SEND with strategic leaders across the partnership. They work closely with the Gateshead youth forum to encourage children and young people with SEND to access opportunities in their communities. Through the inclusion of animation and recordings, the SEND involvement worker and youth ambassador have increased the accessibility of the local offer.
- Leaders of the virtual school provide effective support for children and young people with SEND in care. The virtual school team provide useful training for key stakeholders in health and education to improve their understanding of the impact of trauma on school attendance and well-being. This is helping to strengthen provision for children and young people.
- Leaders across the partnership have a combined strategy for workforce development. This helps to ensure that the workforce can respond to the growing level of children and young people with neurodevelopmental and social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- Coordinated multi-agency working for children and young people supported through the early help and CWD teams makes a positive difference to children and young people and their families. This includes the provision of parent information sessions on autism spectrum disorder and individualised sex and relationships education.
- The dynamic support register is well established for children with learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. A multi-agency team provides individualised support, such as access to appropriate housing and respite care, to meet the needs of these children and young people and their families.
- The specialist speech and language therapy team support young people until their 19th birthday. The team works well to ensure that any young people who require ongoing support receive an appropriate transition to adult services or specialist providers.
- Leaders ensure that the administration of EHC plan assessments is timely. The proportion of EHC plan assessments completed within the statutory 20-week target is well above national figures. Amended plans are typically published in a timely fashion. However, the quality of these plans is variable.

What does the area partnership need to do better?

- Parents and carers express concerns that there is a lack of specialist secondary school provision for children and young people with physical needs that also provides opportunities to obtain academic qualifications and accreditations. This limits the post-16 opportunities for some children and young people with SEND.
- Leaders across the partnership do not plan strategically well for the future education, health and care needs of children born with complex needs. As a

result, these children sometimes do not receive the specialist provision they require soon enough.

- In addition, some parents and carers find communication with the SEND team challenging. They do not feel their views are listened to and understood, which creates unnecessary strain. Some parents and carers struggle to secure EHC plan assessments which can delay admission to specialist settings.
- Contributions to EHC plans from different partners are variable. Health representatives struggle to attend meetings due to the pressures of workload. Where children and young people have social care involvement, contributions from social workers are often limited and do not provide enough detail to be helpful. Furthermore, the authorised officer delays some applications for EHC needs assessments without prior educational psychology involvement. This hinders the identification and assessment of children and young people's needs.
- Some social work assessments of children in need with SEND do not provide a holistic view of children and young people's history and lived experience. This includes a lack of consideration of their ethnicity, language, religion and culture. This means that some parents and carers struggle to engage with and understand the support being provided.
- A small number of children and young people with SEND who are eligible for support through the short breaks service experience long waiting times. This leaves some children and young people with SEND with limited opportunities for social interaction and development and contributes to pressure on families. Leaders have increased the capacity of the service and are increasing access to personal assistant support to help mitigate these delays.
- The 18 to 25 offer in health is at times inconsistent. Most young people are transferred to adult services around their 18th birthday; however, young people do not receive the same level of support provided by children's services. Some young people with additional needs are unable to access adult services easily.
- Too many children and young people wait longer than they should for specialist services such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and neurodevelopmental assessments. Leaders have limited oversight of the significant waits that children and young people experience. This has a negative impact on the progress that children and young people make and on the identification of appropriate provision to meet their needs. Leaders have seen success in improving the waiting times for the 0 to 4 assessment pathway. They are building on this success to improve in other areas. However, leaders have not identified sufficient support for families while they wait for other services.
- Parents, carers and professionals across the partnership do not clearly understand the Gateshead mental health support offer. Furthermore, leaders lack secure oversight of children and young people as they move through the service. Consequently, leaders cannot evaluate fully the impact these services have on children and young people with SEND.

Areas for improvement

Leaders in health should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for services clearly identify the support that children and young people and their families will receive while waiting. These plans should contain ambitious timescales for improvement and clear monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Leaders in health should ensure there is clear oversight of children and young people as they move through the emotional well-being and mental health support systems in the area. Leaders should provide clear and consistent information to children and young people, families and professionals on the pathway.

Strategic leaders across education, health and care should ensure that they provide clarity and consistency of expectations on the level of contribution from all agencies to continue to improve the quality of the EHC assessment and review process.

Strategic leaders should continue to improve the transitions from child to adult services in health, education and care. They should ensure that the strategy for preparation for adulthood starts from the earliest years, particularly for children with complex needs.

Leaders within the SEND service should improve communication between health, education, care and parents and carers to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families. They should further develop the role of the SEND caseworkers to strengthen communication. This should include tailored communication for parents and carers new to the country or who speak English as an additional language.

■

Local area partnership details

Local authority	Integrated care board
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	NHS North East and North Cumbria
Helen Fergusson Director of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning	Sam Allen CEO NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
www.gateshead.gov.uk	Northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk
Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH	Riverside House, Goldcrest Way, Newburn Riverside (Business Park), Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 8NY

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including: two Ofsted Inspectors from education and social care; a lead Children's Services Inspector from Care Quality Commission (CQC); and another Children's Services Inspector from CQC.

Inspection team

Ofsted

Alex Thorp HMI, Ofsted lead inspector
Paula Thomson-Jones, Ofsted Inspector
Patricia Head, Ofsted Inspector

Care Quality Commission

Claire Mason, CQC Lead Inspector
Louise Holland, CQC Inspector

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COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

Council Services – Restructure

Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is to seek Council endorsement of the proposed revisions to the Council's senior management structure which will reflect a more effective way of working across Council services to deliver the Corporate Plan 2023-28.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- i. Approve the organisation structure and associated change to enable the proposal as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report for implementation from 25th January 2024.

For the following reason:

- ii. To enable continued improvement in the co-ordination of Council functions, the organisation of its employees, and to enable Council services to focus on delivery of the Thrive agenda and the Council Plan in a more efficient and effective way.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Council Structure Group/ServiceReview

REPORT OF: Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet agreement to proposed revisions to the Council's senior management structure which will reflect a more effective way of working across Council services to deliver the Corporate Plan 2023-28, and to recommend it for approval to full Council.

Background

2. It is important in any organisation to ensure that its senior management and services structure are kept under review and redesigned as necessary to meet the needs of the organisation. This is increasingly important in local government to ensure that the services we deliver accurately reflect the changing operating context, and the priorities that drive the organisation. This is essential if we want to respond effectively to national and local policy and most importantly to the changing needs of the people of Gateshead.
3. The Council has recently agreed a new Corporate Plan 2023-28. The Corporate Plan focuses on 'The Strength of Gateshead is the people of Gateshead' and outlines policy objectives to deliver Thrive. The Council has made it clear that there needs to be a renewed focus on housing growth and securing investment in the Gateshead economy, together with a heightened need to address inequalities. These proposals reflect that objective.
4. The Council has approved its support for the creation of the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority and the Devolution Deal. This offers significant opportunity for new strategy and long-term funding that will allow us to invest in public transport, economic growth support business, improve skills and living standards while tackling the climate emergency. These proposals support that objective.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that the Council's functions are restructured in and across the following service groups:
 - Office of the Chief Executive
 - Economy, Innovation and Growth
 - Resources and Digital
6. Whilst these proposals set out a standard organisational structure for the

Council, it is critical that the culture of how we work reinforces the commitment for functions to work together to facilitate outcomes, rather than the structure of the Council influencing how services are delivered.

7. Appendix 1 (para 7) provides further detail on the current and proposed structures.

Recommendations

8. That Cabinet recommends to Council to approve the organisation structure and associated change to enable the proposal as detailed in Appendix1 to this report for implementation from 25th January 2024.

For the following reason

To enable continued improvement in the co-ordination of Council functions, the organisation of its employees, and to enable Council services to focus on delivery of the Thrive agenda and the Council Plan in a more efficient and effective way.

CONTACT: Michelle Brown

extension: 2101

Policy Context

1. The revised staffing and organisational structure and alignment of services resulting from these proposals will support the delivery of the Council's Thrive agenda and the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2028 and the new North East Combined Mayoral Authority and the Devolution Deal.

Background

2. It is important in any organisation to ensure that its structures are kept under review. This is increasingly important in local government to ensure that the services we deliver accurately reflect the changing operating context, and the priorities that drive the organisation. This is essential if we want to respond effectively to national and local policy and most importantly to the changing needs of the people of Gateshead.
3. The Council has recently agreed a new Corporate Plan 2023-28. The Corporate Plan focuses on 'The Strength of Gateshead is the people of Gateshead' and outlines policy objectives to deliver Thrive.
4. The Council Plan is supported by the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Workforce Development Strategy. In particular one of the Corporate Plan key objectives is to invest in the economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth. These proposals support that objective.
5. The Council has approved its support in the creation of the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority and the Devolution Deal. This offers significant opportunity for new strategy and long term funding that will allow us to invest in public transport, economic growth, support business, improve skills and living standards while tackling the climate emergency. These proposals support this objective.
6. The Thrive agenda serves as our main driver, with the five pledges focussing our organisational efforts:
 - a. Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do
 - b. Tackling inequality so people have a fair chance
 - c. Supporting our communities to support themselves and each other

- d. Investing in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
 - e. Working together and fight for a better future for Gateshead
7. The intention of this restructure is to align resources and provide capacity to address the priorities identified above (para 3-5) and enable more streamlined and cross-cutting working which is outcome focussed, accountable and transparent.

Main Changes

8. The main changes are **below and in bold**:

Economy, Innovation and Growth Group

An Economic Development and Regeneration Service is established to provide greater focus on the economic growth priorities and devolution to include the functions of:

- Economic Policy, Partnerships and Delivery (**move within Economy, Innovation and Growth group from Business Employment and Skills to Economic Development and Regeneration**)
- Strategic Funding and Programmes (**move within Economy, Innovation and Growth group from Energy, Major Projects and Development to Economic Development and Regeneration**)
- Regeneration and Major Projects (**move within Economy, Innovation and Growth group from Energy, Major Projects and Development to Economic Development and Regeneration**)
- Strategic Culture and Partnerships (**move Strategic Culture from Director of Public Health to Economy, Innovation and Growth Economic Development and Regeneration**)
- Strategic Events (**move Strategic Events from Commercialisation and Improvement Resources and Digital to Economic Development and Regeneration, Economy, Innovation and Growth**).

