Gateshead Council

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 4 March 2024 at 5.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	**Apologies**
2	**Minutes** (Pages 3 - 10) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024.
3	**Review of the Budget Management Process** (Pages 11 - 24) Presentation of Strategic Director of Resources and Digital.
4	**Digital and Online Services** (Pages 25 - 44) Presentation of Strategic Director of Resources and Digital.
5	**Work Programme** (Pages 45 - 48) Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director Corporate Services and Governance

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 22 January 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J Eagle (Chair)

                      Councillor(s): C Buckley, R Beadle, D Bradford, D Burnett,
                      B Clelland, T Graham, J Green, S Green, M Hall,
                      J Simpson, J Turner, J Wallace and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): D Duggan and D Weatherley

CR21   MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

CR22   FINAL REPORT ON REVIEW OF LEISURE

The Committee received a report explaining why Cabinet took a decision to close two leisure facilities in July 2023.

The final report was sent to the Committee for comment, and it was agreed recommendation 9 will be kept under review.

RESOLVED:
        (i)   The Committee considered the information provided in the report.
        (ii)   The Committee agreed on the final report.

CR23   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL'S FUEL POVERTY ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report to be updated on fuel poverty and the implementation of the fuel poverty action plan.

The National Energy Action (NEA) estimate there are currently 6.5 million households in poverty, unable to afford to heat their homes to the temperature needed to keep warm and healthy. This figure of 6.5 million significantly exceeds their previous prediction, which in October 2021 was 4.5 million.

The government uses the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency definition to consider if a household to be fuel poverty. This means three important elements are used to determine if a household is fuel poor: household income, household energy requirements and fuel.

The fuel gap is used to provide additional income to bring a household to the point of not being fuel poor.

The most recent data available is from 2019 however, we estimate this will be much larger in 2024. The data tells us living in urban areas are most likely to be in fuel poverty whilst rural households have the largest poverty gap.

It is estimated that Gateshead has in excess of 12,000 fuel poor households, this is a conservative estimate and one we believe will continue to rise year on year. In response to this Gateshead Council created a Health and Wellbeing Implementation Plan within which there is a commitment to "develop local support and food networks to reduce food and fuel poverty."

Gateshead Council have developed a fuel poverty action plan which has been supported from Council reserves. The priorities in the action plan and next steps are;

- **Information gathering and sharing.**

  o Continue to develop our advice, information, and guidance around fuel poverty, increase our distribution network and signposting tools.

  o Create a Gateshead Fuel Poverty Forum to bring cross sector partners together to ensure we have a full understanding of all the work, opportunities, and challenges around fuel poverty in Gateshead and can respond in a targeted way.

- **Signals and targeting of groups most at risk.**

  o We will continue to work with partners to maintain a programme of energy road shows.

  o We will continue to develop the tools available to support our Warm Space hosts to signpost and make good referrals.

- **Improving energy efficiency.**

- **Income maximisation and reducing fuel costs.**

  o Continue to fund advice, information, and guidance for Gateshead residents.

  o Seek to create a small grant programme to continually develop our Warm Space Network.

- **Ensuring adequate fuel/energy advice and support is readily accessible to residents.**

  o Continue to develop and improve the on-line advice, information, and guidance resources on the Council's website.

  o Continue to inform residents and provide signposting information

through various communication channels.

- **Campaigning for policy change.**

  - ○ Recruitment of Service Manager for the Communities and Volunteering Team. We anticipate the eventual post-holder will play a critical role in the further development of policy and supporting senior officers to lobby effectively.

  - ○ Develop a media campaign and communication strategy to identify and promote campaigning priorities.

The Committee discussed in detail how their residents can gain advice and information for their energy bills. The Council's website has information on for support and guidance, residents can also speak to Citizen Advice who can advise on different grants available and refer them to the Green Doctor. The Green Doctor will visit the resident's home and assess how energy efficient it is, they can then advise based on the assessment.

The Green Doctor is current receiving over 600 referrals which is more than average and are looking to bring another service to accommodate the level of referrals.

The Committee were notified in the cold weather damp and mould will grow in homes. In winter residents will naturally coverup the drafts in their homes, however this reduces the air circulation with damp and mould increasing. If residents are struggling with damp and mould, there is a household fund available through the Council that residents can be referred to. There is no guarantee the household fund will continue; the team are working hard to keep the fund going as it will have a detrimental impact on the region.

The Committee also queried standing charges, are you still charged if the heating is not used? The Committee were informed standing charges are charged daily even if the heating is not being used, this is a common question amongst the public, but it is also a common issue that has significant financial implications to residents.

The Committee raised issues on the quality of the current housing stock, and how much in repairs were required to make homes suitable and more economically efficient. There are ongoing discussions to identify all houses in that need work to make more efficient, there is also ongoing conversations within the private sector, as a Council we can look to join these projects up.

