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All Members of the Council

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Contact Karen Robson
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Date: 14 September 2016

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Centre, at **5.35 pm** on **Thursday, 22 September 2016** to transact the following business:-

- 1 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held 14 July 2016** (Pages 5 - 10)

- 2 Official Announcements**
(announcements may be made by the Mayor, Leader of the Council or the Chief Executive)

- 3 Questions from Members of the Public**
(to consider any questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 7)

- 4 Presentation by Abigail Pogson, Managing Director Sage Gateshead**

- 5 Petitions**
(to receive petitions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10)

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

- 6 **Multi Year Settlement and Efficiency Plan** (Pages 11 - 26)

- 7 **Amendment to the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19** (Pages 27 - 36)

- 8 **Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee 2015/16** (Pages 37 - 46)

- 9 **Lettings Policy Review** (Pages 47 - 108)

- 10 **Charging Structure for Garden Waste Collections 2017** (Pages 109 - 114)

- 11 **Strategic Review of Flooding Response and Distribution of Sandbags** (Pages 115 - 130)

- 12 **Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17** (Pages 131 - 174)

- 13 **Report from the Cabinet** (Pages 175 - 182)

MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

- 14 **Notice of Motion**
(to consider any notices of motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.1)

- 14a Notice of Motion - Devolution (Pages 183 - 184)

- 14a(i) Alteration to Notice of Motion - Devolution (Pages 185 - 186)

14b Notice of Motion - Devolution (Pages 187 - 188)

14c Notice of Motion - Road Safety (Pages 189 - 190)

14c(i) Alteration to Notice of Motion - Road Safety (Pages 191 - 192)

14d Notice of Motion - Grammar Schools (Pages 193 - 194)

15 Questions

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Barker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'M'.

Mike Barker
Acting Chief Executive

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 14 July 2016

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR A THOMPSON (CHAIR)

Councillors: J Adams, R Beadle, C Bradley, M Brain, L Caffrey, M Charlton, B Clelland, P Craig, S Craig, D Davidson, W Dick, S Dickie, P Dillon, C Donovan, A Douglas, D Duggan, K Ferdinand, M Foy, P Foy, M Gannon, A Geddes, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, M Graham, T Graham, J Green, S Green, G Haley, M Hall, S Hawkins, M Henry, M Hood, H Hughes, J Lee, P Maughan, J Kielty, K McCartney, L Kirton, J McClurey, J McElroy, E McMaster, M McNestry, P Mole, B Oliphant, C Ord, M Ord, S Ronchetti, R Mullen, C Simcox, J Turnbull, L Twist, I Patterson, J Wallace, N Weatherley and A Wheeler

APOLOGIES: Councillors: K Dodds, John Eagle, J Graham, L Green, C McHatton, C McHugh and J Simpson

Mohammed Bilal from the Gateshead Muslim Society gave the opening address.

CL20 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 2016

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held 26 May 2016 be approved as a correct record.

CL21 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(A) Appointment of Chair of Planning and Development Committee

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That Councillor Bob Goldsworthy be appointed as the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee and that the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to agree appointments to the resultant vice chair vacancies.

(B) Great British Care Awards 2016

The Mayor announced that Special Olympics Gateshead had been successful in winning the 'Putting People First' category at the Great British Care Awards 2016.

This award recognises teams that have embraced the Putting People First /

Personalisation agenda and who can demonstrate an innovative approach to empowering people to have more control over the support they need in their lives.

In recognition of this achievement, the Mayor presented the award to: Ann Clarke, Jonathan Brown, Andrew Knox, Andrew Dodd and Andrew Pagan, Special Olympic Athletes.

CL22 PETITIONS

Councillor Duggan submitted a petition on behalf of local residents in respect of street cleaning in Low Fell.

CL23 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

CL24 RECRUITMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval for interim arrangements covering the period between the departure of the current Chief Executive, Jane Robinson, on 29 July 2016, and the recruitment of a permanent replacement.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- i) That it be noted that the Chief Executive, Jane Robinson, leaves the Council on 15 August 2016.
 - ii) That the recruitment process to be followed to identify a permanent replacement be noted.
 - iii) That Mike Barker be appointed as Interim Chief Executive and head of paid service until a permanent replacement commences their term of office.

CL25 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 - 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2021/22.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- i) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2017/18 to 2021/22 be approved.
 - ii) That the review of both general fund and strategic earmarked Council reserves be noted.
 - iii) That it be noted that the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Chief

Executive, will continue to produce and monitor on an annual basis, a rolling programme of five-year budget forecasts taking account of the key issues facing the Council.

iv) That it be noted that the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Chief Executive will continue to keep under review and update the Medium Term Financial Strategy as appropriate to respond to Government policy and funding announcements.

CL26 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2016/17 - FIRST QUARTER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report that informed of the latest position on the 2016/17 capital programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the first quarter to 30 June 2016. The report assessed the variances from the approved programme and detailed the proposed financing of the capital programme. The report also considered the impact of CIPFA's Prudential Code on the capital programme and the monitoring of performance against the statutory Prudential Indicators.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - i) That all variations to the 2016/17 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved as the revised programme.

ii) That the financing of the revised programme be approved.

iii) That it be confirmed that the capital expenditure and capital financing requirement indicators have been revised in line with the revised budget and that none of the Prudential Indicators set for 2016/17 have been breached.

CL27 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of a number of amendments to the Constitution.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

CL28 REPORT FROM THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council reported on a number of key issues currently affecting the Council.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

CL29 NOTICE OF MOTION - HATE CRIME

Councillor P Foy moved the following motion (altered in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2):-

“This council believes Gateshead is stronger because of its diverse communities and that society benefits from this diversity.

This council believes that the borough benefits from residents with different ethnicities, nationalities, religions and sexual orientations. We welcome the positive contributions of all residents, regardless of background, to life in Gateshead. We therefore wish to reassure all people living in Gateshead, with our proud heritage of migration and diversity, that they are valued members of our community.

This council believes that acceptance and the celebration of diversity are the hallmarks of modern society and that no one should be forced into conformity. We therefore express concern at the significant increase of hate crime reported since the referendum on 23rd June. Racism, xenophobia and hate crime of any nature have no place in our society. Gateshead Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally.

We congratulate the anti-racism charity Show Racism the Red Card on their 20th anniversary and commend their work here in Gateshead in providing young people and adults with high quality anti-racism education.

Show Racism the Red Card tell us that their education workers have witnessed for some years growing anti-immigrant sentiment and anti-Muslim hatred to add to the older more established racisms. They have highlighted their concerns that migrant communities are being demonised for societal problems which have varied and complex causes and that the recent referendum on the EU was dominated by anti-immigrant sentiment leading many to see it as a referendum on our borders.

We cannot let the EU referendum result boost the confidence of those with racist ideas and attitudes, we cannot allow far-right organisations to grow and descend upon our communities, we must all stand firm in challenging racism where we see it.

Gateshead Council resolves to:

- 1) Support action by Northumbria Police to tackle hate crime;
- 2) Invite Show Racism the Red Card to address a future meeting of the Council;
- 3) Assist organisations like Show Racism the Red Card and other programmes that promote acceptance and diversity to access the support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia, so as to enable them to offer their programmes to every school in Gateshead;
- 4) Take positive action to promote diversity and acceptance, including information on reporting hate crime in Council News and on the Council’s website.”

On the motion being put it was declared to be carried.

CL30 NOTICE OF MOTION - CHANGES TO PENSIONS

The Chief Executive advised that the Monitoring Officer had exercised his discretion to grant a dispensation to those Councillors who would otherwise have had to declare a personal and/or prejudicial interest in this matter, on the grounds that without the dispensation, the number of persons prohibited would be so great a proportion so as to impede the transaction of business.

Councillor L Caffrey moved the following motion:-

“Council notes that:

- Women born in the 1950s have been hit particularly hard by the equalisation of pension age and they have had very little time in order to prepare properly for the changes, being given little or no notice so were unable to be prepared.
- The issue of fairness has been largely ignored in these proposals.
- A petition to Parliament with nearly 200,000 signatures resulted in a debate in Westminster Hall with many examples of the impact of these changes to women shared.
- Local MPs have highlighted the issues nationally representing many constituents affected by these changes.
- Government have not amended the proposals at all yet this issue is continuing to be of concern to huge numbers of women approaching pension age.

Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State to express concerns for the hundreds of women in Gateshead affected by these unfair changes highlighting the concerns raised in the debate and urging the government to compensate properly for the changes.”

On the motion being put it was declared to be carried.

CL31 QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted.

JANE ROBINSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Leader reminded councillors that Jane Robinson was attending her last meeting before starting her new job at Durham University. He referred to her excellent service to the Council as both Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and Council agreed that it should place on record its appreciation for Jane’s service.

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

MULTI YEAR SETTLEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PLAN

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to accept the Government offer of a multi-year financial settlement to 2019/20 and the approval of the proposed efficiency plan submission to Government.
2. The need for effective medium term financial planning in local government has never been more important. The Government's response to concerns from the sector has been to make an offer of a guaranteed minimum grant envelope, paid to councils for a four year period from April 2016 covering Revenue Support Grant, Transitional Funding and Rural Services Delivery Grant.
3. To take advantage of this offer each authority has until 14 October 2016 to accept the offer and publish an efficiency plan which is to be locally owned and driven. The attached report sets out the Council's proposed efficiency plan for submission to government in support of a recommendation to accept the four year financial settlement to 2019/20.
4. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

5. It is recommended that Council accept the Government's offer to Gateshead of a multi-year settlement to 2019/20 to support financial planning over the period and also approve the submission of the Council's proposed efficiency plan as outline in Appendix 2 of the attached report.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Multi Year Settlement and Efficiency Plan

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive
Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

Purpose of the Report

1. To request Cabinet to recommend to Council the acceptance of the Government offer of a multi-year financial settlement to 2019/20 and the approval of the proposed efficiency plan submission to Government.

Background

2. The need for effective medium term financial planning in local government has never been more important. The Government's response to concerns from the sector has been to make an offer of a guaranteed minimum grant envelope, paid to councils for a 4-year period from April 2016 covering Revenue Support Grant (RSG), Transitional Funding and Rural Services Delivery Grant. The Secretary of State has said that this should increase local authority certainty and confidence and would be a step towards supporting councils to strengthen financial management and work collaboratively with local partners when considering the way local services are provided in future.
3. The expectation is that if Council's do not accept the offer they will participate in an annual process with CLG / Treasury and may shoulder a disproportionate share of unforeseen costs.
4. To take advantage of this offer each authority has until 14 October 2016 to accept the offer and publish an efficiency plan which is to be locally owned and driven. This report sets out Gateshead Council's proposed efficiency plan for submission to government in support of a recommendation to accept the 4 year financial settlement to 2019/20.

Proposal

5. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council the acceptance of the Government's offer to Gateshead of a multi-year settlement to 2019/20 to support financial planning over the period and also to approve the submission of the Council's proposed efficiency plan as outlined at appendix 2.

Recommendations

6. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council the acceptance of the multi-year settlement offer from Government to Gateshead and also the approval of the proposed efficiency plan.

For the following reasons:

- i) To contribute to the good financial management practice of the Council.
- ii) To assist the financial sustainability and planning of the Council over the medium term.

Policy Context

1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is the mechanism for supporting the redirection of resources to deliver Vision 2030 and the Council Plan. It also ensures a sustainable Gateshead through best use of resources to deliver value for money services and long term financial stability in a challenging financial environment.

Background

2. The Council’s current MTFS for the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 was approved by Council in July 2016. The MTFS covers a five year period and is reviewed at least annually, although due to changes in Government policies, as well as the UK’s decision to leave the European Union, more frequent reviews may be required in the short term.
3. Medium term financial planning is taking place against the background of significant funding cuts for local government. In addition, the Council, in common with other local authorities, continues to be at risk from financial pressures, including workforce management, waste management, demand for social care and from welfare reform. This environment will challenge the ability of the Council to respond to the needs of Gateshead residents and the wider community.
4. The current MTFS was reviewed to include the impact of the above issues and updated accordingly. It outlined a strategy to deal with a funding gap of around £71.9m for the three year period 2017/18 to 2019/20. The overall five year funding gap over the life of the MTFS was estimated at around £92.3m.