Office of the Chief Executive Group

Office of the Chief Executive Group to include the functions of:

- Corporate Performance Management and Improvement (**move from Commercialisation and Improvement, Resources and Digital to Office of the Chief Executive**)
- Corporate Project Management (**move from Commercialisation and Improvement Resources and Digital to Office of the Chief Executive**)
- Corporate Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (**move from Commercialisation and Improvement Resources and Digital to Office of the Chief Executive**).

Resources and Digital Group

Resources and Digital Group to include the functions of:

- Internal Audit, Risk and Insurance (**move within Resources and Digital Group from Commercialisation and Improvement to Financial Management**))
- Services for Schools (**move within Resources and Digital Group from Commercialisation and Improvement to Financial Management**)
- Catering Services (**move within Resources and Digital Group from Commercialisation and Improvement to Financial Management**). Note: the Interim arrangements of this service being currently sat within Resources and Digital

having moved across from Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities to remain in place)

- **Deletion of Service Director Commercialisation and Improvement post**

Implementation

9. It is proposed that these changes are implemented on 25 January 2024.

Consultation

10. The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members for Economy, EnvironCulture, Sport and Leisure and Communities and Volunteering have been consulted on this proposal. The outcome of these meetings has been very positive and supportive of the proposals as put forward.
11. We will consult with affected employees on the proposals.

Alternative Options

12. The proposals put forward are deemed as the optimum response to the demands placed on the Council, as set out above. There is currently no specific alternative structure, subject to consultation and it is therefore recommended for consideration alongside the proposals.
13. While one alternative option could be to make no change to the current structure of the Council, this would not make the positive contribution toward achieving the aims as set out above.

Implications of Recommended Option

14. **Resources:**

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no direct financial implications of the proposals set out in this report and that the proposal will be implemented within the existing budget.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – The human resource implications are:
 - There are no proposed redundancies as a consequence of the proposed staffing and structure changes.
 - Consultation will be required with the affected teams and individuals regarding the proposed changes where the proposal means that individuals and/or team will move within Group Services and/or across Group Services, to ensure that everyone understands what is being proposed, why the changes are being proposed and to have assurance that the employees are afforded the opportunity to outline any concerns and questions they may have or alternative ideas.
 - The consultation process is not a legal requirement, it is one of good practice and therefore is not time bound.
 - Recruitment into the new roles will be conducted in accordance with the

Council's recruitment policy and procedures.

c) **Property Implications** - there are no property implications arising directly from this report.

15. **Risk Management Implications** - there are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.
16. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – there are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
17. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – there are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.
18. **Health Implications** – the restructure seeks to support the delivery of corporate priorities as set out in Making Gateshead a Place where everyone thrives and the Corporate Plan.
19. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - the proposed structure better aligns services with environmental considerations and service delivery. It therefore better supports the Council's work in mitigating its impact on the environment and delivery of the council's response to the declaration of a Climate Emergency.
20. **Human Rights Implications** - there are no human rights implications arising from this report.
21. **Ward Implications** - there are no area and ward implications arising from this report.
22. **Background Information**

None.



COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

Calendar of Meetings

Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is for Council endorsement of the proposed calendar of meetings for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- i. Approve the calendar of meetings 2024/25
- ii. Agree that, so far as possible, meetings should not be held during school holidays or on dates where the holding of religious festivals may preclude attendance and involvement at meetings; and
- iii. Authorise the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

For the following reason:

- iv. To assist in the preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions and to allow councillors, officers, and partner organisations to plan commitments in their diaries.

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TITLE OF REPORT: **Calendar of Meetings 2024/25**

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

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the proposed calendar of meetings for 2024/25.

Background

2. Every year a calendar of meetings is drawn up for the Council's main decision-making bodies and overview and scrutiny committees for the following municipal year. The calendar of meetings assists in the effective planning of the consideration of Council business and with the preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions.
3. A draft calendar of meetings has been prepared for 2024/25 and this is attached at Appendix 2.
4. In addition to the meetings set out in the draft calendar, it may be necessary to arrange further meetings on an ad hoc basis, for instance to deal with urgent matters within prescribed timeframes.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that the Cabinet agree the calendar of meetings 2024/25 (attached at appendix 2) and that it be forwarded to Council for approval.
6. Any proposed changes to the calendar of meetings will be agreed with the appropriate Chairs.

Recommendations

7. The Cabinet is requested to recommend Council to:
 - (i) approve the calendar of meetings 2024/25
 - (ii) agree that, so far as possible, meetings should not be held during school holidays or on dates where the holding of religious festivals may preclude attendance and involvement at meetings; and
 - (iii) authorise the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

For the following reason:

To assist in the preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions and to allow councillors, officers and partner organisations to plan commitments in their diaries.

CONTACT: Tim Briton extension 2460

Policy Context

1. Preparing a calendar of meetings for the municipal year enables effective planning of Council business and preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions; and supports delivery of the Thrive Agenda and the Corporate Plan.

Background

2. The calendar of meetings has been prepared on the following basis:
 - As far as possible, meetings will not be held during school holidays or on dates where the holding of religious festivals may preclude attendance and involvement at meetings. The Council's multi-faith calendar may be found here - [5645-SS-Multi Faith Calendar 2024.pdf \(gateshead.gov.uk\)](#). It should be noted however that due to the frequency of meetings, it is necessary for meetings of the Planning & Development and Regulatory Committees to be arranged during the summer holiday period.
 - Eight Council meetings, including the annual meeting and special meeting to consider the budget.
 - Meetings of the Cabinet to take place once a month with breaks during school holiday periods. Additional meetings of the Cabinet to be arranged, if required.
 - Meetings of the Planning & Development Committee to be held every four weeks. There will be a longer gap over the Christmas holiday period.
 - Meetings of the Regulatory Committee to be held on a monthly basis.
 - Two meetings of the Licensing Committee per annum. These will be held immediately prior to meetings of the Regulatory Committee. Meetings of the Licensing Sub Committee will be held on a monthly basis with breaks during school holiday periods, with additional meetings arranged on an ad hoc basis where this is necessary to comply with statutory timescales (for instance in relation to Temporary Event Notices).
 - Three meetings of the Rights of Way Committee per annum.
 - Seven meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee per annum.
 - One meeting of the Accounts Committee per annum.
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committees to be held every six weeks.
 - Meetings of the Personnel Appeals Committee to be held on a monthly basis with breaks during school holiday periods.
 - Meetings of the Pensions and Pay Discretions Sub Committee on a quarterly basis.

- Gateshead Health & Wellbeing Board to be held every six weeks.
 - Four meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board per annum.
3. The Councillor Support & Development Group has previously agreed that there should be a guiding principle that most of the Council's committees and OSCs should have at least one evening meeting per year starting at 5.30pm and those meetings should have a suggested maximum duration of no more than two hours.
 4. Planning & Development Committee will continue to have some 6.00pm starts, the Audit and Standards Committee will meet at 4.00pm and the Rights of Way Committee will meet at 4.30pm.
 5. Seminars and meetings of the Corporate Advisory Group will be held at either 2.00pm or 5.30pm.
 6. If Chairs wish to change the date of the meetings starting at the later time to another date then this will be accommodated where possible.
 7. It is proposed that the Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance should be authorised, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

Consultation

8. The Leader of the Council has been consulted on the calendar of meetings.

Alternative Options

9. The options available are –
 - a) To approve the calendar of meetings as proposed
 - b) To approve the calendar of meetings with amendments; or
 - c) Not to approve the calendar of meetings.

Option (a) is recommended, as it will support the existing decision-making cycle and enable councillors, officers and partner organisations to plan commitments in their diaries.

Option (b) is not recommended, as changes to the dates of meetings can create diary clashes and so impact on the ability of councillors and partner organisations to be able to attend and participate in decision-making.

Option (c) is also not recommended, as it would adversely impact on the advance planning of meetings which will impact on the efficient use of time and resources for councillors, officers and partner organisations.

Implications of Recommended Option

10. Resources

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Resources & Digital confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

c) **Property Implications** – There are no property implications arising from this report.

11. Risk Management Implication - There are no risk management implications arising from the recommended option.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications - There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the recommended option; however if changes to the proposed calendar were made such that meetings were held on religious festival dates this may have the effect of precluding attendance and involvement in decision-making.

13. Crime and Disorder Implications - There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the recommended option.

14. Health Implications – There are no health implications arising from the recommended option.

15. Climate Emergency & Sustainability Implications – The recommended option supports the Council’s climate emergency and sustainability ambitions through the efficient use of resources and by minimising the need for ad hoc meetings to take place.

16. Human Rights Implications - There are no human rights implications arising from the recommended option.

17. Ward Implications - There are no ward implications arising from the recommended option.

18. Background Information - The calendar of meetings approved for the current municipal year.

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Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

MAY 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				6	BANK HOLIDAY		13	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	20			27	BANK HOLIDAY	
TUE				7			14	CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	1.30 PM	21	CABINET	10AM	28		
WED	1			8			15	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	22			29		
THU	2	LOCAL, MAYORAL & PCC ELECTIONS		9	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM	16	GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM	4PM	23	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	30		
FRI	3			10			17	ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING	2.30 PM	24			31		

JUNE 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON	3			10	CORPORATE RESOURCES OSC	10AM	17	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	24					
TUE	4	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	11	CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	1.30 PM	18	AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	4PM	25	CABINET CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	10AM 2PM			
WED	5			12	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	6PM	19	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	2PM	26	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM			
THU	6	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	10AM 2PM	13	LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE	10AM	20	PENSIONS & PAY SUB-COMMITTEE FAMILIES OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	27					
FRI	7	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	14			21			28					

JULY 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON	1	JOINT ISC OSC	10AM	8			15	RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE	4.30 PM	22			29		
TUE	2			9	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	5.30 PM	16	CABINET AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	10AM 4PM	23			30		
WED	3			10	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	17	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM	24			31		
THU	4	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM	11	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM	10AM 4PM	18	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	25					
FRI	5			12	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	19	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	26					

AUGUST 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				5			12			19			26	BANK HOLIDAY	
TUE				6	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	13			20			27		
WED				7	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	14			21			28		
THU	1	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM	8		10AM	15			22			29	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM
FRI	2			9			16			23			30		