RESOLVED:
    (i)   The Committee gave their opinions on the proposed next steps.
    (ii)   The Committee noted the year long prohibition.
    (iii)   The Committee noted the DWP Household Support Fund.

CR24   REVIEW OF COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING - SIX MONTHLY MONITORING

REPORT

The Committee received a report to provide a summary update on action taken to implement the recommendations of the review on the Community Wealth Building.

In 2022 the Corporate Resources and Overview Committee agreed the scope for the Community Wealth Building review was focused on;

- Making community wealth building central to Gateshead strategic direction through its strategy.
- E-learning modules to be developed on community wealth building which are available via the intranet for all staff across the Council.
- Review spend analysis of the top 100 suppliers to identify where contracts could be delivered locally, addressing gaps in the local supply chain and those opportunities offered to local suppliers.
- Explore the development of social enterprises through the work of Economic Development.
- Improve SME's access to contract opportunities through improving our internet pages and having a greater presence on social media.
- Supporting the development of a more inclusive economy by working with other organisations to embed community wealth building through the Community Practice meetings and discussions at Anchor institute meetings.

After a number of evidence gathering sessions the final report on 17th April 2023 identified 10 recommendations, those being;

- Recommendation 1 – continue to drive community wealth building through commissioning and procurement, recruitment, and economic development activity.

- Recommendation 2 – procurement documentation and communications should be reviewed to ensure that there are no barriers for local SME's (where this is possible).

- Recommendation 3 – undertake further investigation as to why local organisations do not engage with tender processes.

- Recommendation 3(a) – further networking activity for local suppliers and CVS's should be explored by Economic Development.

- Recommendation 4 – ensure that all officers engaged in commissioning and procurement activity across the Council undertake the e-learning community wealth building module.

- Recommendation 5 – continue with the engagement with anchor organisations to explore joint working on the following:

- o Commissioning and procurement activity
- o Recruitment drives and skills development
- o Reviewing of land and property assets held by anchor organisations in Gateshead to see if they could be re-purposed
- o Develop a carbon reduction/energy transition approach with anchor organisations
- o To undertake workforce analysis, identification of gaps with parts/cohorts of citizens more distant from the labour market –

- Recommendation 6 – further develop the social value work through the newly appointed Social Value co-ordinator role and by working with the VCSE sector, schools, voluntary groups, and internal colleagues to maximise social value benefits through future procurement opportunities. Look to develop 'Our Gateshead' web page to include social value 'asks', this would allow VCSE's, schools and voluntary groups, to submit social value requests and tenderers to see what those requests are and commit to deliver them during their contract period.

- Recommendation 7 – Continue to develop and grow the generative economy working with local organisation to ensure they are fit to compete to maximise their success in future tender and quotation opportunities through pre- procurement market engagement sessions and by encouraging suppliers to attend the NEPO Business Club events.

- Recommendation 8 – support the development of the social economy and alternative business models, including cooperatives and community interest companies that have the potential to provide goods and services that meet community need and address gaps in Council and anchor organisation supply chains.

- Recommendation 9 – consider developing a social value framework for all planning and development to maximise future planning activity to maximise social and community benefits including residents access to employment opportunities arising from major regeneration projects through the Gateshead Works Service.

- Recommendation 10 – Continue to explore opportunities for collaborating with the Anchor Alliance set up by the North of Tyne Combined Authority to enable us to build on the Anchor organisations we work with.

In the next six months the following actions are planned:

- Recommendation 2 – the review of procurement documentation will be completed, and new documentation implemented in accordance with the Procurement Act.

- Recommendation 4 – officers involved in commissioning and procurement activity will have to complete the Community Wealth Building Training when they participate in a procurement process. The draft Community Wealth

Building Policy will also be shared.

- Recommendation 5 – the Anchors will continue to meet and explore opportunities for further joint working to retain maximum wealth in Gateshead.

- Recommendation 8 – the Council will continue support the development of the social economy and alternative business models including intensive work with the 2 groups that are interested in progressing the Community Asset Transfers of the leisure centres that were closed by the Council.

- Recommendation 9 – the Council will continue to support Gateshead to Thrive through the development of Social Value within the Borough, through promoting Gateshead Exchange and the use of Social Value Toolkit in procurements.

The Committee were introduced and given a demo to the Gateshead Exchange website. This is a service designed to bring suppliers, schools, colleges, community groups and voluntary, community and social enterprises together.

On the website there are options to request or offer support in varies ways i.e., materials, volunteers, or a specific service. When a request is submitted procurement will review and match with the appropriate partner. The website is regularly reviewed to ensure the requests are still warranted.

RESOLVED:

    (i)   The Committee are satisfied with the progress to date.
    (ii)   The Committee are satisfied with the impacts to date.