Multi Year Settlement

5. Acceptance of the settlement refers to Revenue Support Grant, Transitional Funding (for first two years) and Rural Services Delivery Grant. Note that acceptance of the offer does not include any other grant allocations. Gateshead allocations over the period are shown in the table below for information;

MULTI YEAR SETTLEMENT	£M	£M	£M	£M
	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
Revenue Support Grant	37.258	27.783	21.423	15.012
Rural Services Grant	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Transition Grant	0.000	0.000	N/A	N/A

6. The acceptance of the four year settlement from 2016/17 to 2019/20 of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) provides some clarity and certainty around one of the main sources of government funding to the Council over these years. Albeit this clarity confirms a continued significant reduction year on year in Government financial support whilst at the same time leaving the Council unclear as to other significant funding streams outside of the three specific grant areas. The figures outlined in the settlement for RSG have been used within the current MTFS projections.

The Efficiency Plan

7. There is no prescribed format or content of the plan from Government however the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Local Government Association (LGA) have published best practice tips of what should be included. This guidance has been followed in drafting a plan for Gateshead.
8. The plan is wider than just the MTFS and requires other documents and narrative to fully understand a Council's current plans and aspirations over the period to 2019. Links to supporting documentation have been included in the plan.

Consultation

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

Alternative Options

10. There are no alternative options identified. The Council could choose to not accept the offer of a 4 year financial settlement but there is no information or evidence available to indicate that this would provide a viable alternative approach.

Implications of Recommended Option

11. Resources

- a. **Financial Implications** - the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that acceptance of the multi-year financial offer will provide some clarity over the revenue support grant to be made available over the period, leading to improved financial planning. The proposed multi-year settlement identifies a significant reduction in funding from Government for this Council and the wider financial context over the medium term remains uncertain.
- b. **Human Resource Implications** – No direct HR implications arise from submission of the plan
- c. **Property Implications** – No direct property implications.

12. **Risk Management Implication** – No direct implications

13. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – No direct equality and diversity implications.

14. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – No direct crime and disorder implications.

15. **Health Implications** – No direct health implications.

16. **Sustainability Implications** – The MTFS provides a framework for ensuring a sustainable financial position over the medium term.

17. **Human Rights Implications** – No direct human rights implications.

18. **Area and Ward Implications** – No direct implications

Efficiency Plan 2016 to 2019 For Gateshead Council

Cllr Martin Gannon – Leader of Gateshead Council

As leader of Gateshead Council I am proud of what has been achieved in a very challenging financial context. Gateshead is an ambitious council and we intend for this to continue, working alongside our partners and local communities to achieve our planned outcomes to benefit the people of Gateshead. We believe that Gateshead is a resilient place with many strengths, that we will continue to build on into the future and this plan sets out the key actions that we intend to take over the next few years to ensure that the Council supports the well-being of individuals, communities and businesses within the borough.

Mike Barker – Acting Chief Executive Gateshead Council

Public service funding pressures over the past five years and more have meant we have had to make significant changes, including reductions in services and staffing. We have already made steps towards working differently and over the coming years this will need to continue. We intend to hold fast to our core values of working with integrity, whilst being inclusive and inspirational. Although the financial context continues to be increasingly challenging the Council has a track record of identifying and achieving significant savings and of delivering budget outturn within agreed budgets. The work of the Council will continue to be supported by a framework of effective financial planning which will be aided by clarity of future Revenue Support Grant allocations over the period to 2019/20. The clarity in the specific grant areas covered by the proposed multi-year settlement does confirm the significant and continuing year on year reductions in funding from Government to this Council.

1. Background

The need for effective medium term financial planning in local government has never been more important. The government's response to concerns from the sector has been to make an offer of a guaranteed minimum grant envelope, paid to councils for a 4-year period from April 2016 covering Revenue Support Grant, transitional funding and Rural Services Delivery Grant. The aim is to support councils to strengthen financial management and work collaboratively with local partners when considering the way local services are provided in future. We intend to take advantage of this offer through submission of this efficiency plan to government in support of acceptance of the settlement to 2019/20. This will aid our financial planning and sustainability over the period and give a degree of clarity on the continuing Government funding reductions to this Council.

2. Links to Corporate Plans

The Council's efficiency planning over the period is underpinned by several key enabling strategies which ensure all our resources are targeted and managed in the most efficient way possible and these have been outlined briefly below;

- **Vision 2030** developed and agreed by the Gateshead Strategic Partnership (GSP) and is the overarching strategy setting out the long term vision and priorities for the future of Gateshead.
- **Council Plan** sets out the collective five year ambitions for the Council and how Vision 2030 will be achieved. It sets out clear policy directions which will help the Council make choices about where limited resources should be focused and what changing roles and responsibilities will mean for employees, buildings, and relationships with partners. Our collective strategy will be based on **Maximising growth** by generating income for the Council through more Council tax, more business rates, external funding and trading. **Reducing costs** both by managing demand in areas where there is significant cost pressure but also by increasing efficiency for example through technology and changes to the way the Council works, such as

consolidation of buildings and reducing costly processes. **Increasing collective responsibility** by encouraging and supporting local people, partner organisations, businesses and local communities to play a more active role in achieving the outcomes for Gateshead.

- **Medium Term Financial Strategy** sets out the Council's current financial position and outlook and overall financial strategy over a five year period to 2021/22
- **Workforce Strategy** proposes an overarching approach to the management of the council's employees and reflects the way in which the council values its employees.
- **Digital Strategy** sets out a five year strategy to develop and implement digital public services
- **Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan** aims to ensure that the Council's property resources are maximised to be used as effectively and efficiently as possible and aligned to achievement of strategic priorities

3. What We Are Doing

3.1 Growing Our Local Economy

A significant amount of activity is already being delivered by the Council and its partners, to promote sustainability and growth across the borough and evidence of this is readily visible through the recent regeneration of the town centres in Blaydon, Birtley, Felling and Central Gateshead.

The Gateshead **Economic Growth Acceleration Plan 2013-18** provides a broad framework to direct the investment of our resources, including the Capital Programme and creation of an Economic Growth Reserve, to ensure economic growth and job creation opportunities are maximised.

In the future the urban core will be the focal point for economic growth and transformation, becoming the main contributor to Gateshead's economic prosperity. As well as being the cultural, retail, tourism and leisure hub, it will be a regionally significant office location for professional, financial and business services; particularly within the Accelerated Development Zone. The growing creative and ICT/media industries are already well represented and demonstrate strong growth potential. Investment will also be encouraged within the key employment areas of Team Valley and Follingsby, the primary centres for manufacturing industries and distribution services.

In addition the Council's Rural Economic Strategy (2015-2020) supports economic growth in the borough's rural communities, whilst contributing to growth across Gateshead and the region. Working with a range of public, private and voluntary sector partners it supports business development in sectors such as tourism and food and drink, whilst seeking to maximise the use of land and property assets for business purposes, thereby increasing business rates income to the Council. Helping residents develop the skills to access these jobs is a key aspect of the work as is helping to co-ordinate the economic objectives arising from for example the development of new housing, the growth in rural services and improvements to the natural environment.

Our strategic ambitions for economic growth will be supported by the Local Plan for Gateshead which includes the Planning for the Future Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne. This framework will help to create and sustain thriving communities and a more prosperous economy through developments, including the provision of new homes, jobs growth and a portfolio of employment land.

A three year approach including government grant allocations to 2019/20 has allowed for improved financial strategies linked closely to the outcomes of the Council plan and resilient reserve management. Indicative future budgets are linked to planned achievement of local growth of rates, council tax and trading activities.

3.2 Planned and Ongoing Transformation Programmes

In response to cuts in public funding Cabinet agreed to a major programme of change at its meeting in February 2016 to guide budget decisions and the shape of the Council in the future. Given the unprecedented scale and pace of change required a co-ordinated programme was determined to provide the best opportunity to review activities at the right time and minimise the effect on what residents may need and expect. This approach will ensure that opportunities are explored to increase income as well as closing or reducing current provision. The Council's approach within the programme is aligned with the Council Plan and is thus focused on four inter-related areas: **economic growth, managing demand, collective responsibility and efficiency** by:

- Doing all we can to support economic growth and revenue generation – given reductions in Central Government funding, success in this area will enable the Council to redirect resource to activities which protect the most vulnerable.
- Focusing on managing demand (particularly in social care) with a targeted approach, emphasising early intervention and prevention.
- Increasing collective responsibility – encouraging and supporting local people, partner organisations, businesses and local communities to play a more active role in achieving the outcomes for Gateshead.
- Continuing to drive efficiencies through changes to the way the Council works, for example, through exploiting new technology, consolidation of buildings and services, reducing complex processes and increased trading.

The change programme has four workstreams as follows:

- **People**- Adult Social Care and Children's Services – reviewing proposals for change within each of the services and consider options for earlier intervention and different ways of working with partners and other agencies.
- **Place** – increasing community and individual resilience such as enabling communities to do more themselves by actively improving the environment and promoting positive behaviours. Exploring opportunities and positive actions to achieve economic growth of the borough, maximising assets and considering the Council's approach to Housing and leisure strategy.
- **Trading and Commercialisation**—finding new opportunities to increase our income from trading activities such as establishing an energy company, bereavement service, housebuilding and trade waste.
- **Ways of Working** – considering how we can maximise the use of buildings and technology to help everyone work smarter and more efficiently, and helping the Council to get the most out of its most valuable resource, its employees. This includes delivery of Digital Gateshead 2015-2020, our five year strategy to develop and implement digital public services will help to transform how, where and when services are delivered and it will provide new opportunities for our residents, service users and customers to help themselves and others, and contribute to better outcomes for Gateshead.

3.3 Managing Current and Future Demand

Demand management is a clear focus of our overarching policy directions which are set out in our five year council plan these being;

- ✓ **Increasing community, individual and council resilience**
 - Redirecting resources to protect those most in need whilst supporting people to help themselves and seeking economic growth for local prosperity
 - Delivery of a digital strategy to provide convenient online services, improving access to information, signposting and improved opportunities to self-serve
 - Promoting health and wellbeing in communities
 - Promoting and encouraging positive behaviours like recycling and robustly tackling negative behaviours like fly tipping
- ✓ **Promoting early help and prevention**
 - Supporting people earlier so they can help themselves
 - Developing a whole system approach to preventative and assertive early intervention services alongside our partners to reduce further demand and target resources.
 - Aiming to prevent long term escalation of issues which lead to more costly outcomes in areas such as environmental issues and holistic decisions on children on the edge of care to identify more permanent better opportunities.
 - Working with partners to promote environments that contribute to health and wellbeing alongside targeted prevention programmes in communities of greatest need.
- ✓ **Targeting our effort, with partners to those greatest in need and in areas where greatest impact can be achieved**
 - Working with partners to develop person-centred service models that address multiple and complex issues. Sharing data and systems to increase targeted integrated programmes for individuals and communities most in need
 - Build on existing partnership models used by FamiliesGateshead which could see services being organised in a different way.
- ✓ **Working differently**
 - We will seek to reduce and/or change the range or level of services provided by the Council or transfer responsibilities to other providers meaning that local people can still access services which the Council is no longer able to fund.
 - Implement new delivery models within the Council or with a partner on a best value basis
 - Deliver our five year digital strategy to optimise the use of technology and deliver services more efficiently and reducing unnecessary costs through reduced duplication of effort and increased self-service.

3.4 Working in Collaboration and Partnership

Our proactive financial planning over the period will allow us to continue to work closely in collaboration and partnership with our neighbouring authorities and across public and private sector partners as well as the voluntary and community sector. In particular work continues to be progressed towards greater alignment and integration of health and social care to meet our aspirations for the health and wellbeing of local people, working with health partners e.g. through work to progress new models of care for our local health and care economy and through initiatives such as our Better Care Fund Plan for Gateshead which will see the transition of its core schemes to new models of care. More broadly, the Council has and will continue to work with health partners to develop and implement a Sustainability and Transformation Plan for Northumberland and Tyne & Wear, which will also have a specific focus on the Newcastle Gateshead local health economy.