SEPTEMBER 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON	2			9	CORPORATE RESROUCES OSC	10AM	16	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	23			30	JOINT ISC OSC	10AM
TUE	3			10	LICENSING COMMITTEE FOLLOWED BY REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	17	CABINET CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	10AM 2PM	24	CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	5.30 PM			
WED	4	MEMBERS' SEMINAR PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	2PM 6PM	11			18	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS' SEMINAR	2PM 5.30 PM	25					
THU	5	PENSIONS & PAY SUB-COMMITTEE FAMILIES OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	12	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM 1.30 PM	19	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	26	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE	10AM 2PM			
FRI	6	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	13			20			27					

OCTOBER 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				7			14	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	21	CORPORATE RESOURCES OSC	10AM	28		
TUE	1	AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	4PM	8	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	15	CABINET CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	22			29		
WED	2	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	9	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	2PM	16	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	5.30 PM	23	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	5.30 PM	30		
THU	3			10	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	2PM	17	FAMILIES OSC	5.30 PM	24			31	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM
FRI	4			11	LICENSING SUB- COMMITTEE	10AM	18	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	25					

NOVEMBER 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				4			11			18	RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE	4.30 PM	25	CORPORATE RESOURCES OSC JOINT ICS OSC	10AM 2PM
TUE				5	AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	4PM	12	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	19	CABINET	10AM	26		
WED				6	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	6PM	13	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	2PM	20	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM	27	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	5.30 PM
THU				7	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	10AM	14	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	21	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	28	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT FAMILIES OSC	10AM 1.30 PM
FRI	1			8			15			22			29	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM

DECEMBER 2024

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON	2	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	9			16			23			30		
TUE	3	CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	1.30 PM	10	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	17	CABINET CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	10AM 2PM	24			31		
WED	4	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	11	MEMBERS' SEMINAR CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM 5.30 PM	18			25					
THU	5	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	10AM	12	PENSIONS & PAY SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	19	LICENSING SUB- COMMITTEE	10AM	26					
FRI	6			13			20			27					

JANUARY 2025

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				6			13	JOINT ICS OSC	4PM	20	CORPORATE RESOURCES OSC	10AM	27	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	5.30 PM
TUE				7			14	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	21	CABINET CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	28	AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	4PM
WED	1	BANK HOLIDAY		8	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	2PM	15	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM	22	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SEMINAR	10AM 5.30 PM	29		
THU	2			9	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	10AM	16	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT FAMILIES OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	23	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	30		
FRI	3			10	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	17	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	24			31		

FEBRUARY 2025

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON	3			10			17			24					
TUE	4			11	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	18	CABINET	10AM	25					
WED	5	MEMBERS' SEMINAR CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM 5.30 PM	12	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	19	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SEMINAR	10AM 5.30 PM	26					
THU	6	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	10AM	13	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM	20	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	27					
FRI	7			14			21	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	28					

MARCH 2025

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON	3	CORPORATE RESOURCES OSC	5.30 PM	10	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	17	RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE	4.30 PM	24	JOINT ICS OSC	4PM	31		
TUE	4	AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	4PM	11	LICENSING COMMITTEE FOLLOWED BY REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	18	CABINET CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	10AM 2PM	25	CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	5.30 PM			
WED	5	MEMBERS' SEMINAR	2PM	12	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM	19	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	6PM	26	MEMBERS. SEMINAR	5.30 PM			
THU	6	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE FAMILIES OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	13	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM	20	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	27	PENSIONS & PAY SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM			
FRI	7			14	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	21			28					

APRIL 2025

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				7	CORPORATE RESOURCES OSC	10AM	14			21	BANK HOLIDAY		28		
TUE	1			8	REGULATORY COMMITTEE CARE, HEALTH & WELLBEING OSC	1.30 PM 4PM	15			22			29	CABINET AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE	10AM 4PM
WED	2	CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP	2PM	9	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE	10AM	16	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	23			30		
THU	3	PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	10AM	10	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT FAMILIES OSC	10AM 1.30 PM	17			24					
FRI	4	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	11			18	BANK HOLIDAY		25					

MAY 2025

DAY	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME	DATE		TIME
MON				5	BANK HOLIDAY		12	HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OSC	1.30 PM	19			26	BANK HOLIDAY	
TUE				5			13	REGULATORY COMMITTEE	1.30 PM	20	CABINET	10AM	27		
WED				6	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	10AM	14			21			28		
THU	1	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SITE VISIT	10AM	7			15	LICENSING SUB- COMMITTEE	10AM	22	COUNCIL	2.30 PM	29		
FRI	2			8			16	ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING	2.30 PM	23	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD	10AM	30		

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COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

Allocations Policy Update

Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To seek Council approval of proposed amendments to the Allocations Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- i. Approve the minor amendments to the allocations policy as set out in appendix 2; and
- ii. Approve the substantive amendments as set out in paragraph 10 above and appendix 1.

For the following reasons:

- iii. To ensure we have a clear and robust Allocations Policy.
- iv. To ensure we have effective governance of the Allocations Policy.
- v. To ensure best use of the housing register.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Allocations Policy Changes**REPORT OF: Colin Huntington – Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities**

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet and Council approval of proposed amendments to the Allocations Policy.
2. The amendments include several minor wording changes to improve clarity and consistency within the policy document as well as several substantial changes which have been endorsed by Strategic Housing Board on 7 December 2023 following a Members workshop on 24 November 2023.

Background

3. In 2021, the Council undertook an Allocations and Tenancy Review, which resulted in:
 - Cabinet agreement in October 2022 of a new Allocations Policy.
 - The establishment of 'Gateshead Home Choice' as the council's social housing allocations scheme following the disbanding of Tyne and Wear Homes in December 2022.
 - The migration of all Gateshead housing application data from Tyne and Wear Homes to the Gateshead housing management system NEC.
 - The launch of the Gateshead Home Choice platform which is used to advertise and allocate social housing using the Council's Allocation Policy on the 28 June 2023.
 - "My Housing Account" for customers to enter an application to go onto the housing register also went live on 28 June 2023.
4. There has now been a six-month settling in period of the Allocations Policy where it has been operationally tested at scale. This has identified several minor amendments which are needed to improve clarity and consistency within the policy and six proposed substantial changes.
5. The minor amendments (appendix 2) consist of a range of wording clarifications and small corrections that need to be made to the policy, for example where there is an incorrect age restriction attached to properties.
6. The substantial amendments to the policy cover six areas that affect eligibility to join the housing register, as well as the effective registration date for former members of the armed forces, and the date that an unborn child will be included in the assessment of an application.

7. A report was taken to the Strategic Housing Board on the 05 October 2023 with the following proposals:
- Provide feedback on the allocations policy update report.
 - Approve the minor amendments to the Allocations Policy or endorse these ahead of seeking formal approval from Cabinet.
 - Provide feedback on the proposal to have a Strategic Housing Board members workshop on areas for substantial change and to feedback any proposed changes to Cabinet.
8. The Strategic Housing Board endorsed all the above proposals and agreed to a workshop to look at areas for substantial change, the findings of which are detailed in this report for Cabinet's consideration.
9. The Strategic Housing Board members workshop took place on the 24 November 2023 and was chaired by the lead member for housing. Members discussed six areas which would constitute a significant change to the Allocations Policy and reached agreed recommendations to bring to Cabinet. Gateshead Council colleagues from specific operational teams attended the workshop to provide Members with detailed information on the relevant policy areas listed below:
- Armed forces
 - Joint Tenants
 - Financial Eligibility
 - Exclusion criteria
 - Unborn children
 - Local Connection

Proposal

10. Members reached a consensus and proposed the following recommendations:
- i. Armed forces – the additional waiting time preference should be restricted to five years post discharge.
 - ii. Joint Tenants – allow people other than partners to become joint tenants.
 - iii. Financial Eligibility– change the financial threshold for total gross annual income for the household to restrict people coming onto the housing register from £25,000 to £50,000 for both single people and couples.
 - iv. Exclusion criteria – the threshold for debt to potentially exclude someone from the housing register will be £3000 for a single person or couple without children and £5500 for a household with children. People who are intentionally homeless due to eviction for anti-social behaviour or high debt levels would be demoted/excluded from the housing register.
 - v. Unborn children – unborn children will be recognised as part of the household from six months into the pregnancy.
 - vi. Local connection – the housing register will only be open to applicants with a local connection to Gateshead. This will be effective from April 2024.

Recommendations

11. Cabinet is requested to recommend Council to approve:
 - i. The minor amendments to the allocations policy as set out in appendix 2; and
 - ii. The substantive amendments as set out in paragraph 10 above and appendix 1.

For the following reasons:

- i. To ensure we have a clear and robust Allocations Policy.
- ii. To ensure we have effective governance of the Allocations Policy.
- iii. To ensure best use of the housing register

CONTACT: Lindsay Warren (Senior Project Manager) lindsaywarren@gateshead.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. Gateshead's strategic approach is set out in 'Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives'. Within this strategy the Council has pledged to put people and families at the heart of everything we do and tackle inequality, so people have a fair chance.
2. Our Housing Strategy sets out key aims to improve Standards, Supply and Support. The Allocations Policy helps us deliver on all three of these strategic aims.
3. The Housing Regulatory Standards require us to let properties in a fair, transparent and efficient way, make best use of our stock reduce the amount of time properties are empty, address under occupation and overcrowding and to meet our strategic housing needs, including homelessness. This policy and strategy are therefore essential to ensuring both regulatory and statutory compliance.

Background

4. In 2021, the Council undertook an Allocations and Tenancy Review, which resulted in:
 - Cabinet agreement in October 2022 of a new Allocations Policy.
 - The establishment of 'Gateshead home Choice' following the disbanding of Tyne and Wear Homes in December 2022.
 - The launch of the Gateshead Home Choice platform which is used to advertise and allocate social housing using the Council's Allocation Policy on the 28 June 2023.
 - My Housing Account for customers to enter an application to go onto the housing register also went live on 28 June 2023
5. There are several areas which have been considered for substantial changes to the Allocations Policy which were discussed in detail with Members from the Strategic Housing Board and are outlined below.

Armed Forces

6. Gateshead Council is signed up to the North-East of England Armed Forces Charter and the Armed Forces Covenant. Special consideration is given to members of the armed forces (and former members) who apply for housing. Members of the armed forces who are due for discharge within 56 days will be assessed under a homeless prevention duty and those who have already been discharged under both a main (full) and relief duty.
7. To award additional preference and to give members of the armed forces the ability to accrue waiting time, the enlistment date is used as the registration date. One of the consequences of this is that an applicant can repeatedly use the additional preference gained by their enlistment date.
8. It is recommended that a statement is included within the policy to advise that this criteria only applies for up to five years of leaving service providing they haven't

found settled accommodation during this period. If a person has been left service for more than five years and has still not been able to find or successfully manage settled accommodation, they can still bring this to our attention and they will be given support and assistance.