CR25   **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee reviewed the work programme and noted the following changes;

A report on Regent Funeral Services will be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Resources OSC.

RESOLVED:

    (i)   The Committee noted the proposed amended programme.
    (ii)   The Committee noted the work will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Chair………..……………..

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Council Finances & Monitoring

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SRUTINY COMMITTEE   MARCH 2024

Scope of todays Session

Budget Management of the Council's

Revenue General Fund.

2023/24 Budgeted Expenditure and Income	*Budget Cost*	*LESS Budget Income*	*EQUALS NET Budget*
	Gross Expenditure	**Gross Income**	**Net Expenditure**
	£'000	**£'000**	**£'000**
Integrated Adults' and Social Care Services	134,598	(41,822)	92,776
Children's Social Care and Lifelong Learning	108,830	(55,139)	53,691
Health and Wellbeing (including Public Health)	30,198	(8,016)	22,182
Office of the Chief Executive	1,510	(531)	979
Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities	76,919	(46,757)	30,162
Economy, Innovation and Growth	14,155	(10,234)	3,921
Corporate Services and Governance	10,996	(3,806)	7,190
Resources and Digital	79,052	(64,648)	14,404
Corporate Growth	2,630	0	2,630
Non Council Services - Corporate Items			
Contingencies, levies etc	32,181	(11,049)	21,132
Revenue cost of capital	32,916	(98)	32,818
	523,985	**(242,100)**	**281,885**
To be Financed By;			
(RSG, Top up, Retained Rates)			(72,787)
Other Grants			(62,866)
Public Health			(17,787)
Council Tax			(110,473)
Collection Fund Surplus			(1,085)
Earmarked Reserves			(16,887)
Total Budgeted Council Funding			**(281,885)**

Overview — Revenue Net Budget

Senior Management Oversight

▶ The Council must manage its budget as a whole to make sure that expenditure is not more than its income or funding in any year.

▶ Budget holders are those responsible and accountable for managing a specific budget. These are usually Service Director level however they can delegate these responsibilities down the structure. Circa 94 budget holders in Gateshead Council.

▶ A budget holder will be responsible for managing specific areas of budget usually within a Service. The aim should always be to spend within their budget envelope and achieve income and they will be accountable for the financial consequences of any decisions made.

▶ Budgets are monitored on a risk basis based on size and volatility but all financial positions are reported into the Treasurer and Corporate Management team on a regular basis for accountability.

▶ Budget performance is reported to corporate resources OSC on an annual basis and is a corporate KPI

Budget Management Support

Budget and Actual Visibility
Budgets are loaded in the financial system each year before April 1st and available in "real time"

The aim is to issue monitoring reports in 5 working days of the period end. Meetings are scheduled to discuss and update the projections. The projection is a look forward to the end of year actual position or "outturn"

Designated Finance Support
Each budget holder is assigned a specific Finance Business Partner to assist and support them.

Clear Deadlines
A monitoring timetable is produced by financial management based on risk

The projection will be as good as the information available at a point in time, the time/ knowledge and experience of the budget holder and available trends and external info available.
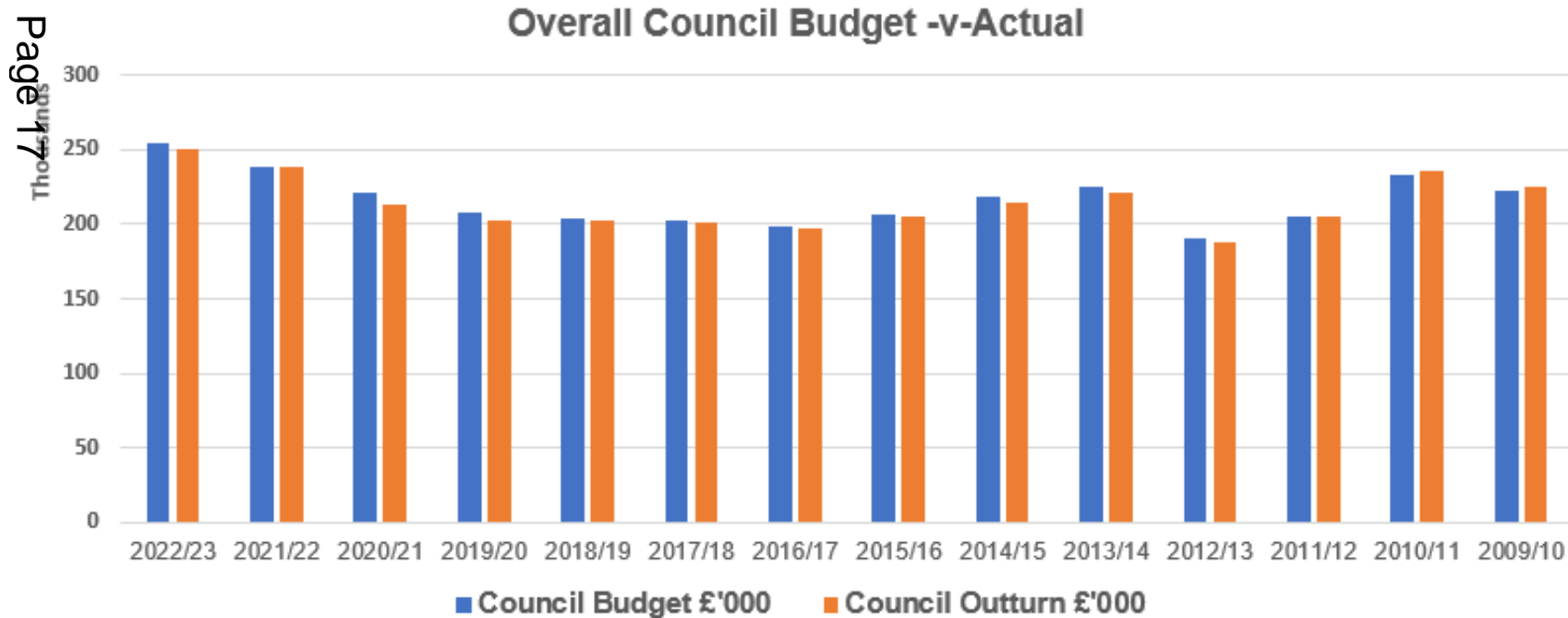
Training
The development of Online E modules have provided extra training and guidance for officers. A budget holder manual is also available on the Councils intranet.