We will continue to build on the strong foundations we have already built to date with others such as;

- **Gateshead Regeneration Partnership** - a joint venture commenced 2012 with Galliford Try, Home Group and the Council. To build 2,400 homes across 19 sites in Gateshead over 15 to 20 years.
- **Gateshead Quays** – a collaborative partnership with Patrizia UK and Ask Real Estate (appointed 2015).
- **PFI - South Tyne & Wear Waste Management Partnership** established in 2007 between Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside Councils. Service commenced 2014 and will run to March 2039.
- **PFI – Pinnacle Schools Gateshead Limited (PSG)** to design, build, finance and operate seven new schools in 2007 and 2008. PSG will manage and maintain these until 2033.
- **Energy Services Company (ESCO)** agreed 2015. Since 2011, the Council, with support from WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff, has been developing a district energy network. Construction of the energy centre began in 2015.
- **Collaboration partnerships with other LAs** e.g. Scape System Build Ltd (2006) – acts as a contracting authority and central purchasing body, joint arrangements regarding traffic lighting in Tyne and Wear, River Tyne Debris Clearance Service, Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums, Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team.
- **Collaborative partnership with public service organisations** – North East Public Service Academy and Northumbria University Trinity Square Accommodation

Under our key policy direction of “Working Differently” we will actively seek to further collaborate and integrate with partners within the borough, regionally, nationally and internationally to ensure we achieve the best solution both in finances and outcomes. Over the period we plan to continue to work with others including other local authorities, North East Combined Authority, public service providers, businesses and the voluntary sector.

Collaborative Working in Social Care

The Council is looking at its commissioning strategy and market position statement with a view to improving relationships with providers and reshaping the market in Gateshead. Given the savings challenge the Council needs to re-evaluate how services are provided including developing the voluntary and community sector.

A new delivery model for social care is currently being implemented with a single point of access, an enablement service and specialist teams (for those who cannot go through enablement or be signposted). The enablement service will be developed from a reshaped in-house domiciliary care service, which requires current packages to be transferred to the independent sector. This market has had some issues but this has been rectified through contracting of spot providers.

Gateshead has a high level of spend per head of population despite some of the lowest commissioned service rates, it has an aging population, high deprivation and poor health including high levels of obesity. The level of savings required to be made by the Council will have a significant impact upon the way in which social care will be provided in the future. There needs to be more collaborative working and integration with health partners and others. There needs to be focus on early intervention and prevention but the savings to be realised from shifting resources will be over the longer term.

The Commissioning and Quality Assurance service has been created which brings together children's and adults commissioning under one service director.

There is an integrated commissioning group with Newcastle Gateshead CCG which meets monthly. The group has oversight of the joint funding arrangements and joint reviews. There is currently a joint review of carers services with a view to jointly commissioning services in the future. Another area being looked at is intermediate care and the future need in Gateshead.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) board oversees the delivery of the BCF plan on a quarterly basis. Whilst joint working is taking place there is considerable progress required before we could say the systems are integrated.

The Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) has highlighted a Northumberland Tyne Wear health funding gap of £634m by 2021 if there are no interventions or planned solutions. This figure could be as high as £970m if the local authority social care gaps are included. There are plans in place to close the health gap which amount to £300m. The plans require scaling up prevention, health and wellbeing, increased out of hospital collaboration and optimal use of the acute sector. The scale of the challenge requires all organisations within the health and social care economy to work together to ensure services provide optimum outcomes for the population.

3.5 Engaging with Local Residents

As part of our approach to engagement we will initiate a conversation with local people and alongside our partner's co-ordinate major engagement programmes around themes such as health and environment. We undertake an annual residents survey which allows the opportunity for feedback and consultation on key matters.

Public consultations will run annually alongside our budget process with specific consultations ran as and when required. Where impacts are identified, draft equality impact assessments (EIAs) are completed and made available on the Council's website. The EIAs are updated throughout the budget process taking into account the outcome of the consultation and any other factors.

3.6 Effective Budget Planning

Medium term financial planning remains challenging and the Council's financial plan to 2019/20 has been prepared against a backdrop of unknown financial impacts arising from the devolution agenda, the UK's referendum outcome alongside a move towards a new funding system for local government. This means that forecasts will be closely monitored and potentially refreshed as consequences become clear.

The Council intends to manage financial sustainability through careful and effective budget planning, strict budget management and targeted use of resources. This can be supported through the change programme led by the Chief Executive to ensure that the right things are delivered efficiently at pace.

We will continue to look at opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce costs associated with service delivery so that any impact on our ability to ensure delivery of frontline services is limited. Last year we made efficiency and effectiveness savings of approximately £8.7m, achieved by reducing the Council's property portfolio, reductions in senior management posts, implementing service reviews, deleting vacant posts from the Council's employee establishment, as well as reducing the cost of supplies and services. These formed part of a total savings package of £18.796m in respect of the 2016/17 budget. Total budget savings identified by this Council from 2010/11 financial year now stand in excess of £130m.

The Council's MTFS 2017 to 2022 estimates that the Council will need to close a further funding gap of £92.3m over the five financial years 2017/18 to 2021/22. The Council's approach to financial planning over the medium term will include a focus on investment in growth and income generation. The Council recognises that economic growth benefits the residents of Gateshead and the businesses within Gateshead. It also strengthens the position of the Council by developing financial resilience through less exposure to reductions in government funding. The Council will retain its vision for the future of the Borough through promoting development and economic growth and this will assist in maintaining the medium term financial sustainability of the Council.

The Council is working across the organisation to identify potential savings or income opportunities to enable the delivery of £71.9m in the three years to 2019/20 ready for consultation in the autumn. A financial gap of this scale cannot be delivered through efficiencies alone given the magnitude of efficiencies already delivered. The gap will need to be closed through a combination of budget savings arising from different delivery methods, joint working, reducing or closing services, more efficient working practices supported through transformational change across the organisation. Opportunities around trading income, fees and charges and local growth will also be key in increasing the funding available on a local level.

Strong governance arrangements will ensure that monitoring and measurement of outcomes is robust. The Council has a strong performance management framework so that underperformance is tackled swiftly and proportionately and this will remain under review to ensure further improvements in accountability, effectiveness and efficiency.

Contingency budgets will be utilised where plans need more time for delivery or unforeseen circumstances occur. In addition use of reserves will be carefully planned to allow for funding of transition costs as services change to new sustainable models of delivery. The Council also holds a number of strategic earmarked reserves that are held for insurance against certain unforeseen events.

We also aim to fully maximise any flexibilities granted by Government such as the capital receipts flexibility. However given the current market and constraints associated with many of the potential development sites within Gateshead (such as contamination/topography) we are struggling to achieve the £3m capital receipts target that is required to fund existing capital projects. This means in practice that flexibility is unlikely to be available or at best

severely limited in scale. Any available flexibility will be utilised to support the implementation of the Council's Digital Strategy to help digitise service delivery and generate future revenue savings. The procurement process for the digital platform is currently ongoing but it is envisaged that we may utilise the flexibility to fund the revenue costs associated with the implementation, which could be in the region of £0.25m. Further transformational schemes may also emerge as part of the budget process and this will be kept under constant review.

4. Maintaining An Effective Balance Sheet

4.1 Asset Management

The Council has a Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan covering the period to 2020 which enables us to demonstrate how we make best use of our land and property portfolio in support of the Council plan and policies.

As a result of our plan we have been able to reduce the number of buildings from which we operate, and continue to progress a programme of rationalisation of our portfolio to enable revenue savings and work more efficiently. During 2014/15 a further 23 buildings were declared surplus to requirements. This builds on the 159 properties which were removed from the portfolio between October 2010 and March 2015 generating some £2m of savings. Rationalisation of the portfolio continues to be a priority and throughout 2015/16 further opportunities for consolidation and rationalisation of the portfolio have been progressed as a result of which the Council has been able to declare a number of additional buildings surplus to requirements and so now operates out of 243 buildings for the purpose of service delivery, of which five are leased from private providers.

The Council has created a Land Development Group with representatives from key services across the Council. The group consider how we can make best use of our surplus land and buildings taking into account such matters including market requirements and Council's Core Strategy. The group is in the process of developing a Land Development and Disposal Plan, which will bring forward suitable Council land and property assets for potential development. It is proposed that the Plan will be published later this year, with sites which are anticipated to be released to the open market within the next 3 years.

The Council is also engaged in discussions with HCA around mechanisms to accelerate the delivery of several key housing sites and is seeking a supportive and flexible response.

4.2 Capital Expenditure Plans

The Council's capital investment plans are set out in the approved capital programme that covers the period between the 2016/17 and 2020/21 financial years. The efficient and effective use of capital resources, including asset management, is fundamental to the Council achieving its medium and long term objectives. It is also critical to achieving the delivery of the required savings across the Council and providing the best possible services within Gateshead.

The availability of resources to support capital investment has had an impact upon the level of capital programme that the Council can continue to support and in recent years the General Fund capital programme has fallen dramatically but it remains significant.

In 2015/16, the Council spent £54m on capital projects, of which £36m related to the General Fund and the remaining £18m was spent on improving the Council's housing stock. Capital investment in 2015/16 included projects aimed at encouraging economic growth and housing growth within Gateshead in addition to investment in low carbon energy infrastructure such as the District Energy Network and investment in the Council's schools, technology and highway network.

The planned capital investment from 2016/17 onwards continues to be set at a reduced level, given the limitations and pressures on the available capital and revenue resources. The

approved five year Capital Programme for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21 had estimated £155m of planned capital investment (excluding Housing) and it is envisaged that additional projects will emerge over the period as major projects, such as investment in Gateshead Quays, continue to progress towards the delivery phase.

The Council continues to explore external funding possibilities when developing capital projects to minimise the borrowing requirement as far as possible. Detailed work programmes will not be committed to until the allocations have been confirmed. Projects and investment plans may therefore be re-prioritised depending on the availability of external funding.

The availability of capital receipts has also reduced in recent years as a result of the property market. The Council has identified a programme of potential asset disposals and the progress is reviewed by the Council's Land Development Group throughout the year. In general, capital receipts from the sale of assets are treated corporately to allow the Council to target resources towards the highest priority projects, although there may be circumstances where a capital receipt must be used to fund a specific scheme.

4.3 Reserves Management

Current balances and planned usage of our reserves are shown below;

Gateshead Reserves	Closing Balance March 2016 £000s	Estimated Use 2016/17 £000s	Estimated Use 2017/18 £000s	Estimated Use 2018/19 £000s	Estimated Use 2019/20 £000s	Estimated Use 2020/21 £000s	Estimated Use 2021/22 £000s	Estimated Balance As at March £000s
General Fund								
General Reserve	(16,341)	3,971	3,000	3,000				(6,370)
LMS Budget Share Reserve*	(7,046)	750	750	750	750	750	750	(2,546)
Total General Fund Reserve	(23,387)	4,721	3,750	3,750	750	750	750	(8,916)
Earmarked Fund Reserves								
Strategic Reserves								
Business Rates	(5,000)	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000		0
Insurance	(3,000)							(3,000)
Grant Clawback	(1,314)							(1,314)
Gateshead Development Pool	(6,009)	1,000	2,000	3,009				0
Economic Growth Reserve	(3,456)	1,100	1,100	1,256				0
Discretionary Social Fund Reserve	(957)	250	250	250	207			0
Strategic Change Reserve	(2,500)	1,600	900					0
Budget Flexibility Reserve	(2,996)	2,563	433					0
Ring Fenced Reserves								
Developers' Contributions*	(2,036)	446	446	351	100	100	100	(493)
DSG Reserve*	(3,357)	0	250	250	250	250	250	(2,107)
Unapplied Revenue Grants*	(4,259)	1,199	761	536	812	226	226	(498)
Public Health Reserve*	(1,772)	849	923					0
Total Earmarked Fund Reserves	(36,656)	10,008	8,063	6,652	2,369	1,576	576	(7,411)
Total Reserves	(60,043)	14,729	11,813	10,402	3,119	2,326	1,326	(16,327)
Total Ring fenced*	(18,470)	3,244	3,130	1,887	1,912	1,326	1,326	(5,644)
No Ring-fence	(41,573)	11,484	8,683	8,515	1,207	1,000	0	(10,684)
	(60,043)	14,729	11,813	10,402	3,119	2,326	1,326	(16,327)

Subject to External Audit

* Ring Fenced reserves are not available to support the Revenue Budget and Council Tax Requirement

The Council has agreed to maintain its general reserve at a minimum of 3% of the net revenue budget to cover any major unforeseen expenditure. As the Council's net revenue budget for 2016 is £198.883 this equates to around £6m. Currently the Council holds £16.3m in the general fund reserve (excluding schools balances) this is just 17% of the estimated financial gap to 2021. Of this amount almost £4m has already been committed as part of the 2016/17 budget.