9. As part of the Armed Forces covenant pledge, we disregard a local connection and accept a duty to refer. Former members of the armed forces will therefore be regarded as having a local connection.

Joint Tenants

10. Under Part 4.2 of the policy (Registration for the Gateshead Housing Register - Qualification Rules) it states:

- *You can register alone, or jointly with your partner. In most cases where the application is joint, the tenancy will also be joint.*

11. This has impacted on people who are not partners being unable to have a joint tenancy. It is recommended to widen the criteria for joint tenancies to allow people other than partners to become joint tenants and include two or more people who have joined the housing register together. This will also require a similar amendment to the Tenancy Management Policy.

Financial Eligibility

12. In section 4.3.1 (Financial Exclusion) the policy states:

- *With the exception of those showing a demonstrable hardship, vulnerability or where you may qualify for specialist accommodation, we may ask you to find your own housing solution if your savings, income, investments or equity levels exceed the thresholds in the table below. The thresholds are reviewed annually and in line with average earnings and average property prices including those sold on the open market and through the Right to Buy scheme to existing tenants. The thresholds do not apply to former members of the armed forces.*

13. The thresholds are:

- Savings - Applicants (both single persons and couples) who have total savings of £25,000 or more.*
- Income - Applicants whose total gross household income from all sources exceeds an annual income of £25,000 or more (for single persons) or joint income of £50,000 or more (for couples).*
- Investments Applicants (both single persons and couples) who have total investments including property in the UK and abroad of £50,000 or more.*
- Equity - Applicants who have equity £50,000 or more to the property.*

14. It is recommended that the income threshold for single persons of £25,000 be raised to £50,000 as this threshold is affecting single persons who are not in a financial position to find alternative provision for example through property purchase.

Exclusion from the housing register due to high levels of housing debt or serious anti-social behaviour / people found to be intentionally homeless.

15. In Section 4.3 the policy sets out circumstances in which an applicant may be excluded from joining the housing register:

We will only exclude applicants where all other viable options are unavailable. Each case is assessed to ensure that they are not the victims of behaviour that was outside of their control. Applicants with very high level of housing related debt, serious anti-social behaviour or criminal behaviour will be considered for exclusion where:

- i. the debt or behaviour is serious enough to meet the threshold applied by courts to grant a possession order.*
- ii. the applicant refuses to engage with the council and therefore we cannot consider them for demotion under reduced preferences.*
- iii. the decision to exclude will be taken at a senior or panel level.*
- iv. where the case may be managed instead, we will consider suspension of the application first, whilst we implement a plan to reduce any risks.*
- v. we will consider all other measures before excluding an applicant who would qualify for a critical or urgent priority award.*

16. Under previous policies the thresholds of debt likely to lead to a possession order were set out in an accompanying statement of flexibility and reviewed annually. This helped in terms of engagement with applicants and added clarity to the policy.

17. It is recommended that additional information is included in the policy to advise that an amount of housing debt where there is likely to be an order granted by the court may trigger exclusion from the housing register. This information would be reviewed annually and is currently set at:

- i. Single people or couple without children: £3,000
- ii. Households with dependent children: £5,500

Serious anti-social behaviour / Intentionally homeless

18. The allocations policy states that “*we will consider all other measures before excluding an applicant who would qualify for a critical or urgent priority award*”. This has the unintended consequence of effectively allowing on the housing register with a critical award due to being owed a homeless relief duty, applicants who have just been evicted by the Council for serious anti-social behaviour or high housing debt. There will be other applicants who have been evicted by other landlords for similarly serious anti-social behaviour or high housing debt.

19. After 56 days, the Council can end the relief duty even if the applicant is still homeless and issue a final homeless decision. The final homeless decision can be that the applicant is intentionally homeless. Such a decision would result in the applicant moving to a substantial award and being open to exclusion or demotion. The homeless application would be closed. So, for 56 days the applicant could get a new council tenancy even though the Council has just evicted them. However, if they remain homeless after 56 days, no further help will be provided to them because the homeless relief duty will be ended.

20. It is recommended to change the policy so that exclusions are allowed for applicants for whom the Council has issued an intentional homeless decision, or where the Council is investigating an issue of intentional homelessness. This will allow us to keep the homeless relief duty open following the intentionally homeless decision for as long as is needed to assist the applicant into appropriate accommodation – for example, supported accommodation with intensive support for occupants with complex needs. However, it will also allow us to exclude the applicant from the housing register, so they cannot get a Council tenancy.

Unborn Children

21. In section 5.1.1 of the policy (Assessment of an application - Size Allowance) the policy states that a baby will only be included in a housing assessment following production of a birth certificate. This can be difficult for applicants who want to plan or need to move to a more suitable property for a baby.

22. Under the previous policy, allowance was made for assessment in terms of bed spaces required and potential overcrowding at the six-month stage of pregnancy.

23. It is recommended that the new policy return to the previous rule of including for assessment at the six-month stage of pregnancy.

Local Connection

24. Applications have been accepted to the housing register from people with and without a local connection to Gateshead, although preference has been given to those with a local connection. Bids from those with a local connection are ranked ahead of those without.

25. The allocation policy states that a local connection is defined as one or more of the following:

- have lived in Gateshead for six of the previous 12 months.
- have lived in Gateshead for three of the previous five years.
- have a current contract of employment in Gateshead.
- likely to be in education in Gateshead for six months or more.
- have family residing in the borough.
- been placed out of borough by Gateshead Council.
- been living in supported housing in Gateshead or be living in accommodation provided by one of the agencies that the council works with for at least six months.
- be either giving support or receiving it from someone living in the borough and it is only possible if they live in Gateshead and have evidence to support this.
- have one of the above prior to incarceration or institutionalisation.
- you have been discharged from the armed forces.

26. Numbers on the housing register have increased in recent years, from 6,793 in April 2020 to 13,637 in October 2023. In the last two years there has been a significant increase in the number of applicants in the two highest need bands (Critical Need and Urgent Need) from 376 in April 2021 to 1,102 in October 2023

27. This means that the likelihood of applicants without a local connection being rehoused has greatly reduced, except for hard to let, low demand properties advertised as “available now.”
28. There were around 2,700 applicants without a recorded local connection on the housing register at the start of October 2023. Registering and managing these applications takes time and resources which instead may be needed to focus on the rising number of Critical and Urgent cases on the register.
29. At the workshop on 24 November 2023 Members expressed a view that the housing register should be closed to applicants without a local connection including to existing applicants.
30. There is also the possibility that a hard to let / low demand property may be advertised outside of the Home Choice system (for example via the council website or social media). In such circumstances where there is no interest from applicants with a local connection it is recommended that with appropriate checks, consideration may be made of making an offer to a person who responds without a local connection.

Consultation

31. Operational staff who use the Allocations Policy on a regular basis were consulted around how the policy was being applied and if there were any amendments or substantial considerations that needed to be addressed.
32. A report went to the Strategic Housing Board on the 05 October 2023 which gave a break down of proposed minor and substantial changes to the policy. They endorsed the proposals and agreed to a workshop to discuss the substantial changes in more detail.
33. A Members workshop took place on the 24 November 2023 to discuss six key areas of substantial change to the policy.
34. The policy change around the local connection requirement was taken to Housing and Environment portfolio on the 5 December 2023 and the proposal to exclude applicants without a local connection from the housing register was put forward. This was then taken back to the Strategic Housing Board on the 7 December 2023.
35. A communication plan will be implemented if these changes are agreed to ensure that customers and stakeholders are aware of them and the implication for accessing the housing register.

Alternative Options

36. There are no alternative options. An Allocations Policy is required to ensure we are meeting our regulatory and statutory requirements.

Implications of Recommended Option

37. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms there are no financial implications directly arising from this report.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resource implications directly arising from this report.
- c) **Property Implications** - The Allocations Policy is the principal document for how the Council and Registered Providers advertise and allocate properties in Gateshead, so we want to ensure that the policy is as robust and clear as possible.

38. **Risk Management Implication** - Integrated impact assessments are in place for the Allocations Policy. This will be reassessed considering any substantial changes to the policy.

39. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - The Allocations Policy will aim to reduce inequalities within Gateshead. An integrated impact assessment has been carried out to identify potential implications and impact related to protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 and will be reviewed if any substantial changes are made to the policy.

40. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – The Allocations Policy will contribute to the achievement of reducing crime and disorder in Gateshead.

41. **Health Implications** – The Allocations Policy will contribute to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for local people and aim to reduce inequalities within Gateshead.

42. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - The Allocations Policy will contribute to the achievement of having sustainable communities and neighbourhoods within Gateshead.

43. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no Human Rights implications relating to this report.

44. **Ward Implications** - All wards within the borough are covered by the Allocations Policy.

Background Information

Appendix 2 – Minor Amends

Point	Page	Area	Type of change	Comments
3.4	11	Armed forces	Typo	Typo (additional comma) in 2 nd paragraph
4.3	13	Exclusion Criteria	Typo	Non qualification rules – one of the bullet points refers to section 4.6 but should be 4.4
4.4	14	Demotions	Typo	Wording incorrect – mixes up demotions/exclusions
4.4	14	Demotions	Typo	C Tax is an abbreviation. Change to full word
4.4	15	Applicants Demoted under reduced preference	Typo	Word missing
4.8	16	Household Splits	Wording clarification	Clarity required on household splits
5.1.1	19	Size allowance	Wording clarification	Wording to be changed to 'children' rather than 'siblings'
5.1.1	19	Size allowance	Wording Clarification	Needs to also reference appendix 3 which gives a definition of the space standard
5.1.1	19	Size Allowance	Wording Clarification	Parlours
5.1.2	20	Property allocation table	Incomplete Table	Property allocation table (which shows the type of properties that different household types can bid for) is incomplete. Update with information around split households as does not cover access arrangements and the four-night criteria is misleading. Current wording is shown in 4.8 page 16 of policy.
5.1.2	20	Property allocation table	Incomplete Table	Maisonettes in multi-story properties. Need to reflect policy on multi-story so no children under 16. Current wording is shown in 5.3.17 page 30 of policy
5.3.9	27	Overcrowding	Wording Clarification	Clarify that an urgent award is given if a child is sharing a bedroom with an adult not just 'parent'
5.3.13	29	Under occupation	Wording Clarification	Wording states 'existing tenant' – should say 'existing social housing tenant'
5.3.13	29	Under Occupation	Wording Clarification	'No breaches of tenancy' may be misleading as someone may need to downsize due to affordability issues and have rent arrears. Clarity needed on what is meant
5.3.15	29	Service Accommodation	Wording Clarification	Section here should also mention backdated waiting time (to the start of their employment date) – it is referred to on page 32 (5.6-a) but should be covered here too.