Audit of Budget Management

- ▶ The budget monitoring processes of the Council are a key system which is subject to annual audit by Internal Audit.

- ▶ The results of those audits over the last 5 years is:

- ▶ 2019/20   Operating Well

- ▶ 2020/21   Operating Well

- ▶ 2021/22   Satisfactory

- ▶ 2022/23   Operating Well

- ▶ 2023/24   Operating Well

- ▶ In addition to internal audit. Mazars the Council's external auditor considers the effectiveness of the Council's budget management systems as part of the Value for Money assessment and has never made any adverse comments on the arrangements we have on place.

Overall Budget Performance

▶ Gateshead has a strong track record – 11 years of budget delivery

Overall Council Budget -v-Actual

Council Budget £'000   Council Outturn £'000

Years shown: 2022/23, 2021/22, 2020/21, 2019/20, 2018/19, 2017/18, 2016/17, 2015/16, 2014/15, 2013/14, 2012/13, 2011/12, 2010/11, 2009/10

Aim: To deliver within budget

An overspend would require unplanned use of reserves which is a red flag to external audit and Public Sector bodies

An underspend adds money to the general reserve

Quarterly Budget Performance

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m
2021/22			
Qtr1	238.758	238.499	(0.259)
Qtr2	238.758	238.103	(0.655)
Qtr3	238.758	239.025	0.267
Qtr4 Outturn	238.758	238.327	(0.431)
2022/23			
Qtr1	254.304	255.505	1.201
Qtr2	254.304	259.667	5.363
Qtr3	254.304	253.431	(0.873)
Qtr4 Outturn	254.304	250.931	(3.373)
2023/24			
Qtr1	289.903	291.01	1.107
Qtr2	281.885	284.66	2.775
Qtr3	281.885	281.276	(0.609)
Qtr4 Outturn			

Quarterly Budget Performance

▶ In 2022/23 the quarter 2 projected outturn forecast an overspend of £5.4 million. Following the reporting of this urgent managerial actions were taken, led by the Deputy Chief Executive to address the overspend, including special leadership sessions highlighting the importance of senior management to address the issue and their accountability as budget holders.

▶ The actions included a freeze on all but essential recruitment, a freeze on or deferral of non-essential expenditure, further maximisation of income opportunities, additional energy savings measures, review of commissioning.

▶ This approach had an immediate positive impact and an underspend was forecast by quarter 3.

Budget Management Principles

▶ CIPFA, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, is the professional body for accountants in public finance.

▶ All accountants are trained to be "prudent" – they plan for the worst!

Key definition

Prudence:

A reserved approach which recognises losses as they arise, but defers profits until they are fully realised.

The preparation of financial statements is based upon a number of judgements and estimates. These include depreciation, allowance for debts and accruals. Prudence requires that these judgements are not over optimistic. As a consequence, when preparing financial statements, it is considered prudent to recognise in full any potential losses that might arise whilst anticipated profits are not recorded until fully realised.

Outturn Projection - Variables

▶ Projections at the start of the year are more likely to capture known cost pressures and known income losses leading to a more pessimistic position.

▶ Staffing – vacancies will be projected to be filled in full however and delays in finding suitable replacements can lead to underspends against budget.