Forecasts show that we will likely reach minimum balance on the general reserve during the period of the MTFs and Council may need to consider replenishment. Use of reserves will be carefully planned and agreed at budget setting stage following consultation with councillors. Reserves are reviewed at least once a year and the review in 2016 considered the current level of reserves as adequate. Expected movement of reserves over the period is shown in the MTFs document published July 2016.

Earmarked reserves are held for specific strategic purposes to help achieve key priorities over the MTFs period, for example the economic growth reserve to achieve growth and support the local economy. Or specifically to protect against certain events such as the insurance, business rate and grant clawback reserve. In periods of financial uncertainty good financial management dictates that adequate reserves are held to protect the Council any significant financial impacts.

As per the principles set out in the MTFs the Council does not currently plan to use reserves to fund shortfalls within the annual budget however in recent years reserve funds have been earmarked to support specific budget proposals to allow part year achievement where there are contractual obligations or consultation requirements that impact on the timing of delivery of savings. Reserves can only be used once and are therefore not a sustainable source of financing without placing the Council's financial position at risk. The Council's strategy is to find a more permanent solution to the funding gap, rather than a short-term solution by using reserves.

5. Strong Governance, Risk Management and Control

5.1 Governance

In April 2016, Cabinet approved a redesigned performance management framework which, along with the change programme, will continue to help deliver the Council's priorities within Vision 2030 and the Council Plan.

The Council has a clear governance structure which is regularly reviewed and where necessary adjusted to remain fit for purpose. A formal constitution is in place setting out the scheme of delegation for decisions which was last updated in July 2016 and is available on the Council's website.

The Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16 within the end of year Statement of Accounts provides a clear summary of the governance and management arrangements in place to ensure informed decision-making and explains how assurance on the effectiveness of these arrangements in the year has been provided to the Audit and Standards Committee.

5.2 Management of Key Risks

Some major funding streams are not covered by the multi-year offer while costs remain subject to pressures that are increasing but difficult to predict and control. Strong financial management requires that the Council provide for sufficient reserves and contingencies to allow for those risks to be managed.

Key risks over the period are logged in the Council's Strategic and operational risk register alongside an assessment of the impact and likelihood of the risk and the controls that are in place to mitigate them.

The Council will take account of the public sector equality duty as detailed in the Equality Act 2010.

We will also ensure continued compliance with all statutory duties and consider these when looking at reduction or change in service delivery. In light of a significantly reduced budget envelope the level of compliance will need to be assessed against risk appetite where appropriate.

6. Summary

The Council continues to face significant financial challenges that are characterised by annual deep funding reductions at the same time as very significant increasing cost pressures. The Council does however have an impressive track record of agreeing and delivering approved budgets that are set within an effective strategic and planning framework. The work of the Council will continue to be supported by this framework of effective financial planning and strong governance, collaboration and partnership. The intention remains to manage demand and grow our local economy so that individuals, communities and businesses within Gateshead can prosper. The significant continuing Government funding reductions are extremely challenging in this context but any clarity around levels of funding can assist financial planning.

Supporting Documents to the Plan can be found on the Council website;

- Vision 2030
- Council Plan
- Workforce Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Home.aspx>



COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

AMENDMENT TO THE TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT AND TREASURY STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2018/19

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of an amendment to the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy for 2016/17 to 2018/19.
2. The report proposes that the Treasury Strategy be amended to exclude the UK from the requirement to have a sovereign rating of AA+ for investment purposes. Failure to adopt this amendment could mean that the Council is in a position where no deposits can be made with UK Banks.
3. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

4. It is recommended that Council approve the changes to the Treasury Strategy as follows:
 - Section 6. Investment Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 to change to reflect the exclusion of the UK from the requirement to have a sovereign rating of AA+ as shown in Appendix 2 of the attached report.

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Title of report: **Amendment to the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19**

Report of: **Darren Collins – Strategic Director, Corporate Resources**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report asks Cabinet to review and to recommend to Council a proposed amendment to the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy for 2016/17 to 2018/19. The proposal was presented for the views of Audit and Standards Committee on the 25th July 2016.

Background

2. To provide a framework for the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources to exercise his delegated powers, the Council agrees a three year Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Strategy which is reviewed at the start of each financial year.
3. The current Strategy was approved by Cabinet on the 15 March 2016 and the Strategy states that any in year changes have to be reported and agreed by Cabinet on an exception basis. This report is to consider an in year change.
4. The current strategy requires that all countries in which the Council invests monies have a minimum country sovereign rating of AA+ and this includes the UK. However the relevance of this sovereign rating for the UK has been weakened due to the evolution of financial market regulations that has seen the link between sovereigns and their respective banks materially weakened.
5. This report proposes that the Treasury Strategy be amended to exclude the UK from the requirement to have a sovereign rating of AA+ for investment purposes.
6. Failure to adopt this amendment could mean that the Council is in a position where no deposits can be made with UK Banks.
7. The proposal was presented for the views of Audit and Standards Committee on the 25 July 2016 and the content of the report was recommended to Cabinet.

Proposals

8. Cabinet is asked to consider the amendment to the Treasury Strategy in Appendix 2 reflecting the removal of the UK from the requirement to have AA+ sovereign rating for investment purposes.

Recommendation

9 Cabinet is asked to recommend Council to approve the changes to the Treasury Strategy as follows:

- Section 6. Investment Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 to change to reflect the exclusion of the UK from the requirement to have a sovereign rating of AA+ as shown in appendix 2.

For the following reason:

- To ensure that UK banks are assessed using their individual credit ratings and not against a sovereign rating that is no longer applicable.
- To ensure that the Council fully complies with the requirements of good practice as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in its Code of Practice on Treasury Management and Prudential Code for Capital and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Guidance on Local Government Investments.

CONTACT: Stephanie Humble, ext. 3591

Policy Context

1. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council's vision and medium term priorities as set out in Vision 2030 and the Council Plan and in particular they ensure that effective use is made of the Council's resources to ensure a sustainable financial position.

Background

2. Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 specifies the powers of a local authority to borrow for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs. Borrowing is linked to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital which sets out a range of prudential and treasury indicators that must be calculated to ensure borrowing is affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Prudential Code refers to the need for a clear and integrated treasury strategy.
3. In addition, under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2003, authorities are required to have regard to the CLG's guidance on Local Government Investments. This document stipulates the requirement for an annual investment strategy to be integrated into the Council's Treasury Strategy.
4. CIPFA has produced the Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2011 (the Code) which represents best practice. The Council fully complies with the Code and this contributes towards achieving good practice.
5. Under Part 4 of the Council's Constitution the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources will produce a Treasury Policy Statement annually, setting out the general policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management function.

Treasury Policy

6. The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on the risk implications for the Council.
7. The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.
8. CIPFA's Code requires the setting out of responsibilities and duties of councillors and officers to allow a framework for reporting and decision making on all aspects of treasury management. To achieve this CIPFA has recommended the adoption of 12 treasury management practices (TMPs).

9. These principles are intended to provide a working document that forms a detailed framework for treasury management activities. The policy fully encompasses CIPFA's Code of Practice. In addition the policy fully takes account of the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the guidance issued by the CLG supporting Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 in respect of local authority investments.

Treasury Strategy

10. The Treasury Strategy for 2016/17 to 2018/19 covers the specific activities proposed for 2016/17 to 2018/19 in relation to both borrowing and investments and ensures a wide range of advice is taken to maintain and preserve all principal sums, whilst obtaining a reasonable rate of return, and that the most appropriate borrowing is undertaken. The primary objective of the investment strategy is to maintain the security of investments at all times.
11. The Council has produced the Treasury Strategy to comply with the requirements of the Code, the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council considers that compliance with the above ensures that best practice is followed.
12. Following on from the recent vote to leave the EU, Capita, the Council's Treasury Advisers produced a note providing an update on recent action taken by credit ratings agencies on the UK sovereign rating. This was to ensure that Local Authorities who have sovereign criteria in their strategy review their policy and remove the UK from this criteria.
13. The current strategy requires that all countries in which the Council invests monies have a minimum country sovereign rating of AA+ and this includes the UK. However the relevance of this sovereign rating for the UK has been weakened due to the evolution of financial market regulations that has seen the link between sovereigns and their respective banks materially weakened.
14. The result of the breakage of the link has meant that there is little or no "sovereign uplift" to any major bank ratings in the UK and beyond.
15. The Council's Treasury Advisers, Capita have advised that the UK sovereign rating is currently not a constraining factor for any UK bank ratings and while there are negative implications for the UK, its economy and financial institutions as a result of Brexit, financial markets and the operators therein are materially stronger, in terms of capital and liquidity than they were ahead of the financial crisis.
16. The Governor of the Bank of England has stated "...the capital requirements of our largest banks are now ten times higher than before the crisis. The Bank of England has stress tested them against scenarios more severe than the Country currently faces. As a result of these actions, UK banks have raised over £130bn of capital, and now have more than £600bn of high quality liquid assets."

- 17 The impact of Brexit may filter through to the individual bank ratings that the credit rating agencies supply. These ratings are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with the current strategy. We will continue to review the UK banks in line with the current strategy and advice from our Treasury advisers.
- 18 The proposed change is the removal of the UK from the requirement to have AA+ sovereign rating.

Consultation

19. Consultation on the amendment to the Treasury Strategy for 2016/17 to 2018/19, has taken place with the Council's treasury advisers (Capita Asset Services, Treasury Solutions). The outcome of the consultation process, has informed the format and content of the policy and strategy statements.

Alternative Options

20. There are no alternative options proposed.

Implications of recommended options

21. **Resources:**

a) Financial Implications - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the financial implications are set out in this report. There are no additional financial implications associated with the report itself.

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.

22. **Risk Management Implications**

The Treasury Policy and Treasury Strategy which informs activity in this area was prepared with the primary aim of minimising risk to ensure that the Council's principal sums are safeguarded. Maximising income is considered secondary to this main aim.

23. **Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

24. **Crime and Disorder Implications**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

25. **Sustainability Implications**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

26. **Human Rights Implications**

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

27. **Area and Ward Implications**

There are no direct area and ward implications arising from this report.

28. **Background Information:**

The following documents have been used in preparation of the report:

- Local Government Act 2003
- CLG Guidance on Local Government Investments
- CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital
- CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management
- Council's approved Treasury Management Practice Statements

- 6.12 The evolving regulatory environment, in tandem with the rating agencies' new methodologies also means that sovereign ratings are now of lesser importance in the assessment process. While this authority understands the changes that have taken place, it will continue to specify a minimum sovereign rating of AA+ to all banks outside the UK. This is in relation to the fact that the underlying domestic and where appropriate, international, economic and wider political and social background, will still have an influence on the ratings of a financial institution.

Creditworthiness Policy

- 6.14 The Council uses the creditworthiness service provided by Capita Asset Services to assess the creditworthiness of counterparties. The service provided by Capita Asset Services uses a sophisticated modelling approach with credit ratings from all three rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, forming the core element. However, it does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties but also uses the following information as overlays which are combined in a weighted scoring system:
- Credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
 - Credit Default Swap spreads, financial agreements that compensate the buyer in the event of a default, which give an early warning of likely changes in credit ratings; and
 - Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries outside the UK.

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE 2015/16**

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to endorse the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2015/16.
2. In line with best practice, the Audit and Standards Committee is required to report on its activity each year. The report for 2015/16 was agreed by the Audit and Standards Committee on 25 July 2016.
3. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

4. It is recommended that Council endorse the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2015/16.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee 2015/16

REPORT OF: Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

Purpose of the Report

1. Cabinet is asked to consider the Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report for 2015/16 and agree that this report is submitted to Council.

Background

- 2 In line with best practice the Audit and Standards Committee is required to report to Cabinet and Council on the Committee's activity each year. The report for 2015/16 was agreed by the Audit and Standards Committee on 25 July 2016.

Proposal

- 3 Cabinet is asked to consider the Audit and Standards Committee's annual report at Appendix 2 and agree to submit it to Council. The report provides an overview on the work of the Audit and Standards Committee during 2015/16, and describes how it has had a positive impact on governance, financial reporting and audit issues across the Council, as well as providing challenge and independent assurance on the risk management framework and associated internal control environment.