5.4	30	Housing Priority Bands	Typo	Page 30 – mix of capital and lower case – needs unifying
5.4	31	Housing Priority Bands	Wording Clarification	Urgent Priority – overcrowded by 2 bedspaces. Also needs to include that an urgent priority band will be given if an adult is sharing with a child.
5.4	31	Housing Priority Bands	Table	5.3.18 states that 'move on' applicants from supported accommodation will be given an urgent band. This needs to be clearly reflected in the table.
5.6	32	Determination of effective band dare	Wording Clarification	Section (a) to use consistent language with covenant on page 10 as here it refers to 'members of the armed forces' rather than anyone who served
6.4	34	How will you know which properties you can express an interest in?	Wording Clarification	Change 'all applicants with a housing need can bid on properties advertised as priority need' to 'all eligible applicants can bid on properties advertised as priority need.'
6.4	34	How will you know which properties you can express an interest in?	Wording Clarification	Last sentence needs clarification - if we exhaust medical bids we would consider other priorities/general needs cases current wording suggests they would not be able to bid.
6.5	35	How are applicants' bids ranked?	Take out wording	Second paragraph – take out wording 'we will also give preference for the largest families'
6.7	37	Offer of accommodation	Wording Clarification	para 3 – clarify that we require an arrangement to be set up at the point of offer around arrears?
Appendix 4	46	Property age restrictions	Formatting	Formatting on table – all over 40's should be together then all over 50's etc
Appendix 4	48	Property age restrictions	Typo	Greenfields 1 bed flat is 50 plus not 60. Should be moved to page 46 under Emmaville details
Appendix 40	48	Property age restrictions	Wording Clarification	Wording unclear: 'all other bungalows are available to anyone over the age of 50', should read 'all other one bed bungalows'
Appendix 6	50/51	Local lettings plans	Formatting	Greenfields to be included with Emmaville

Appendix Two – Integrated Impact Assessment

Title of proposal: Allocations Policy (formerly Lettings Policy)	Age	Race	Sex	Gender reassignment	Disability	Religion or Belief	Pregnancy and Maternity	Sexual Orientation	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Description of potential mitigation
<p>Equality impact: (✓ all that apply. The assessment should also consider impact on council employees and carers where applicable)</p> <p>Description of impact: The new allocations policy introduces the following changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armed forces. The 5-year cap has been removed and both honourably and dishonourably former members of the armed forces will be considered. 	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<p>In theory the changes have the possibility of impacting any of the groups covered by the Act. However the impact is a positive one overall.</p> <p>January 2024 update People who apply to go onto Gateshead’s housing register could potentially have any protected characteristics. However, the protected characteristics most likely to be impacted by the Jan 2024 changes to the policy are age, sex, disability and pregnancy and maternity. No disproportionate impact is expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By removing the 5-year cap and not discriminating between honourable or dishonourable at the point of application we have lowered thresholds and will consider priority need alone. Former members of the armed

<p>January 2024 update - The additional waiting time preference for members of the armed forces will be restricted to five years post discharge providing that they have not found settled accommodation.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<p>forces continue to benefit from the current covenants and new covenant duty being introduced at the end of the 2022.</p> <p>January 2024 update – it was identified that removing the 5 year gap was having unintended consequences of allowing people who had been in settled accommodation for many years to have an unintended preference.</p>
<p>2. Out of Borough. The rules around OOB applicants remain unchanged for the present but we have strengthened the local connection rules in line with legislation and industry good practice.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The local connection has been strengthened and places less of burden to evidence a connection. However an exercise is due to take place where we quantify the number of OOB applicants with no local connection with a view to giving consideration to continuing as we are or closing the list. This will be brought to Cabinet at a later stage once the new policy has bedded in for at least a year.
<p>January update 2024 – Due to the exponential increase in the housing register people without a local connection to the area will not be able to join the housing register.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<p>January update 2024 - Applicants without a local connection to Gateshead will not be able to join the housing register and applicants currently on the register without a local connection will be removed.</p>
<p>3. Exclusions. These remain but with a formal decision</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclusions have been strengthened and all viable

<p>process to consider the health and wellbeing of both the individuals and the community balance. They will not apply to bands 1 and 2 where the housing need is critical or urgent.</p>											<p>options will be pursued before an exclusion is agreed. This promotes Thrive and the need to explore better management of cases which might previously have been excluded. They will not apply to those in critical or urgent need.</p>
<p>January update 2024 Exclusions - Debt. Clarification given on the thresholds for financial exclusion from the housing register. These are to be set at £3000 for a single person or a couple without children and £5500 for households with children.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<p>January update 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the person has met the financial threshold but has a priority award they will not be excluded from the register. Instead they will be supported to have a financial payment plan in place.
<p>Exclusion – ASB. People who are intentionally homeless due to eviction would be excluded from the housing register.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whilst a person may be excluded from the housing register due to serious ASB they will still be given support to access supported accommodation if they have a priority award.
<p>4. Financial Eligibility. This has been strengthened. Those with equity, income, savings and investments above thresholds set in line with RTB discounts, average house prices, private rents and average earnings will be expected to find their own housing solutions unless they are vulnerable or need specialist accommodation.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial eligibility will not apply to vulnerable households or those needing specialist accommodation so will not penalise those most in need.

<p>January 2024 update The financial threshold has been amended to allow single people to have an income up to £50,000 before they are excluded from the housing register.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<p>January 2024 update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This change has been made in recognition that the threshold of £25,000 was too low and was excluding people from the housing register who were unable to access housing through the open market.
<p>5. Demotions. These will now be within the qualifying band rather than at the end of the housing register. They will not apply to bands 1 and 2 where the housing need is critical or urgent.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demotions recognises the need for those in band 3 to sit above those in band 4 thereby recognising their priority need.
<p>6. Overcrowding. The pressure on very large households in overcrowded accommodation has been recognised. Those needing 3 or more bedspaces will sit in band 1 (critical). Those needing 2 bedspaces will sit in band 2 (urgent) and those needing 1 bedspace will sit in band 3 (substantial).</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By recognising the need for large properties for overcrowded households we have sought a remedy that addresses need by bedspace shortfall.
<p>7. Homeless Priority Need. This has been adjusted to recognise the need to move those in B&B and temporary accommodation quickly and reduce the stress to the applicants and the cost to the Council. Full and relief duty</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By recognising the need to place those in B&B and TA into critical need we recognise the thrive agenda and the cost to the Council. We will need to monitor the savings for a full letting year post approval of the policy to understand the full impact of

<p>will now be band 1 (critical). Prevention duty will be band 2 (urgent) and intentionally homeless will be band 3 (substantial).</p> <p>8. January 2024 update. Joint tenants – people other than partners can become joint tenants.</p> <p>9. January 2024 update Unborn children will be recognised as part of the household from six months into the pregnancy.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<p>those savings.</p> <p>▪ January 2024 update. Will reduce overcrowding and support families being adequately housed.</p>
<p>Health impact: (e.g. physical, mental health, wellbeing, substance misuse) We have considered the impact to health and wellbeing when introducing the changes around homeless priority, overcrowding and armed forces.</p>											NA
<p>Socio Economic impact: (e.g. neighbourhood, ward, area of deprivation, household group, income, wealth) Overcrowded households moving to larger properties will need to find them affordable where they are not in receipt of benefit or there is a benefit cap. We will monitor the impact of releasing B&B and TA quicker by awarding a critical need over the next 12 months. By introducing a financial exclusion policy for those who can afford to seek their own housing solutions we reduce the pressure on the existing housing register and those who are vulnerable or in need of specialist accommodation.</p> <p>January 2024 update Since 2020 the demand on the housing register has doubled and this is in part due to rent increases and lack of availability in the private market and people’s ability to afford their rent. It is likely that this will continue to impact on the housing register over the next 12 months</p>											<p>We will need to monitor the impact of financial hardship overall over the next year. Further changes may be introduced where there is a negative impact. However with overcrowding we are also seeking to move dependents who are 18 and over to their properties in order to alleviate the overcrowding to the main household which in itself mitigate the costs to the main household.</p> <p>January 2024 update We will continue to monitor the impact of the policy changes and the external housing environment on the housing</p>

<p>and we will continue to monitor the impact of this on an annual basis.</p>	<p>register to ensure we continue to offer a fair and transparent service which meets the needs of our customers.</p>
<p>Environmental impact: (does the proposal impact on climate change and the Council’s commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030? Is the proposal in line with the Council’s Environmental Policy? Does the proposal increase natural resource use? Does the proposal increase waste? Does the proposal increase pollution? Does the proposal impact on wildlife? Does the proposal increase car use? Does the proposal increase energy use?) None</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Cumulative impact: (consider impact based on successive budgetary decisions relating to the proposal or is the proposal part of wider budgetary considerations that may collectively have an impact on service users and is potentially at odds with the Thrive agenda). Where there is financial hardship, this will factor in the priority award. A further impact assessment will be undertaken once the impact analysis and savings have been monitored and completed.</p>	<p>A final impact analysis will be submitted 12 months after the approval and implementation of the new policy to understand the effects of savings, further work on whether to close the housing register, monitor financial hardship, monitor the effects of banding changes and demotions within qualifying bands.</p>

Summary of consultation/data/research undertaken to inform the assessment:

(e.g. feedback and engagement with service users, trade unions, employees, partners, public, benchmarking, case studies)

A full impact analysis is underway as follows:

1. Banding Migration. We are looking at the full effect of banding changes, for the households that move and also the impact to the band they move from and to. This work is due for completion by mid Sept and the results will be sent to Cabinet with the new Allocations Policy.
2. Demotion within Qualifying Band. We are looking at the full effect of demotion within qualifying band. This will cover the exemptions for critical and urgent, the impact to moving the demotion from the bottom of the list into the qualifying band and the impact to band 3 and 4 where there is no exemption. This is due for completion by mid Sept and the results will be sent to Cabinet with the new Allocations Policy.
3. Demotion housing related debt threshold of £250 changing to £500. The work is complete. Around 25% of applicants who are currently demoted will not be demoted with a higher threshold for housing related debt. Further this will not apply to those in critical or urgent need. Demotion will not apply to applicants who find themselves in debt through no fault of their own.
4. Financial Exclusions. We looked at the rehoused owner occupiers in the last 6 months. Data is not currently collected for savings, income or investments, it will be in the future. The threshold that was applied was £100,000 and 9 applicants were over it and would not have been rehoused. The threshold has now been revised following consultation to £50,000 and more would apply so we are revisiting the exercise which is due for completion by mid Sept.
5. We will do a costs savings exercise over the next 12 months for households owed a relief duty.
6. We will do a quantitative exercise over the next 12 months for households who are out of borough without a local connection. This is to look at the numbers of the housing register and whether by accepting them this is having a detrimental effect on rehousing transfer applicants. It is also to understand whether the original trend of housing OOB applicants with no local connection into lower demand properties has changed and needs to be further evidenced.
7. A partnership agreement is being developed with Registered Providers over the next 12 months.
8. A further liA will be submitted once all the above are complete.

