

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 5 September 2016

PRESENT: Councillor John Eagle (Chair)
Councillor(s): L Caffrey, P Dillon, P Foy, T Graham, J Green, S Green, M Hall, B Oliphant and M Ord

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): R Beadle, M Charlton, M Henry and N Weatherley

CR10 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Beadle, M Charlton, M Henry and N Weatherley.

CR11 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2016 be approved as a correct record, with the inclusion of Councillor S Green as present.

CR12 ROLE AND REMIT

The terms of reference for the Committee, as detailed in the Council's Constitution, were reported.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's remit and terms of reference be noted.

CR13 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17

The Committee received a report detailing revisions to the 2016/17 work programme for the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

CR14 CORPORATE STRATEGIC TRACKER AND TARGET INDICATORS - 2020

The Committee received a report outlining the proposed service targets (Strategic Indicators – SIs) to be agreed for the period up to 2020.

The targets will be used a tool for driving continuous improvement and stretching

performance against a particular measure over a period of time and will enable the delivery of Vision 2030 and the Council Plan.

It was reported that Cabinet approved revisions to the corporate strategic indicator set, including the replacement of the rolling five-year performance targets with a single fixed 2020 target.

RESOLVED: i) The Committee endorsed the proposed approach.

CR15 THE COUNCIL PLAN - YEAR END ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY 2015/2016

The Committee received a report providing the year end assessment of performance for 2015/16, along with an update on the performance and delivery of the Council Plan 2015-2020.

The year end 2015/2016 assessment of performance report relates to the remit of this Committee and focuses on achievements, areas for improvement and future actions.

Where available, information was included in the report in respect of how well the Council is performing in relation to the 2015/16 targets.

The Council's performance in relation to the equalities objectives was also included in the report.

It was noted that 42% of respondents to the employee survey felt that generally communication wasn't good within the Council. The Committee agreed that this is an area requiring improvement and noted evidence that activity is underway to address this.

Concerns were raised that 47% of respondents to the employee survey felt they did not have opportunities to develop their careers at the Council.

The Committee welcomed a greater focus on digital inclusion, following the identification of Gateshead (by Doteveryone) as an area where digital exclusion is likely to occur. It was also suggested that more detailed information be presented to Councillors on the work being undertaken to improve digital inclusion, for consideration and discussion.

It was suggested that technology could be provided in public locations to increase the public's engagement with the Council's consultations and surveys.

It was queried whether Councillors are automatically signed up to receive the Gateshead Now emails. Information was also sought on how the email addresses (for the distribution of Gateshead Now) were obtained.

It was queried why the free Wi-Fi in the centre of Gateshead is not available.

RESOLVED: i) The Committee was satisfied with the activities

undertaken to achieve the desired outcomes in the Council Plan 2015-2020.

- ii) That the views of the Committee be used to inform the Council's approach.

CR16 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The Committee considered a report detailing the number of requests for information received by the Council, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015.

The report provided the background to the Act, highlighted the number of requests received and provided information resulting from analysis.

Over the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 the number of requests received was 1206, representing an 8.16% increase on requests received in the previous year and a 453.21% increase since the implementation of the Act in 2005.

Of the requests received 94.84% were dealt with within the 20 day timescale. This represents a decrease of 0.1% in performance on the 2014 figure.

Eight requests were subject to an internal review. The original decision maker's decision was upheld in all eight cases.

It was noted that one requester has exercised the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner. This has yet to be determined.

Comparative data was also included showing the number of requests received by Gateshead and its neighbouring authorities in 2015.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the information be noted.
 - ii) That the Committee is satisfied with the operation of the Freedom of Information Act procedure.

CR17 THE IMPACT OF THE GATESHEAD FUND 2015-16: A CASE STUDY

The Committee received a case study report on the impact of The Gateshead Fund and in particular the allocation of the Gateshead Funding during 2015/16 to support, develop and build capacity in the voluntary and community sector.

It was noted that the interactive presentation will also be made available to Councillors outside of the meeting and that more detailed financial data is available on request.

The Committee praised the reporting of the impact of the Gateshead Fund and were pleased to note a focus on support to grass roots and small organisations.

It was commented that it is often relatively small contributions that deliver a great

dividend.

The Committee agreed the importance of being able to provide smaller funds to support activities undertaken by volunteers such as litter picks and not just formal groups.

It was also commented that the activities operated by the Older Peoples Assembly have transformed Deckham Community Centre and the local community.

It was queried whether the local history projects that have been supported by the Council could be collated and details published online. It was also said that the professional input of the Library Service into many of these projects should be acknowledged.

It was commented that in previous funding years the Councillors in Wardley and Leam Lane have helped support over 450 cadets in the Durham Army Cadet Force using the Local Community Fund. This was cited as a good project that could be considered for funding in future years as children from various wards in Gateshead participate in the annual camp.

RESOLVED: i) That the Committee praised the overall impact of the Gateshead Fund.

CR18 RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING FRAMEWORK - PROGRESS UPDATE

An update report was provided on the progress made during the last six months in relation to the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework.

The key focus over the last six months for Resilience and Emergency Planning has been to continue to work in collaboration with partners and communities; increasing capacity and capability to respond; strengthening community resilience; and ensuring lessons are learnt to respond to future incidents.

Updates were provided against the themed areas.

The vision for Resilience and Emergency Planning will be to maintain that 'Gateshead is a safe and resilient place to live, work and visit'.

It was queried whether the Sustainable Urban Drainage system at Shelly Drive, Gateshead has been successful to date. It was agreed that an update will be obtained from the engineers on the severity of the event that the system is expected to mitigate and whether such an event as occurred since its installation.

It was requested that future reports include details on the implementation of the Flood Risk Management Strategy.

It was reported that a Councillor's Seminar for Emergency Response will take place

on Wednesday 7 December 2016. The session will follow a different format to regular seminars and will present an exercise with a scenario for all Councillors to participate in a mock incident. More details will follow separately.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the progress be noted.
 - ii) That the Committee is satisfied with the progress achieved within the last six months.
 - ii) That a further progress report be provided in April 2017.

Chair.....