Recommendation

- 4 It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2015/16 and agree that it is submitted to Council.

For the following reason:

To strengthen the Council's arrangements for oversight by councillors of governance, audit, risk management, the internal control framework, value for money and efficiency.

Policy Context

1. The proposal supports the vision for Gateshead as outlined in the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Vision 2030 and the Council Plan. In particular, it supports the priority to ensure a sustainable Gateshead by building capacity across the Council and ensuring the best use of resources.

Background

2. In line with best practice, the Audit and Standards Committee is required to submit an annual report to Cabinet and Council, and also any further reports and recommendations as it sees fit. The areas of activity of the Audit and Standards Committee during 2015/16 are set out in the Annual Report.

Contents of the Report

3. Appendix 2 outlines the activity which the Audit and Standards Committee has covered over the last year.
4. The Audit and Standards Committee has received reports in the following areas:
 - Internal Audit planning, performance and activity
 - Annual Internal Audit benchmarking results
 - Internal Audit recommendations
 - External Audit planning, performance and activity
 - Corporate Risk Management and Resilience activity
 - The Annual Governance Statement and supporting evidence
 - Treasury Management Policy and mid-year update.
 - Local Code of Governance update
5. There were no reports in year which were specific to Standards issues. No complaints have been received under the Member's Code of Conduct, that required investigation, nor was there any guidance or best practice issued during the year that warranted a report. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for maintaining and promoting high standards within the Council and he and his staff have contributed to the Audit work on good governance particularly those matters relating to the Corporate Risk Management activity and the Annual Governance Statement.
6. Based on the evidence presented during the year and at the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee on 20 June 2016 it was concluded that the Council's system of internal control and governance framework is effective.

Consultation

7. The Audit and Standards Committee considered and agreed the contents of this report at their meeting of 25 July 2016.

Alternative Options

8. There are no alternative options.

Implications of Recommended Option

9. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – None.
- c) **Property Implications** – None.

10. **Risk Management Implications** - The Audit and Standards Committee receives quarterly reports on risk management and has been instrumental in championing risk awareness training for councillors.

11. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – None.

12. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - None.

13. **Health Implications** – None.

14. **Sustainability Implications** – None.

15. **Human Rights Implications** - None.

16. **Area and Ward Implications** – None.

17. **Background Information** – Report of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 25 July 2016.

1. Contents of the Report to Cabinet and Council – 2015/16

1.1 The Audit and Standards Committee has considered the following areas of activity during 2015/16:

2. Internal Audit planning, performance and activity

- 2.1 As at 31 March 2016 96% of the Internal Audit Plan was completed. This resulted in 65 audit reports. Of these reports 55 (85%) found systems to be operating well or satisfactory, with 10 (15%) reporting systems having significant weaknesses, of which one was in relation to schools.
- 2.2 All recommendations will be followed-up as part of the Internal Audit process and the Audit and Standards Committee will monitor the outcomes.
- 2.3 Based on this evidence arising from Internal Audit activity during 2015/16, the Council's internal control systems and governance and risk management arrangements are considered to be effective.
- 2.4 The Internal Audit Service has also co-ordinated the Council's National Fraud Initiative (NFI) work and has supported Council managers with irregularity, e-mail, internet and other disciplinary investigations on an ongoing basis during 2015/16, with quarterly updates to Audit and Standards Committee.
- 2.5 Other reports received during 2015/16 and relating to Internal Audit included the CIPFA Benchmarking Results for 2014/15 and a report on the outcome of external assessment against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) The Audit and Standards Committee also approved the Audit Strategy and Plan.
- 2.6 The Audit and Standards Committee will continue to monitor Internal Audit's progress on a quarterly basis against the 2016/17 Audit Plan.

3. External Audit planning, performance and activity

3.1 The following external audit reports have been reviewed over the year:

- Annual audit fee levels for 2015/16;
- Certification of grant claims and returns; and
- Audit Strategy for 2015/16.

3.2 The Committee was also asked to consider how it exercises oversight of certain key management processes in relation to some specific areas of governance, with a potential to impact upon the financial statements during 2015/16. This was a requirement to satisfy the external auditors that such oversight was in place in order to comply with International Auditing Standards. The Committee agreed that an effective level of oversight was in place.

4. Corporate Risk Management and Resilience activity

- 4.1 The Committee receives quarterly reports on the assurance derived from risk management. These reports make Councillors aware of the arrangements that exist within the Council for managing risk, the impact that these have had and the plans for further development of risk management arrangements.

5. The Annual Governance Statement and supporting evidence

- 5.1 The Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16 concluded that the Council's system of internal control, risk management and governance framework is effective.
- 5.2 The Audit and Standards Committee approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16 following a review of the evidence, detailed below, and evidence seen by the Committee during the year.

6. Cabinet Members

- 6.1 Assurance was sought from Members of the Cabinet on the effectiveness they felt could be placed on the Council's corporate governance arrangements. They concluded that effective governance arrangements are in place.

7. Senior Managers

- 7.1 Service Directors completed self-assessment assurance statements detailing the level of assurance obtained from their key control processes. The conclusion of this exercise found that senior managers agreed that effective control systems were in place overall. These areas are examined as part of the 2016/17 Audit Plan and the outcomes were reported to the Audit and Standards Committee in July 2016.

8. Internal Audit

- 8.1 The Internal Audit Service has undertaken audit work throughout the year based on the risk based audit plan. In addition the Council has a framework of assurance available to satisfy it that risks have been properly identified and are being managed by controls that are adequately designed and effective in operation. This includes assurance from a variety of sources other than the Internal Audit Service. These other audit systems have been assessed as part of the Audit Plan.
- 8.2 Based on this audit activity the overall opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year 2015/16 was that internal control systems and risk management and governance arrangements are effective.
- 8.3 A review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit has also been undertaken for 2015/16 in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This review focused upon compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit, reliance

placed by the external auditor on Internal Audit's work, an assessment of the effectiveness of the Audit and Standards Committee and relevant local performance information. Based on the review the Council's system of Internal Audit was considered to be operating effectively.

9. Risk Management

- 9.1 Risk management is embedded in the Council through a Corporate Risk Management Policy which includes the requirement to identify strategic and operational risks, assess those risks for likelihood and impact, identify mitigating controls and allocate responsibility for those controls. The Council maintains and reviews a register of its business risks, linking them to strategic business objectives and assigning ownership for each risk. Risk management awareness is an integral part of the Council's employee competency framework and a comprehensive training programme has been developed for employees at all levels.
- 9.2 The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources reported that risk management arrangements during the year were effective.

10. Performance Management and Data Quality

- 10.1 The Council has a Corporate Performance Management Framework which helps it deliver the priorities within the Council Plan. The monitoring of performance takes place at key performance points as identified in the framework including quarterly performance reported to Group Management Teams and Corporate Senior Officer meetings.
- 10.2 In addition performance is also monitored, measured, challenged and scrutinised on a six monthly basis at Cabinet and respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 10.3 Based on evidence arising from the performance management process for 2015/16 effective controls are in place.

11. Views of the External Auditor and other External Inspectors

- 11.1 Mazars, the Council's external auditor, issued an Annual Audit Letter covering the financial year 2014/15. This comprised of two elements: the audit of the Council's financial statements and an assessment of the Council's arrangements to achieve value for money in its use of resources. An unqualified opinion was given in both of these areas for 2014/15.
- 11.2 Other external inspectorates' reports have been issued from time to time on management and governance arrangements to the Council. The positive OFSTED report on Children Social Care informed the scope of the audit carried out during 2015/16.

12. The Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 12.1 Assurance has been obtained from the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance as the Monitoring Officer who has a legal duty to ensure the

lawfulness and fairness of decision-making within the Council. The Council has a Constitution in place and compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations is ensured by the requirement to give the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance the opportunity to comment on every report submitted to a decision-making body.

13. Financial Controls

13.1 Assurance has been obtained from the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, who is designated as the responsible officer for the administration of the Council's financial affairs under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, that financial controls are effective. Systems in place include Financial Regulations, the opportunity to comment on the financial implications of committee reports, monitoring meetings and evidence from internal and external audit.

14 Partnerships

14.1 Service Directors review partnerships within their service plans on an annual basis. As partners are key to the delivery of the Council's objectives assurance of their control and governance systems is required. Service Directors have also been required to provide assurance on governance arrangements through their self-assessment statements and all Services are required to identify, through their business plans, where delivery of activity could impact on partnership working.

14.2 During 2015/16 updated corporate guidance on the management of partnerships was issued including a Partnership Toolkit.

14.3 Based on evidence arising from partnerships for 2015/16 effective controls are in place.

15. Other Reports

15.1 Treasury Management Policy & Strategy & Six Monthly Update

In line with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management the Annual Treasury Policy and Strategy are reviewed by the Audit and Standards Committee prior to being reported to Cabinet and Council. A six monthly position is also reported through the Audit and Standards Committee to highlight progress on investment performance and borrowing.

15.2 Local Code of Governance Update

The Council has a local code of governance which was originally presented to the Audit Committee in April 2007. In line with good practice the document should be reviewed regularly and the Audit and Standards Committee were asked to consider a revised version on 16 March 2015 which they agreed.

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

LETTINGS POLICY REVIEW

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of proposed changes to the lettings policy to improve accessibility for customers and support the sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account.
2. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has recently been introduced and as a consequence, a two stage lettings policy review was agreed by Cabinet on 19 January 2016 to ensure compliance and necessary change is made in a timely manner. A further set of lettings policy changes may be required once guidance for the Act has been published later in the year.
3. An amended Lettings Policy, highlighted in the attached report, will ensure that the Council is maximising the potential to have the highest number of residential homes generating a rental income and to reword some parts of the policy to give more clarity and reduce room for misinterpretation.
4. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

5. It is recommended that Council:
 - i) Approve the revised policy at Appendix 2 of the attached report
 - ii) Approve that the Lettings Policy is continued with a second report to be presented to Cabinet outlining changes necessary to address the implications of the Housing Planning Act 2016, once regulatory guidance has been released in the autumn.

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TITLE OF REPORT: **Lettings Policy Review**

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

Purpose of the Report

1. To propose changes to the lettings policy to improve accessibility for customers and support the sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account.

Background

2. Housing, Economic and Welfare Reform have resulted in a need to revisit the Gateshead Lettings Policy to ensure that it reflects the needs of our communities and supports the sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account business plan.
3. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has recently been introduced; and as a consequence a two stage lettings policy review was agreed by Cabinet on 19 January to ensure compliance and necessary change is made in a timely manner.
4. A further set of lettings policy changes may be required once guidance for the Act has been published later in the year.
5. Various areas of identified potential change have been considered and options have been debated within two advisory groups. The feedback from these groups has been used as a framework to create recommendations for change with a measured approach to risk, housing need, as well as financial and administrative implications.

Proposal

6. To amend the Lettings Policy as highlighted in appendix 1 to ensure that the Council is maximising the potential to have the highest number of residential homes generating a rental income and to reword some parts of the policy to give more clarity and reduce room for misinterpretation.

Recommendations

7. The Cabinet is asked to recommend the Council to approve:
 - (i) The revised policy at appendix 2.
 - (ii) The review of the Lettings Policy is continued with a second report to be presented to Cabinet outlining changes necessary to address the implications of the Housing Planning Act 2016, once regulatory guidance has been released in the autumn.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To maximise income potential from Council housing stock
- (ii) To provide greater clarity and guidance for officers
- (iii) To ensure that the Council is compliant with the Housing Planning Act 2016

CONTACT: Phillip Walker
Lisa Philliskirk

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The proposals are consistent with Vision 2030, the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gateshead and in particular support the 'Sustainable Gateshead' Big Idea. The proposals also support the achievement of Council Plan priorities.