We undertook public consultation between 30 June and 28 July 2022. This was undertaken with the following:

- All applicants on the housing register. We had 1750 respondents out of 9500 applicants which represents 19%.
- Residents in Gateshead via a public consultation. We are undertaking a tenants workshop on the 1 September 2022.
- Members
- Registered providers in Gateshead
- External stakeholders
- Internal stakeholders

The results on the proposed changes so far:

1. Armed forces. 83% agreed and the change has been adopted.
2. Out of Borough. 71% agreed and the comments overall were that housing should be prioritised for Gateshead residents; with out

of borough applicants having the opportunity to apply. Further discussions with staff and members resulted in retention of the current policy which states that out of borough applicants will be assessed for band 4, those with a local connection will sit above those without one. The local connection rule was strengthened in line with industry standards and retained. The main reason for retaining it is to give transfers preference over out of borough applicants without a local connection. Further work is planned as detailed in 6 above.

3. Exclusions. At the time of consultation were considering removing exclusions. 52% agreed and 43% disagreed which meant the result was inconclusive. Applicants and members felt exclusion should be rare with a formal decision process and only where there is no other viable option but that they should not be removed entirely. There should be a greater degree of management of high-risk cases and that those that engaged with the Council could be demoted; those that did not may be suspended whilst a plan was constructed to minimise any risks. A modified version of exclusions was retained.
4. Financial Exclusions. 76% agreed; although there were general comments about the thresholds. There has been further discussion internally and the thresholds have been reviewed in line with average earnings, private rents and average property prices following right to buy discounts. The change has been adopted.
5. Demotions. 74% agreed; and this only applies to bands 3 and 4, so those demoted in band 3 will sit above general needs, their priority need is therefore preserved. The change has been adopted.
6. Overcrowding. 81% agreed and this recognises severe overcrowding. The change has been adopted.
7. Homeless Priority Need. 83% agreed and this recognises the need for the Council to reduce the costs of temporary accommodation. The change has been adopted. Further work is planned see 5 above.

January 2024 update

Changes to the housing register

The housing register is impacted by the external housing market which has changed significantly over the last few years. This includes:

- Increased demand on the housing register
 - 13,637 applications for housing in Oct 2023, compared to 6,793 in April 2020
- More applicants with critical or urgent need
 - Increased from 376 to 1,102 in just over two years.
- Fewer council properties let each year.
 - 1,125 let in 2022/23. Around 1,400 previously
- More evictions from private sector tenancies
- More use of bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation
- Pressures on single persons accommodation and family housing
- Some flats reserved for tenants aged 50+ more difficult to let.
- Two-bedroom flats unaffordable to many applicants

This inevitably necessitates refinements to the allocations policy to ensure it meet changing needs and priorities.

Engagement on policy changes

During August to December 2023 engagement on the policy changes has taken place with:

- Operational teams at Gateshead Council (lettings, allocations, and housing solutions).
- Strategic Housing Board
- Cllr with responsibility for the armed forces portfolio.
- Members workshop
- Customers

Signed: (completing officer) Lindsay Warren (senior Project Manager) with Kevin Johnson, Head of Customer Services, Gateshead Council.

Date: 04 January 2024

Service Director: (approved) Kevin Scarlett, Director of Strategic Housing and Residential Growth

Date: 04 January 2024



COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators 2023/24 - Third Quarter Review

Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report sets out the latest position on the 2023/24 Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the third quarter to 31 December 2023.
2. The report assesses reasons for the variances from the approved programme and details the proposed financing of the capital programme.
3. In addition, the report considers the impact of CIPFA's Prudential Code on the capital programme and the monitoring of performance against the statutory Prudential Indicators.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- i. Approves the revision to the capital programme.
- ii. Approves the financing of the revised programme.
- iii. Agrees that the capital expenditure and capital financing requirement indicators have been revised in line with the revised budget and that none of the approved Prudential Indicators set for 2023/24 have been breached.

For the following reason(s):

- i. To ensure the optimum use of the Council's capital resources in 2023/24
- ii. To accommodate changes to the Council's in-year capital expenditure plans.
- iii. To ensure performance has been assessed against approved Prudential Limits.

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**TITLE OF REPORT: Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators 2023/24
 – Third Quarter Review**
REPORT OF: Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Resources and Digital
Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the latest position on the 2023/24 Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the third quarter to 31 December 2023. The report assesses reasons for the variances from the approved programme and details the proposed financing of the capital programme. In addition, the report considers the impact of CIPFA's Prudential Code on the capital programme and the monitoring of performance against the statutory Prudential Indicators.

Background

2. The original budget for the capital programme for 2023/24, as agreed by Council on 23 February 2023, totalled £112.1m. This was increased to £113.5m at the first quarter review and decreased to £106.8m at the second quarter review to accommodate re-profiling to future years. The third quarter review of progress has resulted in a revised estimate for capital expenditure of £78.0m by the year end, £52.8m General Fund and £25.2m HRA.
3. The proposed reduction in the capital programme at the third quarter comprises of the following movements:

	£m
Additional capital expenditure	2.176
Re-profiling of capital expenditure to future years	(30.929)
Total Variance	(28.753)

4. The proposed increase of £2.176m relates to variations of less than £0.500m for a number of projects within the General Fund due to accelerated spend and £1.3m within the HRA for new home acquisitions.
5. The re-profiling of expenditure to future years of £30.929m relates to the following schemes:
 - (£8.153m) Quays – slippage due to collating final plans and costs.
 - (£7.562m) Transforming Cities - schemes have been designed and costed with some started on site.
 - (£5.000m) Flood Alleviation – schemes are being designed and costed.
 - (£3.000m) Schools Basic Need – schools are to submit their funding requests to meet the demand for places.

- (£2.000m) West Askew Road – junction works have been approved and waiting to commence on site.
- (£1.000m) Schools Special Education Needs High Needs – work is ongoing to determine how to best utilise the funding.
- (£0.750m) Local Transport Plan – Integrated Transport – slippage on some schemes which require more design and modelling work.
- (£0.650m) High Street South – work is ongoing to determine how to best progress the development.

Proposal

6. The report identifies planned capital expenditure of £78.0m for the 2023/24 financial year. The expected resources required to fund the Capital Programme are as follows:

	£m
Prudential Borrowing	23.711
Projected Capital Receipts	0.679
Capital Grants and Contributions	28.420
Major Repairs Reserve (HRA)	19.264
Capital Grants and Contributions (HRA)	1.541
Right to Buy Receipts (HRA)	4.387
Total Capital Programme	78.002

7. CIPFA's Prudential Code advises the regular monitoring of performance against the prudential indicators which regulate borrowing and investment. Targets and limits for the prudential indicators for 2023/24 were agreed at Council on 23 February 2023 and borrowing and investment levels have remained within these limits. Performance against the indicators for 2023/24 is set out in Appendix 5.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that
- (i) Cabinet recommends to Council the revision to the capital programme.
 - (ii) Cabinet recommends to Council the financing of the revised programme.
 - (iii) Cabinet confirms to Council that the capital expenditure and capital financing requirement indicators have been revised in line with the revised budget and that none of the approved Prudential Indicators set for 2023/24 have been breached.

For the following reason(s)

- (i) To ensure the optimum use of the Council's capital resources in 2023/24
- (ii) To accommodate changes to the Council's in-year capital expenditure plans.
- (iii) To ensure performance has been assessed against approved Prudential Limits.

CONTACT: Clare Tait

extension: 3417

APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The proposals within this report are consistent with the objectives contained within the Council's corporate Capital Strategy and will contribute to achieving the objectives set out by the Council's Thrive Agenda. The financial implications of the capital programme are incorporated within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Background

2. The original budget for the capital programme for 2023/24, as agreed by Council on 23 February 2023, totalled £112.1m which increased to £113.5m at the first quarter review, but then reduced to £106.8m at the second quarter review.
3. The third quarter review has reprofiled the capital programme to reflect in year changes within capital schemes, resulting in a revised estimate of £78.0m.
4. All variations contributing to the £28.8m reduction since the quarter two review are detailed in Appendix 2.
5. Appendix 3 summarises the original budget and forecasted year end positions by Corporate Priority. The budget, projected year end positions and comments on the progress of each scheme are detailed in Appendix 4.
6. The prudential code sets out a range of Prudential Indicators that were agreed by Council on the 23 February 2023. Performance against the indicators for 2023/24 is set out in Appendix 5.

Consultation

7. The Leader of the Council has been consulted on this report.

Alternative Options

8. The proposed financing arrangements are the best available in order to ensure the optimum use of the Council's capital resources in 2023/24.

Implications of Recommended Option

9. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that the financial implications are as set out in the report.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications arising from this report.
 - c) **Property Implications** - There are no direct property implications arising from this report. Capital investment optimises the use of property assets to

support the delivery of corporate priorities. The property implications of individual schemes will be considered and reported separately.