▶ Projections will become more refined throughout the year as trends can be assessed and as more accurate information is received from external partners, or third party costs or funding is confirmed.

▶ By quarter two all budget holders will have had a meeting and an opportunity to discuss projections with financial management.

▶ Budget holders should always feed financial updates in a timely manner to accountants.

▶ It is vital Groups and Service portfolio budgets are carefully managed and proactive action and intervention taken to deliver. This can take time and change the outturn by the end of the year.

▶ Significant one-off unbudgeted income streams and additional grants are received in year and cannot be captured until fully confirmed.

Improvements

▶ Due to the increasing financial challenges faced by the Council it is more important than ever that budgets are delivered.

▶ From 2023/24 the presentation of the monitoring has been reviewed to reflect the need for the budget to be actively managed by managers to ensure that it is delivered. The new format reinforces this management responsibility by recognising interventions that have a positive impact on the overall service budget. Service Directors are now asked to identify interventions to deliver their budget responsibilities.

Appendix 2- Revenue Monitoring Summary 2023/24

Service	Budget	Projected Outturn After reserves Before Action	Management Intervention	Under/ Over Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

▶ Work is ongoing to reinforce the ordering process across the Council this will ensure all financial commitments in relation to orders can be captured accurately within the monitoring.

▶ Overall financial awareness and training will continue to be rolled out to Services

Conclusion

Strong Effective Financial Management Remains Critical,

► Many of the drivers for cost pressures continue,

  ► Quantum of savings requirement over Medium Term Financial Strategy.

  ► Continued increase in demand in Adult and Children's Social Care Services.

  ► Unfunded pay pressures, such as public sector pay award and the Governments National Living Wage aspirations, which also impacts on negotiations with care providers and commissioning costs.

  ► The performance of traded and investment income linked to the wider economy.

  ► Increased cost pressures in relation to utilities and inflation on supplies.

  ► Significant uncertainties and volatility in relation to the pandemic impact on income from business rates and council tax.

  ► Addressing the health, employment and poverty inequalities that the pandemic has added to. Increased demand for services such as business advice and support. welfare, mental health services and debt advice.

  ► Continue to improve budget process through training and systems development.

Any Questions?

Digital inclusion

Corporate Resources OSC
4th March 2024

Digital Inclusion

Digital Inclusion = various wording and definitions, e.g. digital citizenship, digital divide, digital access…

What we know so far:

- Digital exclusion is a huge and complex problem, and not static
- Context is key – the people best placed to support people are the ones closest to them
- What works is meaningful collaboration and co-production
- We can't do digital, if we don't do inclusion

The Council's Digital Declaration

1. **Putting users first -** Our services will be tailored to fit our users' needs, prioritising users above professionals and the organisation.

2. **Creating technology that connects -** Our IT systems will join up effectively, using simpler and more reliable software with open standards to give our data a common structure.

3. **Building trust in data practices -** We will only ever share information safely and securely, building trust among our partners and users, and better supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities.

4. **Leading digital transformation -** We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for organisational transformation, and ensuring all those we work with embrace this Digital Declaration.

5. **Fostering open and collaborative working -** We will champion an open working culture that helps every colleague to succeed with working digitally, through sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.

Our Digital Services Offer - Including, Involving, Improving

- Assisting and supporting

- Increasing digital skills residents and employees

- Involving residents – digital panel www.gateshead.gov.uk/digitalpanel

- Making improvements – adapting and changing ways of working and the system

- Better use of data – real time
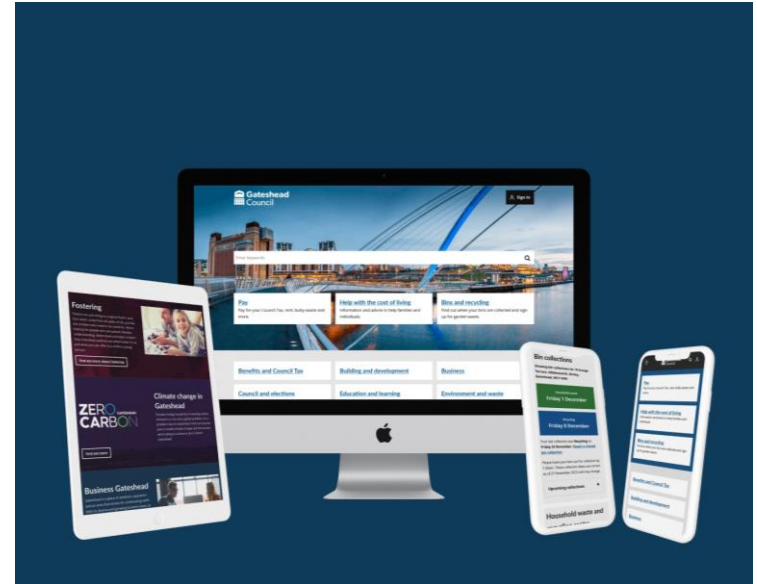
Digital Inclusion – Our Workforce

- Two dedicated IT Trainers

- Since April 2020 we have delivered 1,816 training sessions to employees and councillors

- Training Programme is available and can be booked online via the corporate Learning Hub
  - In addition, we also offer be-spoke training sessions, one to one sessions, face to face, virtual training and online courses on learning hub.
  - Creation of training documentation, videos how to / FAQ's available online for all employees to access via our IT online portal assytNet.