Background

2. A report was presented to the Cabinet on 19 January 2016 describing the need and influencing factors of carrying out a review of the Lettings Policy.
3. The scope of the review was agreed by Cabinet, including the use of Advisory Groups to gain views from councillors with regard to the extent and nature of the change required.
4. Two advisory groups were held on 26 February and 23 March (appendix 3 and 4). In the first session potential areas of policy change were presented to councillors for consideration and debate; councillors identified areas of policy that they wished to explore further, resulting in additional information being presented in March.
5. Developing the proposals over two phases was supported, allowing more time for regulatory guidance to be produced and more consideration to be given to more complicated areas of potential change.
6. The changes that were supported, have been developed in a balanced framework taking into account the need to increase the use of council housing but at the same time supporting and improving the stability of Gateshead's neighbourhoods, communities and existing tenancies.
7. Increasing access to properties by changing age criteria has been a fundamental part of the review; some aspects of this potential change are challenging and require further consideration and preparation. Specifically the older people's accommodation (sheltered housing and bungalows) has been left to phase two of the change proposals and will be presented in a later report. This will enable further consideration of the wider implications of changes to age criteria

Proposals to change the eligibility for transfer between council tenancies

8. Effective management of transfers can reduce void costs and rent loss; it is therefore proposed that, where no emerging housing need has occurred, a qualifying tenancy period of 1 year (from commencement of tenancy) for council tenants will be applied before applications for transfer will be accepted. Households whose need has changed or escalated within the first year of their new tenancy will be recognised and assisted.
9. Approval for council tenants to register for a transfer will be subject to a home visit to ensure lettable standards have been maintained.

Increasing sustainability

10. Increasing sustainability of tenancies reduces the levels of property turn over and promotes efficiencies. Proposed changes will assist with this agenda.
11. Offers will only be made to applicants able to demonstrate that they can afford to sustain a tenancy. This will reduce the number of failing and abandoned tenancies and improve outcomes for vulnerable people. A separate process will be established (outside of policy) to enable this assessment to be carried out fairly and consistently.
12. Demoted applicants (with low levels of debt or Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)) will need to demonstrate that they can manage their account and behaviour to achieve appropriate standards before being able to move. This will also apply to new or returning tenants.
13. To avoid tenancies being terminated or properties abandoned; a “substantial” priority award will be applied to victims of long term, low level unresolved ASB where there is insufficient evidence to take action against the perpetrators. This will also apply to long term neighbour disputes that cannot be resolved.
14. The “Sensitive lets” section of the current policy will be replaced by a policy prohibiting people who have a history of ASB and crime being allocated an address where neighbours have suffered from previous residents. It will also include an element of policy to prevent people who have a history of criminal or antisocial behaviour from accessing properties where they are likely to reoffend, be targeted or put the community at risk.
15. Support will be given and individual circumstances taken into account in all of the above situations.

Increasing eligibility

16. Increasing eligibility will promote opportunities to let properties, as more households will be able to bid for a wider range of accommodation.
17. Proposed policy changes will enable families with children to move into flats, with the exception of multi-storey blocks. The ability to revoke this for particular blocks of flats will be retained where need is evident. New awards of priority will no longer be given to transfer applicants with children in this type of property (although existing awards will be honoured).

Simplification of policy

18. The wording of the overcrowding criteria is changed within the proposed changes. The underlying principles will remain the same.
19. Where the Council has confirmed that a larger home will be needed on a long term basis for a Gateshead foster carer, an overcrowding priority will be awarded.

20. The new policy includes an amendment of the “substantial” housing award, which is currently given on the grounds of financial hardship due to under occupation. The new policy recognises wider causes of uncontrollable financial change.
21. It is proposed to allow “like for like” moves on a permanent basis for those council tenants who are relocated for repair issues.

Review timetables

22. Applicants are able to request reviews and appeals relating to various aspects of policy decision. Over recent years the timelines applied to responding to these requests has become unreasonable. Following legal consultation it is proposed to extend these times and bring them in line with legal guidance (40 working days). This aspect of change was not discussed within the Advisory group but is not considered contentious and will not impact negatively upon applicants.

Consultation

23. The Cabinet Members for Housing and the Policy advisory group have been consulted and are supportive of the proposals.
24. The Gateshead Housing Company has been consulted and is supportive of the proposals.

Alternative Options

25. There are no alternative options identified at this time. Complementary work to assist in respect to maximising the potential for the HRA is being carried out in tandem to this proposal.

Implications of Recommended Option

26. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the proposal seeks to increase accessibility to Council housing and so will create the capacity to increase rental income. There will also be the potential of increased efficiencies from a reduction in stock turnover.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** - there are no direct Human Resource implications attached to the proposal. Increased income into the HRA may safeguard budgets underpinning salary costs for the future.
 - c) **Property Implications** - the proposal seeks to maximise income to the HRA which is the financial source for works to council homes.
27. **Risk Management Implication** - the proposal seeks to reduce financial risk to the Council and risks relating to vacant properties, which may have a negative effect upon communities and neighbourhoods.
28. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - any changes to the Lettings Policy are likely to result in a more inclusive policy.

29. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - there are no direct implications however full consideration will be given via more in depth consultation should any policy changes be identified and will be subject to future reports to Cabinet.
30. **Health Implications** - there are no direct implications relating to the review. Any recommendations arising from the review will be subject to future reports to Cabinet.
31. **Sustainability Implications** - the review will consider sustainability of neighbourhoods and communities alongside the financial aspects affected.
32. **Human Rights Implications** - there are no negative Human Rights implications relating to the review.
33. **Area and Ward Implications** - the review may result in recommendations for policy change that will have the potential to affect wards; such recommendations will be subject to full consultation and subsequent Cabinet approval.

Gateshead Council

Lettings Policy

September 2016

Contents

	Page
Introduction	
Section 1 - Help and Assistance	1
Section 2 – Registration	
• Who can apply for Council and Housing Association accommodation in Gateshead?	2
• Immigration Control	2
• Verification Checks and References	3
• People who own their homes	3
• Council Employees (and their relatives)	4
• Awaiting Information	4
• Annual Review	4
Section 3 - Lettings Criteria	
• What are Lettings Criteria?	5
• Minimum age for any offer of a property	5
• What type/size of home do you qualify for?	5
• Size of Household	6
• Pets	7
• Access to Children	7
• People with Carers	7
• What size property you can get if your home is being demolished.	7
• Age requirements	7
• Supported Housing Schemes and Extra Care Housing Schemes	8
Section 4 - Exceptional Circumstance Protocol	9
Section 5 – Advertising	
• How will you know which properties are available?	10
• How will you know which properties you can express an interest in?	10
• How are applicants' bids ranked?	10
• How will you know if your expression of interest has been successful?	11
• Offer Conditions	11
Section 6 - Lettings Information and Feedback	12

Section 7 - What will happen if you do not bid for any properties?	13
Section 8 – Exclusion and Demotion of registrations	
• Applicants excluded from joining the Housing Register	14
• What does it mean if your application is excluded from the Housing Register?	14
• Why your application might be excluded	14
• Exclusions due to arrears or tenancy related debt	
• Exclusions due to Criminal or Anti-Social Behaviour	
• What does it mean if your application is demoted?	14
• Demotion due to arrears or tenancy related debt	
• Demotion due to Criminal or Anti-Social Behaviour	
• Notification and review and appeal procedure	15
• Review Process	
• Exclusion Appeals Process	16
Section 9 - Cancelled and Invalid Applications	
• When is your application no longer valid?	17
Section 10 - Review Procedure (Officer Reviews)	18
• Procedure	
• Possible Outcomes of Review	
Section 11 - Category of Needs	
• Summary of Categories	20
Section 12 – Housing Need Criteria	
• Medical	22
• Severe Harassment	23
• Safeguarding Children	23
• Applicants Threatened with Homelessness	24
• Statutorily Homeless	24
• Homeless Appeals	25
• Domestic Violence/Abuse	26
• Overcrowding	26
• Demolition or change of use of property	27
• Leaving Forces	27
• People leaving Gateshead Council Tied Accommodation	27
• New Tenancy Upon Death of Householder	28
• Best use of Stock	29

•	Release of property for relet to alleviate urgent housing need	29
•	Under Occupation	29
•	Single Gateway	30
•	Children Leaving Care	30
•	Children in Flats	30
•	Foster Carers	31
Section 13 – Direct Lets		
•	Emergency	32
•	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement	32
•	Request for or release of adapted or adaptable property	32
•	Threat of or Fear of Life	32
•	Key Workers	33
•	Domestic Violence/Abuse	33
•	Social Care Preventative Lettings	33
•	Homelessness	33
•	Extenuating or Unusual Circumstances	33
Section 14 - Local Lettings Plans (LLPs)		
•	What are LLPs?	34
•	How will the need for a LLP be identified?	34
•	Possible Outcomes of LLPs.	34
•	Impact of LLPs on the Lettings Policy	34
•	Review of LLPs	35
Section 15 – Succession, New tenancy upon death of householder, Assignment or a Mutual Exchange		
•	Succession	36
•	When can a person succeed a tenancy?	36
•	How will a decision be made if more than one person wishes to succeed?	37
•	What if you do not qualify for a succession by law?	37
•	Properties set aside for older people or people with mobility needs	
•	Assignment	38
•	Joint Tenancies	38
•	Sole to joint tenancies	39
Section 16 – Mutual Exchanges		40
Section 17 – Sensitive Lets		42
Section 18 – Garage Lettings		43

Introduction

The lettings policy is a set of rules by which all Council houses in Gateshead are let. Gateshead Council has developed these rules to address housing need by making better use of Council housing stock, and ensuring that those applicants with the greatest housing need are accommodated, whilst still recognising the desires of households who have been waiting longest. The policy strives to address housing need for households where failure to access housing within the borough would cause hardship to themselves or others.

A “Flexible Arrangement Statement” will be published alongside the lettings policy. This document will compliment the policy by advising of ongoing operational reviews, which are necessary in order to implement some sections of the policy that are affected by socio economic trends and changes.

Section 1 - Help and Assistance

Advice and assistance is available to all applicants who apply for housing. You can get help to complete your application form and/or get support to bid for properties. Information will be made available to you upon application.

All information relating to the lettings policy can be provided in a range of formats to suit your particular circumstances. These might include audiotape, large print, Braille, translation into other languages, interpreting services and sign language. If you have any other requirements please ask.

Section 2 - Registration

Who can apply for Council and Housing Association accommodation in Gateshead?

Gateshead Council's Housing Register is available to all applicants including existing tenants.

Existing council tenants can join the Housing Register once they have held their existing tenancy for a period of one year. If an existing tenant has not held their tenancy for this qualifying time, but has experienced a change in their housing needs, they will be considered to join the Housing Register; individual circumstances will be taken into consideration.

If you are over 18 you can join our Housing Register. If you are under 18 see Section 3 for more details.

You can register alone, or you can register jointly with your partner or another adult who lives, or will be living with you.

If you live outside of the Borough you will be included on the Housing Register but you will only accrue "waiting time" in the General Needs Category. Gateshead residents will be considered before applicants from outside of the Borough, unless they have a local connection. The local connection criteria can be found in the "Flexible Statement Arrangement". Any housing priority will not be recognised unless you are able to provide proof of your "need" to move into the area and demonstrate why this "need" cannot be satisfied within your current location.

This criteria does not apply to ex military personnel who have left the armed forces within five years of applying to join the housing register. It is also disregarded for partners of military personnel who are leaving Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their partner in service or where applicants are in the reservists and become ill or disabled due to their service

The Council works in partnership with Housing Associations within Gateshead and, where appropriate, will supply them with your details (within the rules set out in this policy). However, Housing Association policies may differ from the Council's, and they will make the final decision relating to whom they offer their properties to.

Immigration Control

If you are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 you are not a qualifying person and therefore will not qualify for Council housing. The Secretary of State may prescribe other persons or classes of persons who are not qualifying persons.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure accurate assessments are undertaken, the responsibility to provide official documentation for the assessment remains with you. Failure to provide requested information will result in your application being cancelled.

Verification Checks and References

When you register an application a number of checks will be carried out on you and any adult member of your household who is moving with you to verify details before you are made an offer of a new home.

Pre Tenancy checks

- If you or any adult moving with you has had a tenancy in their own name or with a partner in at least the last two years you must supply a reference from that landlord to show how you have conducted your tenancy.
- We will ask to see documents that confirm your identity.
- We will carry out Police vetting checks under the Safer Estates Agreement for example where:
 - You have disclosed criminal convictions
 - You have significant gaps in your housing history
 - You are known to have had a previous history of ASB or criminal activity
- We may visit you in your current home. Existing council tenants will be visited to ensure that property standards have been maintained; these standards can be found within the "Flexible Arrangement Statement".
- Demoted applicants (see Section 8) must be able to demonstrate that they can manage their tenancy to appropriate standards. This check will be applied to existing or returning tenants and to new applicants; details are available within the "Flexible Arrangement Statement".
- Offers will only be made to applicants able to demonstrate that they can afford to sustain a tenancy; support and advice may be offered to overcome difficulties where appropriate. Details of this assessment are available within the "Flexible Arrangement Statement".