10. **Risk Management Implication** - Risks are assessed as part of the process of monitoring the programme and in respect of treasury management. The Cabinet will continue to receive quarterly reports for recommendation of any issues to Council, together with any necessary action to ensure expenditure is managed within available resources.
11. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
12. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.
13. **Health Implications** – There are no health implications arising from this report.
14. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - The climate emergency and sustainability implications are considered as part of developing and implementing individual capital projects. Planned investment within the capital programme is expected to result in improvements throughout the Borough.
15. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.
16. **Ward Implications** - Capital scheme investment will improve wards across the borough.

Background Information

17. Report for Cabinet, 21 February 2023 (Council 23 February 2023) – Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Report for Cabinet 18 July 2023 (Council 20 July 2023) – Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators 2023/24 First Quarter Review.

Report for Cabinet 21 November 2023 (Council 23 November 2023) – Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators 2023/24 Second Quarter Review.

Appendix 2

Reason for movement	Portfolio	Group	Project Title	Variance £000	
Other movements	Resources, Management and Reputation	EIG	Baltic Quarter Enabling Infrastructure	4	
	Resources, Management and Reputation	HEHC	Installation of Electric Vehicle charging points in Council Depots	3	
	Resources, Management and Reputation	HEHC	Blaydon West Primary School	1	
	Resources, Management and Reputation	R&D	IT Strategic Plan	(65)	
	Resources, Management and Reputation	CSC&LL	Specialist equipment to improve inclusion for Children and Young People - High incidence needs	7	
	Resources, Management and Reputation	CSC&LL	Specialist IT equipment for Children and Young People with low incidence needs (hearing and vision impairment)	10	
	Environment and Transport	EIG	Solar PV	67	
	Environment and Transport	EIG	District Heating and Private Wire Connections	15	
	Children and Young People	HEHC	School Condition Investment	200	
	Children and Young People	HEHC	Schools Devolved Formula Funding	240	
	Children and Young People	CSC&LL	Children's Three bed Residential Home	111	
	Children and Young People	CSC&LL	Family Hubs	27	
	Adult Social Care	IASCS	Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	185	
	Housing	HEHC	New Build/Acquisition - Various	671	
	Housing	HEHC	Block Communal improvements	(705)	
	Housing	HEHC	Building Safety Improvements	(290)	
	Housing	HEHC	Contractual Obligations	(1,700)	
	Housing	HEHC	ICT Refresh	239	
	Housing	HEHC	Decent Homes	803	
	Housing	HEHC	Aids & Adaptations	1,500	
	Housing	HEHC	Lift Replacement Programme	65	
	Housing	HEHC	Door & Window replacements	40	
	Housing	HEHC	Stock Project Management	100	
	Housing	HEHC	Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	648	
	Other movements Total				2,176
	Slippage to future years	Resources, Management and Reputation	EIG	Gateshead Quays	(8,153)
Resources, Management and Reputation		EIG	Refurbishment of Metrology Lab	(138)	
Resources, Management and Reputation		HEHC	Health & Safety	(306)	
Resources, Management and Reputation		R&D	Technology Plan: Infrastructure	(200)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Flood Alleviation Investment	(5,000)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Local Transport Plan - Planned Maintenance	(750)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Transforming Cities (Tranche 2)	(7,562)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Quays fixed and VMS signage	(350)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Quays traffic signal upgrades	(150)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Bensham Road Corridor	(100)	
Environment and Transport		EIG	Gateshead District Energy Scheme - Old Ford/Nest House	(200)	
Environment and Transport		HEHC	Traffic Sign Replacement	(25)	
Culture, Sport and Leisure		HEHC	Fixed Play Facility Renewals	(220)	
Communities and Volunteering		HEHC	Community Hubs	(21)	
Children and Young People		HEHC	Schools Basic Need Funding	(3,000)	
Children and Young People		HEHC	Schools SEN High Needs Funding	(1,000)	
Children and Young People		CSC&LL	Extensions and adaptations to the homes of foster carers	(150)	
Economy		EIG	Greensfield Business Centre Refurbishment	(100)	
Economy		R&D	Broadband Delivery UK	(10)	
Economy		R&D	Digital Gateshead	(41)	
Housing		EIG	High Street South	(650)	
Housing		HEHC	West Askew Road junction improvements	(2,000)	
Housing		HEHC	Digital Transformation	(305)	
Housing		HEHC	Garage Improvement Programme	(90)	
Housing		HEHC	Regeneration and Demolition	(283)	
Housing		HEHC	Housing Development	(125)	
Slippage to future years Total				(30,929)	
Grand Total				(28,753)	

Appendix 3

	Approved 2023/24 Allocation £000	Revised Q1 Allocation £000	Revised Q2 Allocation £000	Revised Q3 Allocation £000	Variance £000
COMMUNITIES					
Culture, Sport and Leisure	840	720	720	500	(220)
Communities and Volunteering	62	56	56	35	(21)
Communities - Culture, Sport and Leisure	0	85	85	85	0
COMMUNITIES Total	902	861	861	620	(241)
PEOPLE					
Children and Young People	14,800	9,686	9,586	6,014	(3,572)
Adult Social Care	6,053	7,918	8,260	8,445	185
PEOPLE Total	20,853	17,604	17,846	14,459	(3,387)
PLACE AND ECONOMY					
Environment and Transport	22,732	30,948	27,673	13,618	(14,055)
Economy	1,775	2,283	2,283	2,132	(151)
Housing	29,885	29,106	29,482	27,400	(2,082)
PLACE AND ECONOMY Total	54,392	62,337	59,438	43,150	(16,288)
RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT AND REPUTATION					
Resources, Management and Reputation	31,719	30,956	26,900	18,063	(8,837)
RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT AND REPUTATION Total	31,719	30,956	26,900	18,063	(8,837)
LOAN					
Environment and Transport	4,209	1,709	1,709	1,709	0
LOAN Total	4,209	1,709	1,709	1,709	0
Grand Total	112,075	113,468	106,755	78,002	(28,753)

Appendix 4

	Approved 2023/24 Allocation £000	Revised Q1 Allocation £000	Revised Q2 Allocation £000	Revised Q3 Allocation £000	Variance £000	Comment
COMMUNITIES						
<i>Culture, Sport and Leisure</i>						
Fixed Play Facility Renewals	720	720	720	500	(220)	Slippage to future years
Virtual Reality Fitness Systems	120	0	0	0	0	
<i>Communities and Volunteering</i>						
Community Hubs	62	56	56	35	(21)	Slippage to future years
<i>Communities - Culture, Sport and Leisure</i>						
Gateshead International Stadium Investment	0	85	85	85	0	
PEOPLE						
<i>Children and Young People</i>						
Children's Three bed Residential Home	0	237	237	348	111	Increased use of grant
Extensions and adaptations to the homes of foster carers	160	310	210	60	(150)	Slippage to future years
School Condition Investment	1,800	1,800	1,800	2,000	200	Increased use of grant
Schools Devolved Formula Funding	250	250	250	490	240	Increased use of grant
Schools Basic Need Funding	12,590	5,000	5,000	2,000	(3,000)	Slippage to future years
Schools SEN High Needs Funding	0	2,028	2,028	1,028	(1,000)	Slippage to future years
Family Hubs	0	61	61	88	27	Increased use of grant
<i>Adult Social Care</i>						
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	1,950	2,211	2,211	2,396	185	Increased use of grant
Technology Enabled Care	150	100	100	100	0	
Telecare Equipment	75	75	75	75	0	
Sister Winifred Laver Centre	3,628	4,815	4,815	4,815	0	
Social Care System	250	718	1,060	1,060	0	
PLACE AND ECONOMY						
<i>Environment and Transport</i>						
Bensham Road Corridor	676	326	163	63	(100)	Slippage to future years
Flagged Footways	340	340	340	340	0	
Flood Alleviation Investment	5,483	5,483	5,483	483	(5,000)	Slippage to future years
Local Transport Plan - Integrated Transport	1,233	2,826	1,121	1,121	0	
Local Transport Plan - Planned Maintenance	3,288	4,997	4,961	4,211	(750)	Slippage to future years
Quays fixed and VMS signage	500	450	450	100	(350)	Slippage to future years
Quays traffic signal upgrades	241	180	180	30	(150)	Slippage to future years
Replacement Bins	130	133	133	133	0	
Riverside Park	685	722	150	150	0	
Salix Energy Efficiency Works	150	150	150	150	0	
Traffic Sign Replacement	150	175	75	50	(25)	Slippage to future years
Transforming Cities (Tranche 2)	6,904	11,298	11,562	4,000	(7,562)	Slippage to future years
Unclassified Road Resurfacing - Micro Asphalt	500	547	547	547	0	
Gateshead District Energy Scheme - Old Ford/Nest House	114	301	301	101	(200)	Slippage to future years
Street Lighting Column Replacement	1,698	1,698	1,698	1,698	0	
Traffic Signal Renewal	350	659	350	350	0	
Unveiling the Angel	290	300	10	10	0	
Greenhomes Chopwell	0	364	0	0	0	
District Heating and Private Wire Connections	0	0	0	15	15	Project completion costs
Solar PV	0	0	0	67	67	Project completion costs
<i>Economy</i>						
Baltic Quarter Remediation	0	88	88	88	0	
Blaydon Business Centre Extension	821	0	0	0	0	
Broadband Delivery UK	82	82	82	72	(10)	Slippage to future years
Digital Gateshead	790	869	869	828	(41)	Slippage to future years
Greensfield Business Centre Refurbishment	62	242	242	142	(100)	Slippage to future years
High Street North - Future Place	20	42	42	42	0	
UKSPF	0	960	960	960	0	
<i>Housing</i>						
Block Communal improvements	705	705	705	0	(705)	Other movements
Building Safety Improvements	790	8	1,736	1,446	(290)	Other movements
Communal Mechanical & Electrical Works	579	718	725	725	0	
Contractual Obligations	2,000	1,700	1,700	0	(1,700)	Other movements
Decent Homes	5,351	7,958	7,804	8,607	803	Other movements
Development Site Preparation Works	850	945	945	945	0	
Digital Transformation	700	650	650	345	(305)	Slippage to future years
Domestic Heating Improvements	2,604	2,837	2,837	2,837	0	
Fixed budget fees	550	550	550	550	0	
Garage Improvement Programme	200	259	100	10	(90)	Slippage to future years
High Street South	1,627	686	686	36	(650)	Slippage to future years
HRA Commercial Property Improvements	50	79	79	79	0	
Major Investment Scheme	1,970	328	164	164	0	
Metrogreen	73	99	66	66	0	
Safety & Security	59	59	59	59	0	
West Askew Road junction improvements	2,786	2,786	2,786	786	(2,000)	Slippage to future years
Regeneration and Demolition	1,259	1,259	1,042	759	(283)	Slippage to future years
Aids & Adaptations	1,500	1,500	1,500	3,000	1,500	Other movements
Basement Improvements	0	100	1	1	0	
Door & Window replacements	797	876	377	417	40	Other movements
Environmental & Estate Improvement	100	143	19	19	0	
ICT Refresh	40	40	40	279	239	Other movements
Lift Replacement Programme	0	590	623	688	65	Other movements
New Build/Acquisition - Various	3,295	3,651	797	1,468	671	Other movements
Passive Air Units	0	80	80	80	0	
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	0	0	2,854	3,502	648	Allocation of grant
Tyne Bank	0	0	57	57	0	
Housing Development	2,000	500	500	375	(125)	Slippage to future years
Stock Project Management	0	0	0	100	100	Other movements
RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT AND REPUTATION						
<i>Resources, Management and Reputation</i>						
Gateshead Quays	20,377	21,153	18,153	10,000	(8,153)	Slippage to future years
Baltic Quarter Enabling Infrastructure	214	222	222	226	4	Project investigations