- Focus Groups – both employees and councillors

- How to / did you know IT snippets/ guidance issued weekly in the Council News

Gateshead Digital Inclusion Project

- Alessandra Mondin - Gateshead Digital Inclusion in Health and Social Care Project Manager at Connected Voice (Health Equity Team), since April 2023

- Gateshead Digital Inclusion Steering Group

- Cross-sector partnership between NHS, Gateshead Council, VCSE organisations, research, industry

- Priority setting

Gateshead Digital Inclusion Steering Group: Initial Priorities

- Mapping
- Information sharing
- Gateshead Digital Inclusion Network
- Connecting and collaborating with different organisations across sectors – e.g. with Primary Care
- Funding – circulate opportunities, coordinate collaborations
- Influencing – on matters such as good practice, research, design, accessibility
- Workforce development
- New solutions for tech assisted care and wellbeing
- Coordinating projects in the community

New: UKSPF Digital Inclusion Project

To work with 20 micro, small, and medium VCSE organisations (annual income <£300,000) based and working in Gateshead

- With a footprint in areas of highest need relating to digital poverty and/or most digitally excluded demographics

- Outcome: improve access to the organisation and the perception of their facilities/amenities

- Grant up to £3,450 each + project support throughout, free training and opportunities, join Gateshead Digital Inclusion Network - until March 2025

Funded by UK Government

POWERED BY
LEVELLING
— UP —

Gateshead Council

Connected Voice Health Equity

We amplify voices.
We champion equality.
We inspire change.
We support action.
We connect people.

One Strawberry Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4BX
Alessandra.Mondin@
ConnectedVoice.org.uk
www.connectedvoice.org.uk

Gateshead Libraries Digital Inclusion Offer

Rachel Ridley

- ✓ Computer provision forms an essential part of our statutory service, with book lending
- ✓ 8 libraries comprise the Council's statutory service
- ✓ Additional 6 libraries run by volunteer associations
- ✓ Good geographic spread
- ✓ Range of opening hours including evenings and weekends
- ✓ Delivery from our Digital team in other community venues also

Data, Devices & Connectivity

Access to an internet enabled device (such as smartphone, tablet or laptop) is essential in participating digitally. However, many cannot afford an internet-enabled device or have sufficient broadband or mobile data.

➢ We provide free access to up-to-date computers (including up-to-date security) and have 147 public PCs across our libraries

➢ Free Wi-Fi is offered in all our libraries – easy to use, no sign up necessary

➢ Access to printers for a small charge

➢ Charging points & workspaces for own devices
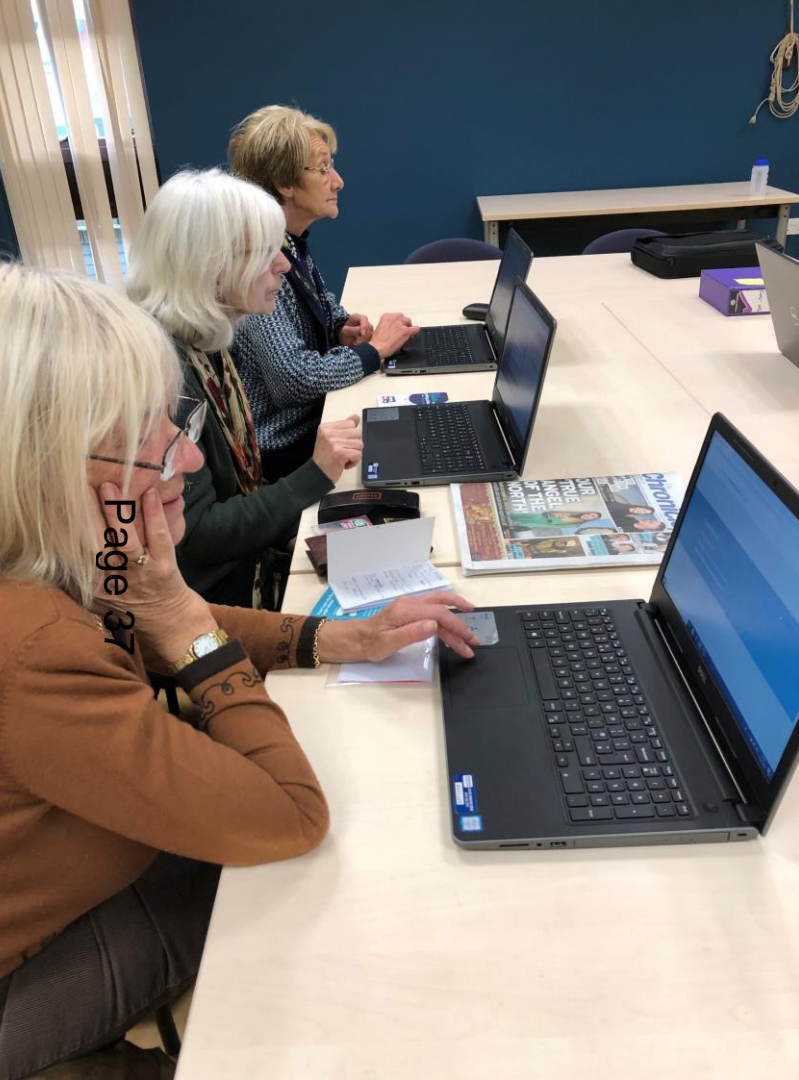
Support