If you inform us that getting a landlord's reference is likely to cause problems we may ask for other information for example your rent book or Council Tax details.

Support will be given and individual circumstances taken into account in all of the above situations.

People who own their own homes

If you own your own home you will be asked to provide financial information to tell us how much equity you have in your property. If this amount is over the agreed "trigger" level, an individual assessment will be made to identify whether or not you are in a financial position to address your own housing need. If the assessment shows that you are able to do this, you will be placed in the General Needs Category.

Housing need will be determined by actual requirement and not preference.

The “trigger” level will be reviewed by senior officers, in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio team. Review details, and the trigger level will be reported within the “Flexible Arrangements Statement” which accompanies and supports this policy.

The offer of a council home will be subject to the sale of your home within a reasonable timescale.

Council Employees (and their relatives)

It is Gateshead Council's policy to carry out procedural checks on applications of people who may be related to Council employees or influential partners of the Council. This is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

Awaiting Information

Your application will not be activated:

- If we are waiting for information relevant to your application, including landlords references and proof of identity.
- Pending vetting by the Police, as outlined within the Safer Estates Agreement.

Once all of the information required is available your application will be registered from the date it was originally received.

Annual Review

Every year you will be contacted to check if your circumstances have changed and that you still wish to remain on the Housing Register. If you do not respond within the required timescale your registration will be cancelled.

You must advise us immediately of any changes within your household.

As part of tenant/service user involvement the experiences of customers whilst using the lettings process will be used to review current policy and identify service improvements.

Section 3 – Lettings Criteria

What are Lettings Criteria?

Lettings criteria are the rules we use to decide who is eligible to be considered for a vacant property to:

- Enable the Council to make the best use of the housing stock.
- Assist you in making informed choices about the properties available to bid for.

Minimum age for any offer of a property

An offer of accommodation will not normally be made to you if you are under the age of 18 unless you:

- Have been awarded priority due to being accepted as statutorily homeless; or
- Have been given priority because the Council has a legal duty to accommodate you (this is usually if you are leaving care); or
- Are supported, and are fully engaging with a government or voluntary agency and the Council is satisfied with the level of support to be provided; or
- Are part of the Single Gateway Scheme

If you are assessed as requiring support, engagement with a support agency may be a condition of an offer of accommodation.

What type/size of home do you qualify for ?

The table below aims to show you what type of property you could normally qualify for in Gateshead. Please note that households not included in the green category may still be able to access those property types. Where there has been no demand for a property from eligible applicants the lettings criteria can be relaxed; for example in terms of property size. Demotion criteria will not normally be relaxed.

GREEN - You have an automatic right to apply for any of the properties marked green.

White - You can be considered eligible for these properties only if there is no demand from “green” applicants.

Multi storey flats will not be offered to households with children below the age of 16. This does not apply to households with access arrangements.

Properties with a flight of stairs to the front door will not be offered to households with a child below the age of 3. This does not apply to households with access arrangements.

Adapted properties, 3 bedroom bungalows, 3 bedroom ground floor flats and those properties suitable for people with disabilities will be advertised to applicants who have been awarded Urgent Housing Need status on health grounds although other applicants can bid for them but will only be considered after applicants with a relevant medical issue.

	Studio-Flat/Bedsit	1 Bed Flat	1 Bed Bungalow	1 Bed House	2 Bed Own Entrance Flat	2 Bed Shared Entrance Flat/Maisonette	2 Bed Bungalow	2 Bed House	2 Bed Own Entrance Maisonette	3 Bed Own Entrance Flat	3 Bed Shared Entrance Flat or Maisonette	3 Bed House	3 Bed own entrance Lower Maisonette	3 Bed own entrance Upper Maisonette	4 Bed House/Flat or Maisonette	5 Bed House
Single Person under 60																
Single Person over 60																
Single Person with overnight access to 1 or more children																
Couple under 60																
Couple under 60 with overnight access to one or more children																
Couple where oldest applicant is over 60																
2 adults (non-couple) under 60																
2 adults (non-couple) where oldest applicant is over 60																
Household with 1 child* over 16 years of age																
Household with 1 child* Δ																
Household with 2 children* over 16 years of age																
Household with 2 children* Δ																
Household with 3 children* Δ																
Household with 4 children* Δ																
Household with 5 or more children*																
* Children who are full time resident in the household rather than access arrangements. Δ Does not apply to multi storey flats (over 5 floors)																

Pets

Some pets are not allowed in some types of property with a communal entrance; these restrictions generally apply to cats and dogs but this is subject to consideration and will be discussed prior to any offer.

Access to children

Access arrangements can only be applied to children under the age of 18 years. Where there is joint parental responsibility for children, usually the parent with primary care responsibility will be offered a family home. Access arrangements are not included in overcrowding assessments or when considering the shared entrance policy for flats.

People with Carers

Full-Time Carers

People with full-time, live in care provided by family or friends are required to include the carer on their application. The carer will be subject to registration checks and will be counted in terms of eligibility for property size and type. A carer will not be added to the application if the individual's details are not provided.

Where a Social Services 'Assessment of Need' has identified a need for overnight care, which is to be provided by a support provider and does not include "sleepover" i.e. the carer is working and required to stay awake: the carer will be looked upon as conducting a nightshift. As they would not be expected to sleep during this time additional bedroom requirements would not be recognised.

Where a Social Services 'Assessment of Need' has identified a need for overnight care, which is to be provided by a support provider and includes "sleepover" duties. The eligibility for property size and type will be amended accordingly.

Part-time Carers

Carers who provide casual assistance when required will not be recognised as a household member and additional bedroom requirements will not generally be recognised.

What size property you can get if your home is being demolished

Normal eligibility criteria will apply however the Council reserve the right to introduce individual criteria where appropriate.

Age requirements

Some of our homes have age requirements; this will be clearly stated in the advert.

We may consider members who do not specifically meet this requirement in the following situations:

- To meet medical need (where there are no other suitable homes available).

- Homes are adapted, adaptable or suitable to meet the needs of those with either a disability or specific need on medical grounds.

Records regarding these cases will be maintained to ensure fairness and consistency and to demonstrate that all other property types have been considered.

Supported Housing Schemes and Extra Care Housing Schemes

Some groups of properties come with a high level of support to enable people to remain in their own home. The Council will work with support providers to ensure that people requiring this support are prioritised to access this housing.

Section 4 – Exceptional Circumstance Protocol

Under exceptional circumstances the Council may deem it necessary to act outside of the lettings policy. This will be to address an unforeseen need or situation that cannot be resolved reasonably within policy criteria. The Exceptional Circumstance Protocol will be brought into effect to tackle such situations. Where this occurs, records will be kept of why the allocation took place

Section 5 - Advertising

Properties that are available to let will be openly advertised and anyone who is registered can express an interest in these properties by placing a bid.

A proportion of the properties will be advertised as giving preference to households with housing need. There may also be a proportion of properties advertised with preference given to the substantial “under occupation” category. The remaining properties will be advertised with no preference given to households in need. The proportions may vary in order to enable the Council to meet its statutory duties. Adapted homes are not included in this proportion.

Senior officers of the Council will determine this proportion in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio Team and details will be included in the “Flexible Arrangements Statement”, which accompanies and supports this policy.

There will be instances when homes become available that are not advertised, this happens when there is a need to make a “direct let” (see Section 13). We will give consideration to property availability and demand before deciding which properties will be advertised.

How will you know which properties are available?

Properties will be advertised in a number of different ways. Upon registration you will be informed of how and where to find this information.

How will you know which properties you can express an interest in?

Adverts will explain:

- How to express an interest in a property.
- The closing date for expressions of interest.
- The details of each property including location, rent, number of bedrooms, adaptations or special features.
- If preference is to be made to households in housing need.
- If preference is to be made to a specific type of housing need e.g. “Medical” category.
- The lettings criteria.

Applicants can express interest in up to three properties per week.

How are applicants' bids ranked?

A proportion of the properties advertised, will be prioritised in accordance with housing need. This means that the people in the most need will be ranked highest. Applicants bidding, who meet the lettings criteria will be prioritised in accordance with their category of need (in order of Critical, Urgent, Substantial and General) and within each category, applicants will be ranked in order of the date that their specific housing need was identified. This means that the bid from the applicant within the highest category of need with the longest time within this category will be selected.

Within each of the categories, people who qualify for more than one qualifying type of need will be ranked higher than those with only one. The date that the second need was identified will be used to identify the successful bidder i.e. the one with the longest time with both recognised needs will be ranked highest.

Homes advertised without preference to housing need will be offered to the eligible bidder with the earliest registration date. People who live in Gateshead or have a local connection will be given priority over those who do not. Different rules apply when ranking excluded or demoted applications. See Section 8.

To ensure that best use is made of the housing stock, where an adapted property is advertised applicants will be ranked in order of the need for the adaptations, the need for the type and size of property and the category start date. If there are no appropriate bidders we will endeavour to identify other housing applicants who may benefit from the type and size of property as well as any adaptations installed before consideration is given to applicants with no recognised housing need.

How will you know if your expression of interest has been successful?

If your bid is successful, you will be contacted shortly after the closing date to arrange a viewing of the property.

We will not contact you if you are unsuccessful. However, our publications will give general feedback on all lettings to help you make more informed expressions of interest in the future.

Offer Conditions

If you are a current tenant, your current home must meet "lettable standards" (including gardens and external areas).

Only one property can be offered at a time - An applicant successfully bidding for more than one property in one week or across several weeks will be allowed to choose which property is to proceed to an offer. However that decision must be made at the point of being informed of the second or subsequent successful bid.

Section 6 – Lettings Information and Feedback

We will let you know how Council properties are allocated by providing you with information. This information will include how we allocate to different groups of people with differing levels and kinds of housing need and waiting time. This information will not relate to individual properties but will instead give you an insight into how we deal with housing issues across the borough and communities.

To help you decide which type of property you are more likely to be successful for, we will publish regular feedback on past lettings. This will help you to understand how often particular properties are available to let in particular areas. We will tell you the number of people who expressed an interest in that property, and the category of the successful applicant and/or the waiting time..

Section 7 – What will happen if you do not bid for any properties?

If you are registered in Critical, Urgent or Substantial Need categories, we have recognised your need to move to another property. If you do not aim to eliminate that need, by bidding for advertised properties, your housing application may be re-designated to a lower category.

The majority of adapted homes will be advertised, and the adverts will clearly state that preference will be given to those who need to move on health grounds. The Council reserves the right to allocate such homes on the basis of need in relation to the specific adaptations and property type/size, rather than on the basis of waiting time.

Section 8 – Exclusion and Demotion of Applicants

Applicants excluded from joining the Housing Register

If the behaviour of a person applying for housing is deemed “unacceptable” in terms of perpetrating serious anti-social/criminal behaviour or damage to property, or in owing high levels of rent or other tenancy related debt, then they may be excluded from joining the Housing Register.

A decision to exclude will only be made where there is evidence that a person’s behaviour is such that (had they been a tenant) a judge would have been likely to evict them from their home.

Every case will be considered in relation to personal circumstances. Extenuating or unusual circumstances should be highlighted to officers to ensure that vulnerable people are not excluded or demoted due to issues beyond their control.

What does it mean if your application is excluded from the Housing Register?

If your application is excluded from the Housing Register your details would not be recorded on the register and you will not qualify for council housing.

The length of time the exclusion will last will depend upon your individual circumstances, and any agreement reached in order to address the situation. (See notification and review procedure below).

Why your application might be excluded

Exclusions due to arrears or tenancy related debt

We would consider excluding your application if you (or any of your intended household) owe current or former rent arrears or other tenancy related debt. We will identify a level of debt (in line with current court proceedings), to establish cases, which may fit these criteria. If your debt is lower than this amount, your application may be demoted (see below).

Exclusions due to Criminal or Anti-Social Behaviour

Your application would be considered for exclusion if you or anyone from your intended household, have been a perpetrator of Criminal or Anti-Social behaviour. This includes deliberately or negligently causing serious damage to a previous or current property. If your behaviour is not deemed serious enough to warrant exclusion your application may still be demoted (see below).