	Approved 2023/24 Allocation £000	Revised Q1 Allocation £000	Revised Q2 Allocation £000	Revised Q3 Allocation £000	Variance £000	Comment
Customer Experience	112	123	123	123	0	
Gateshead Quays Multi Storey Car Park	116	116	116	116	0	
Health & Safety	963	872	872	566	(306)	Slippage to future years
Major Projects - Project Management Costs	290	290	340	340	0	
Refurbishment of Metrology Lab	195	153	153	15	(138)	Slippage to future years
Replacement of Fleet and Horticultural Equipment	2,275	1,525	1,525	1,525	0	
Strategic Maintenance	1,485	1,901	1,901	1,901	0	
Technology Plan: Infrastructure	3,840	2,683	2,683	2,483	(200)	Slippage to future years
Technology Plan: Transformation Through Technology & New Ways of Working	369	500	500	500	0	
Installation of Electric Vehicle charging points in Council Depots	1,162	1,148	90	93	3	Project investigations
IT Strategic Plan	261	226	171	106	(65)	Reduction in Capital Costs
Specialist equipment to improve inclusion for Children and Young People - High incidence needs	30	15	15	22	7	Increased demand
Specialist IT equipment for Children and Young People with low incidence needs (hearing and vision impairment)	30	30	30	40	10	Increased demand
Blaydon West Primary School	0	0	7	8	1	Project investigations
LOAN						
<i>Environment and Transport</i>						
Loan to Gateshead Energy Company District Energy extension	4,209	1,709	1,709	1,709	0	
Grand Total	112,075	113,468	106,755	78,002	(28,753)	

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24

The 2023/24 Prudential Indicators were agreed by Council on 23 February 2023 (column 1). This is now compared with the 2023/24 actual Q3 position as at the 31 December 2023 (column 2).

Certain Treasury Management indicators must be monitored throughout the year on a regular basis in order to avoid breaching agreed limits. The capital expenditure and capital financing requirement indicators have been revised in line with the revised budget and none of the other approved Prudential Indicators set for 2023/24 have been breached.

Capital Expenditure		
	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator	2023/24 £000 Quarter 3
Non-HRA	89,526	52,810
HRA	22,549	25,192
Total	112,075	78,002
To reflect the reported capital monitoring agreed by Council during the year		

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream		
	2023/24 Reported Indicator	2023/24 Quarter 3
Non-HRA	15.53%	NA
HRA	40.90%	NA

Capital Financing Requirement		
	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator	2023/24 £000 Quarter 3
Non-HRA	423,998	425,591
HRA	345,505	345,505

Authorised Limit for External Debt	
	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator
Borrowing	865,000
Other Long Term Liabilities	0
Total	865,000
Maximum YTD 31/12/2023 £684.966m	

Operational Boundary for External Debt	
	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator
Borrowing	850,000
Other Long Term Liabilities	0
Total	850,000
Maximum YTD 31/12/2023 £684.966m	

The Council's actual external debt at 31 December 2023 was £684.966m. It should be noted that actual external debt is not directly comparable to the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary, since the actual external debt reflects the position at one point in time.

Adherence to CIPFA code on Treasury Management

The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.

Upper / Lower Limits for Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator		2023/24 £000 Actual Position	
	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Actual Percentage	Maximum YTD
Under 12 months	15%	0%	2.78%	2.78%
12 months to 24 months	19%	0%	3.02%	3.02%
24 months to 5 years	22%	0%	7.69%	9.15%
5 years to 10 years	22%	0%	10.98%	11.71%
10 years to 20 years	17%	0%	5.04%	6.50%
20 years to 30 years	41%	0%	6.65%	6.65%
30 years to 40 years	42%	0%	32.73%	33.46%
40 years to 50 years	41%	0%	29.64%	33.29%
50 years and above	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
All within agreed limits.				

Upper / Lower Limits for Maturity Structure of Variable Rate Borrowing

	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator		2023/24 £000 Actual Position	
	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Actual Percentage	Maximum YTD
Under 12 months	16%	0%	1.46%	2.92%
12 months to 24 months	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
24 months to 5 years	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
5 years to 10 years	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
10 years to 20 years	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
20 years to 30 years	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
30 years to 40 years	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
40 years to 50 years	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
50 years and above	11%	0%	0.00%	0.00%
All within agreed limits.				

On 8 March 2007, Council agreed to the placing of investments for periods of longer than 364 days in order to maximise investment income before forecasted cuts in interest rates. An upper limit was set and agreed as a new Prudential Indicator.

Upper Limit on amounts invested beyond 364 days

	2023/24 £000 Reported Indicator	2023/24 £000 Actual Position	2023/24 £000 Maximum YTD
	Investments	15,000	0

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COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Beadle will move the following motion:

The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.

Analysis by the Child Poverty Action Group shows that 900,000 children living in poverty in England do not currently qualify for free school meals because the Conservative Government introduced an arbitrary £7,400 household income threshold in 2018.

A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns mental health problems and cost-of-living pressures on families are among the complex reasons for increased absenteeism.

Scrapping the two-child limit is the most cost-effective way to reduce child poverty. It would lift 250,000 children out of poverty and mean 850,000 children are in less deep poverty.

The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families including 5330 children are affected by the cap.

Council resolves to:

Call on the UK Government to scrap the two-child benefit cap. We ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to Liz Twist MP, Kate Osborne MP and Ian Mearns MP expressing the Council's support for the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap and encouraging them to raise this matter in Parliament.

Proposed by: Councillor R Beadle

Seconded by: Councillor D Duggan

Supported by: Councillor I Patterson
Councillor A Wintcher
Councillor D Welsh

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COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

AMENDMENT TO NOTICE OF MOTION

ITEM 11a – TWO CHILD BENEFIT CAP

Councillor J Adams will move the following amendment:

Insert two new paragraphs at the beginning:

“This Council notes the achievements of the Labour Government of 1997-2010 in reducing child poverty. When Labour entered power in 1997, one in three children were living in families that were officially living in poverty. By 2010 research by the Resolution Foundation showed that the number of children living in poverty in the UK had reduced from 3 million in 1998 to 1.6 million in 2010.

“This council also recognises the significant harm caused since 2010 by both the Liberal Democrat-Tory Coalition and the Conservative governments since 2015 as a direct result of welfare reform, a benefits freeze, the closure of Sure Starts and austerity, all of which have increased poverty and damaged the economy of the North East and the well-being of its residents.”

Replace “The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families including 5330 children are affected by the cap.” with:

“Gateshead Council notes that child poverty has increased in Gateshead since 2010, with over a third of our children living in poverty (39% in the latest figures). An estimated 14.5 million people are now living in poverty, 22 per cent of the population, including 4.3 million children. The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families, including 5330 children, are affected by the two-child limit.

“This Council recognises the ongoing work being done across Gateshead to deal with the consequences of these policy decisions. We have invested in making sure our residents have better information, advice and guidance, which according to Citizens Advice Gateshead has resulted in an additional income of £12 million for our residents

in 2022/23. Council staff should be congratulated on the excellent work they have done delivering the Household Support Fund, free school meal vouchers during school holidays, funding older person households in need, creating Warm Spaces and funding voluntary and community organisations.”

Delete final paragraph and replace with:

“We ask the Chief Executive to write to our MPs expressing the Council’s support for the removal of the two child cap among other anti-poverty measures, including an extension of the Household Support Fund, an increase in the threshold for access to free school meals, a fundamental reform to universal credit, an end to zero-hour contracts and fire and rehire, a bold cross government child poverty strategy, free breakfast clubs in every primary school and an end to the bedroom tax. The public finances are in a woeful state after 14 years of mismanagement, but welfare must be reformed as soon as practical and must be a priority for public spending.”

Proposed by: Councillor J Adams

Seconded by: Councillor S Potts



COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Adams will move the following motion:

This Council is pleased to announce that it is working with Out North East to deliver Pride in Gateshead 2024.

Pride in Gateshead will fly the flag for equality and bring communities together for a programme of events on an annual basis. As a Council we have always upheld the values of inclusivity and respect, whilst working towards strong community cohesion in Gateshead – something this programme will strengthen.

Pride in Gateshead will take place in August 2024 and celebrate the Borough's proud, diverse, and inclusive LGBTQ+ community and its many allies. Delivered by Gateshead charity Out North East, this free festival will have an engaging and entertaining programme of activities and events for all communities to enjoy, including:

- Pride Picnic in the Park – Saltwell Park will host a family fun day with craft activities, circus skills, theatre performances, music and entertainment, sporting skills, advice and support stalls, and food concessions.
- Pride in Gateshead Concert – Gateshead Quayside will be brimming with pride with a main stage of national and local performers.
- Pride in Bowling – Pelaw Bowling Club will host its first Pride tournament.
- Plus, satellite events held at community venues, town centres and at Pride Media Centre, Pelaw.

This Council is proud to be able to support Out North East in the delivery of Pride in Gateshead 2024 and will work with the charity to deliver this inclusive programme of activity. Working with the organiser, we hope that Pride in Gateshead will become a firm fixture in the North East Pride calendar on an annual basis.

Proposed by: Councillor J Adams

Seconded by: Councillor D Burnett

Supported by: Councillor K Dodds
Councillor C Buckley

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