Access to support to use equipment, websites and apps to develop confidence and skills is also much needed.

➤ Trained Library staff support residents to get online every day – the breadth of enquiries continues to evolve
➤ Our Digital Team provide more formal support, including group skills sessions such as jobseeker support & basic computer skills
➤ Drop-in sessions offered in a variety of settings to address specific issues or encourage communities to find out more
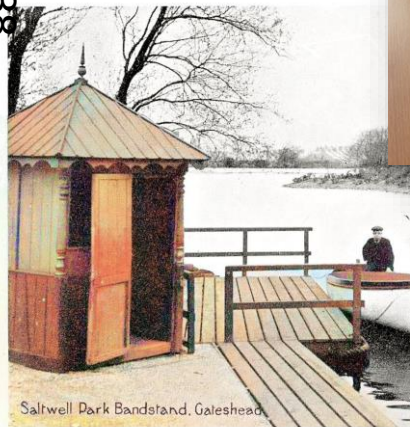
Motivation

A lack of interest or being unable to see any benefit are well-documented contributing factors to non-use of the internet. We offer an innovative and flexible approach to engaging with Gateshead residents who are reluctant to use or do not have access to digital devices.

Themed 'learn by stealth' sessions are used to entice reluctant learners to engage with digital skills. These include sessions about:

➤ using photo editing

➤ using Vinted

➤ tracing your family tree

➤ creative design skills to use our MakerPlace equipment

➤ wellbeing apps, and much more

Our users

➢ Library users are typically older learners, unemployed people and those on low income

➢ Younger learners do also need support, e.g., to complete forms more easily after a reliance on smartphone access only

➢ Referrals from Jobcentre Plus, Housing services, Work Coaches and other partners

➢ Access to the internet for homeless and travellers – no need to provide proof of permanent address

➢ Increased demand for Wi-Fi and printing from diverse mix of residents

Some of our current partners include:

- DWP
- Working Gateshead
- 2way Tenancy
- Refugee Services
- Edberts House
- Winlaton Community Centre
- Teams Life Centre
- Looked After Children & Young People Service
- Bespoke Gateshead, Castleview Group
- Community Link Workers
- RNIB

Case Study: Teams Life Centre

The Digital Team worked with volunteers at the Teams Life Centre to improve their digital skills and, in becoming Digital Champions, support others who would make use of their new IT suite. After a number of weeks, the volunteers then toured the Central Library and found out more about the resources available to them there.

The sessions have made a very big difference to me, I've learned skills about using a computer. I want to be able to learn how to use a computer for myself so I don't have to rely on other people to be able to do things online
Digital Skills course participant

Just wanted to let you know of the amazing support I have had from jacky at gateshead library. She pointed me in the direction of national careers service and learn my way as well as trying to get me some help with a laptop. Suffering with anxiety and was really struggling this help has been amazing there a credit both jacky and national careers service.
Digital skills course participant

I've proved to myself I can do something I thought I couldn't on the computer
Digital Skills course participant

It will help me to be able to help my children use the computer and be safe online
Digital skills course participant

Case Study: data and hardware gifting

- As part of the Good Things Foundation's National DataBank scheme the Digital Team have worked with a number of partners to distribute free SIM cards to people in need. The SIMs last 6 months with a free monthly allocation of 20gb data plus unlimited calls and texts.
- The criteria are simply that the individual must be over 18 and in need to data to do everything in their life that they need to be able to do. The team offer support for switching SIMS, retaining original numbers, downloading necessary apps and take the opportunity to tell clients about other sessions that can be offered.
- Gateshead Libraries has also been part of National Device scheme to gift laptops and tablets.

I am currently working with a patient who often does not have any credit on her phone to be able to ring people back. She is currently trying to avoid drinking alcohol and has other mental health issues that she is trying to sort out. She is very much ready to engage with agencies however often she cannot ring them back due to not having suffice or any credit on her phone.
Community Link Worker

I'd like to refer someone for your free SIM card service. They receive UC, and are struggling to make their monthly contract payments due to the escalating cost of living. As a result they are no longer able to make or receive calls and are struggling to manage and organize necessary healthcare appointments and debt support.
Community Link Worker

Digital Switchover

- What it is
  - The Public Switched Telephone Network to be retired
  - Landline calls will be delivered over digital technology called Voice over Internet Protocol which uses a broadband connection
  - Timeline
- What it could mean for our communities
- What we've done
  - Within the Council
  - Council news and information
  - Community event in summer at the Central Library

Next steps

- Members seminar

- Digital Switchover community event at the Central Library

- Revised Digital Declaration

- Published digital principles and standards

- Further updates to Members

Gateshead Council

TITLE OF REPORT: **Annual Work Programme**

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

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SUMMARY

The report sets out the provisional work programme for the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

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1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 20 July 2023.

2. At its meeting on 16 October 2023, Councillors agreed to amend the work programme to enable that meeting to focus solely on the evidence gathering process for the OSC review of leisure and further amendments have been made to balance up the workplan and to incorporate reports requested by the Committee.

3. Appendix 1 sets out the current workplan as agreed by Councillors at its last meeting on 22 January 2024.with any further proposed amendments highlighted in red..

Recommendations

4. The Committee is asked to:

    a. Note the proposed amended programme;

    b. Note that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

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Contact: Andrea Tickner   **Extension** 5995

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Corporate Resources OSC Work Programme 2023-2024	
12 June 2023	• **Performance Management and Improvement Framework – Year End Performance 2022-23 –** Lindsay Murray • **Resilience and Emergency Planning Annual Update** – Michael Reynard *(including focus on strength/robustness of our response to emergencies caused by climate change, including the power network, thinking about high winds damaging power lines, felling trees, flood risks during heavy rainfall)* • **Work Programme –** Andrea Tickner
4 September 2023	• **Health and Safety Performance – Annual report –** Stephen Foggin / Michelle Brown • **Update on voluntary sector resilience** – Alison Dunn *(to focus on how voluntary sector is surviving in challenging financial times)* • **Scoping Report – Leisure Services Review** – Andrea Tickner • **Work Programme –** Andrea Tickner
16 October 2023	• **Evidence Gathering – Review of Leisure Services –** Alice Wiseman, Lindsay Murray, Michael Lamb, John Shiel, Andrea Tickner plus external guests.
27 November 2023	• **Performance Management and Improvement Framework 2023-24 – Six Month Update** Lindsay Murray/Richard Hall • **Annual report on implementation of the Workforce Strategy –** Michelle Brown • **Annual Budget Review including savings delivery –** John Shiel • **Interim Report on Review of Leisure –** Andrea Tickner • **Work Programme –** Andrea Tickner
22 January 2023	• **(Impacts of World Events (**including Brexit, legacy of Covid, Conflict in Ulkraine etc)) – Removed from the workplan - Committee agreed at its November meeting that this report was no longer required . • **Final Report on Review of Leisure –** Andrea Tickner

	• **Implementation of the Council's Fuel Poverty Action Plan –** Alison Dunn • **Review of Community Wealth Building – Six Monthly Monitoring Report** – Janine Copeland • **Work Programme –** Andrea Tickner
4 March 2024	• **Corporate Asset Management Plan Annual Update –** *(Potential to focus on use of assets in terms of efficiency and/or safety, use of the Civic Centre – whether there are plans to actively market the vacant space) -* Sandra Watson Proposal to move to April Committee • **Review of Budget Management Process –** Presentation by John Shiel • **Digital and Online Services –** Marisa Jobling (moved from January 2024 to balance up work plan) • **Work Programme – Andrea Tickner**
15 April 2024	• **Information Governance Annual Update** – Angela Simmonds-Mather • **Review of Community Wealth Building – Six Monthly Monitoring Report –** Janine Copeland Agreed to be postponed at January Meeting • **Corporate Asset Management Plan Annual Update –** *(Potential to focus on use of assets in terms of efficiency and/or safety, use of the Civic Centre – whether there are plans to actively market the vacant space) -* Sandra Watson Propose to move from March Committee • **Capturing wider regeneration benefits of Gateshead Quays –** *(to explore the benefits of a wider geographical area including the Old Town Hall, the Town Centre, Baltic Quarter etc)* **–** Peter Udall • **Work Programme –** Andrea Tickner

To be added to a future meeting:
- **Review of Community Wealth Building – Six Monthly Monitoring Report**
- **Review of Regent Funeral Services**

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