What does it mean if your application is demoted?

If you have tenancy related debt or have committed Criminal or Anti-Social Behaviour but have not been excluded from the Housing Register, your application may be demoted.

If your application is demoted, you will still be allowed to appear on the Housing Register but your housing need will not be taken into account when applications are ranked in order of need. Also when properties are advertised that will be ranked in order of waiting time, your application will not be considered until the list of people who are not demoted have been considered first.

Any offer of accommodation will be subject to the applicant satisfying the conditions of the pre tenancy check. (see Section 2 Verification Checks and References).

The length of time the demotion will last will depend upon your individual circumstances, and any agreement reached in order to address the situation. (See notification and review procedure below).

Demotions due to arrears or tenancy related debt

We would consider demoting your application if you (or any of your intended household) owe current or former rent arrears or other tenancy related debt. We will identify a level of debt that will result in assessment for demotion.

Demotions due to Criminal or Anti-Social Behaviour

Your application would be considered for demotion if you or anyone from your intended household, have been a perpetrator of low level Criminal or Anti-Social behaviour. This includes deliberately or negligently causing damage to a previous or current property, which is not considered serious enough to warrant exclusion.

Notification and review and appeal procedure

Within One week of a decision to exclude or demote your application to the Housing Register, you will be notified in writing . The letter will explain:

- Why you have been excluded or demoted and how the decision was reached. Where appropriate this will include how we used the “Unacceptable Behaviour Test”.
- What you need to do to have the exclusion or demotion removed.
- Where to gain independent advice.
- How to get support from agencies who will help you to make plans to enable you to access council (or alternative) housing in the future.
- How to request a review of the decision to exclude or demote your application (see Section 10).
- That whether or not you request a review against the decision now, you may also apply for your case to be reviewed every 6 months.

Review Process

If you are excluded or demoted you are entitled to request a review of the decision (see Section 10).

Exclusion Appeals Process

If you are excluded and have exhausted the review process you are entitled to request a Member's appeal. Appeal forms must be returned complete within 21 days of the date that you received your notification. Your request for an appeal will be considered within 40 working days by an independent appeals panel made up of three elected members.

Section 9 – Cancelled and Invalid Applications

When is your application no longer valid?

Your current application is no longer valid and will be cancelled if:

- You accept a Council tenancy as a sole or joint tenant;
- You accept a Housing Association tenancy (allocated by Council). Applicants who move to another private property are not cancelled.
- You become a joint tenant with an existing tenant;
- You are assigned a tenancy;
- You buy a property in a build for sale or shared ownership scheme;
- You buy a Council property under the Right to Buy scheme.
- You ask us to do so.
- You do not respond to a review letter or other correspondence relating to your application.
- You move and do not update your address.
- You leave the country and are subsequently prevented from being registered because of the restrictions within the Asylum and Immigration Act.
- We find that you have supplied false or incomplete information connected with your registration.
- You have mutually exchanged with another Council or housing association tenant.

Please note it is your responsibility to tell us of any changes to your circumstances, if you do not do this, your application may be cancelled.

Once cancelled your application will not be re-instated, if you would like to continue to look for housing you will need to register a new application. New applications will not benefit from waiting time accrued from previous applications.

Section 10 – Review Procedure (Officer Reviews)

If you are unhappy with a lettings decision you can request a review of the following issues:

- Date of registration
- Application placed in the incorrect category.
- Removal of priority
- Exclusion or demotion of your application

Specific policy applies if you wish to request a review relating to the exclusion of your application (See Section 8) or a Homeless decision or offer of accommodation to address homelessness (See Section 12).

Individual circumstances of applicants will always be considered.

Procedure

A request for a review must be made in writing within 21 days from the day on which you were notified of the decision and the reasons for it. Should you wish you might instruct someone to request a review on your behalf. A review can be made by letter, fax or email.

A review request must include the reason for the review and also the extenuating circumstances. A review that effectively requests that the policy be over ridden can only be considered where the circumstances of the case are urgent and immediate.

The review will be carried out by an independent senior officer, who will carry out an investigation in accordance with the Council's Lettings Policy and taking careful note of relevant legislative requirements, Statutory Instruments and the prevailing Code of Guidance.

If the reviewing officer finds that you have given additional information that had not been taken into account when the original decision was made, your case will be referred back to the officer that dealt with your case and they will be asked to reconsider their decision in view of the new information provided.

The reviewing officer will notify you of their decision within 40 working days of the request for a review (although in extenuating circumstances this time limit may be extended).

Possible Outcomes of Review

For all decisions we will write to you with the outcome. The three options are:

Original Decision Upheld: the letter will give the reasons supporting the review decision.

Original Decision Rejected: the letter will explain what action we will take as a result and the reasons for doing so.

Applicant Provides the Reviewing Officer with New Information (i.e. information not known to the officer who took the original decision) the review will end and the file will be returned to

the officer who took the original decision for new enquiries to be made and a fresh decision to be issued. In such cases you will be advised of your right to request a review of the new decision.

This process is in addition to your general right to complain about any Council service. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review you can still make a formal complaint, however the review outcome will only be changed if the complaint identifies an error in the way that the review process was carried out.

Cases regarding exclusions from the Housing Register may also request a Members' Appeal once the review process has been exhausted (Section 8).

Section 11 – Categories of Need

Summary of Categories

The table below illustrates the types of personal circumstances that make up the four housing need categories.

Critical Housing Need <i>(Applicants who qualify on more than one ground would be considered first)</i>	Urgent Housing Need <i>(Applicants who qualify on more than one ground would be considered first)</i>	Substantial Housing Need <i>(Applicants who qualify on more than one ground would be considered first)</i>	General Housing Need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants with a critical medical need who must be rehoused in order to be discharged from hospital or a care home • Applicants who are experiencing severe harassment, and have been assessed as being at risk unless rehoused • Applicants who must be rehoused to prevent a child being taken into care or to ensure the safety of children under the terms of current legislation • Urgent homeless cases, where Gateshead Council needs to discharge its statutory duty as a matter of urgency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutorily homeless • Applicants threatened with homelessness • Applicants with a severe medical need who are at risk in their current home • Cases of severe overcrowding • Proposed demolition of home / change of use agreed by Gateshead Council • Single Gateway • Leaving Care arrangements • Leaving a Gateshead Council Tied Tenancy (imminently) • Leaving Armed Forces -within 3 months • Applicants who are entitled to alternative accommodation – instead of succeeding to a tenancy • Best use of stock • Domestic Violence • Foster Care arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-priority homeless (but not intentionally homeless) • Applicants with a medical need that may be worsened by living in current home • Overcrowded (but not severely) • Leaving a Gateshead Council Tied Tenancy (but not imminently) • Leaving Armed Forces (but not imminently) • Children in multi storey flats • Intentionally homeless in a priority need group. You are homeless but as a result of your own actions (only considered after other applicants within this category) • Financial hardship • Long term, low level ASB • Long term unresolved neighbour disputes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of Borough cases • All other applicants

You will be placed into one of 4 Categories to reflect your housing requirements and level of need.

Some types of housing need (e.g. medical need) may fit into more than one category. The criteria to establish which category an applicant will be placed in are described in Section 12.

If you are placed within a housing need category and then refuse a property, which would have alleviated your housing need, your application may be redesignated to an alternative lower category.

Where you qualify for more than one element of need within any category you will be ranked above those with only one element.

Critical Housing Need applicants are households whose housing needs present a risk to the household, the community or the Council if not addressed imminently.

Urgent Housing Need applicants have a recognised urgent housing need but circumstances do not present an immediate threat to the household, community or the Council.

Urgent Need status is awarded to address a serious need for re-housing and not because of preference. Priority will only be given to you for an initial three-month period and you will be expected to apply for suitable accommodation within that timescale (separate rules apply to homeless applicants see Section 12). After this three-month period the priority level will be reviewed. If the priority is withdrawn, you have the right to request a review.

We will contact you four weeks after your priority was awarded to see what help or advice you will need to enable you to actively participate in choosing a home for the remaining two months of your priority. If you have not expressed interest in any vacancies and are homeless the Council may make you a formal offer by way of a "Direct Let". **This offer could be located anywhere within the borough but we will aim to maintain your current support networks.** If you feel that this offer is unreasonable you have the right of appeal.

Where Urgent Need status is used to make inappropriate bids for properties that would not alleviate the housing need, they will be disregarded e.g. an applicant who is awarded Urgent Need status because they are unable to climb stairs could not use their Urgent Need status to secure a home with stairs (unless suitable adaptations were in place).

The Council reserve the right to make a direct let rather than award Urgent Need priority where it is deemed to be in the best interests or more appropriate to the circumstances of an individual.

Substantial Housing Need applicants have reasonable housing needs. This means that their current housing does not ideally meet their needs but does not require urgent intervention.

General Housing Need applicants who would like to move for a variety of reasons, which have not been classified as critical, urgent or substantial.

Section 12 – Housing Need Criteria

Medical

The Council will make an assessment of housing need in conjunction with health professionals and may include a home visit. Cases will be regularly reviewed.

In order to qualify for rehousing on medical grounds, your current home must present a risk to your health and wellbeing; you must therefore be requesting a move to an alternative property that will eliminate or substantially minimise these risks.

Your assessment for priority will be made upon a long-term basis and not in response to a temporary condition.

An applicant, who is a main carer, who needs to move to be nearer to the person with a medical or mobility issue, (as defined above), may also be included, following an assessment by the Council.

If you are applying to move from outside the borough with “Urgent Need status” you will need to provide proof of your “need” to move into the area and demonstrate why this “need” cannot be satisfied by your current housing provision or provider.

Medical Category Criteria

Critical Housing Need

You would qualify for Critical Housing Need Category, if you are currently in hospital and the hospital’s Occupational Therapy service consider you unable to return to your present home, as your life would be at risk.

This also includes where you may have been moved from a hospital bed to respite care, intermediate care or other short-term solution as a temporary measure. It also covers where “step up” arrangements have been made to provide additional support in order to prevent admission.

This level of priority is only intended to address situations where you have been assessed, as having a critical risk to your life were you to move back into your existing home.

Urgent Housing Need

This category applies where you have a degenerative illness or have an impairment, which may be physical, mental, learning or sensory which has progressed to a stage where you are no longer able to cope in your present home. You are unable to gain access to basic facilities within your home. A health professional has recommended that an urgent move is necessary and re-housing would resolve the difficulties experienced.

There is an urgent need for support, which cannot be provided in their current area or home and can be provided by a move to a different area.

Substantial Housing Need

You would qualify for Substantial Housing Need if you have a degenerative illness or have an impairment, either physical, mental, learning or sensory which could be eased or improved by re-housing but the severity is not enough to merit Urgent Need status. It would apply where you have some difficulty gaining access to basic facilities within your home.

There is minimal support in your current area and a move to an alternative area or home would provide significant additional support from others that could not otherwise be provided.

People living in adapted properties, wishing to move to another

If you are already living in a property that has been adapted by the Council and request to move to an alternative property that is not adapted to meet your needs, the Council may refuse to fund additional adaptations.

You must give due consideration to your needs and how you will manage in your new home if it is not adapted. Upon applying for re-housing you must declare the fact that you are in an adapted property to ensure that your ongoing needs are considered and that you receive advice regarding your rights and responsibilities regarding provisions within your new home.

Severe Harassment

This category applies where you or a member of your household is a victim of serious anti-social behaviour that the Council or its partners cannot resolve.

This includes harassment as a result of "Hate Crime", which is crime motivated by prejudice.

Harassment will include actual violence, serious threats of violence or intimidation significant enough to be deemed unreasonable for you to remain in your current home.

Evidence will be investigated and corroborated by the Council using intelligence gathered from its partners and the local Police authority at a senior level.

This level of priority will only be awarded to enable you to be removed from the locality of the harassment and housing should be to an area where you would be sufficiently distant to avoid a re-occurrence of the problem.

Safeguarding Children

Applicants who meet this criterion must be rehoused to prevent a child being taken into care or to ensure the safety of children under the terms of current legislation.

Assessments become appropriate when a placement or a child's welfare is at risk and is not covered by the lettings policy. An example of such a situation may be where a child cannot be discharged from Local Authority care due to the fact that their guardian/parent does not have a home for them to go to. In this case, their specific housing needs would not be covered within the general lettings policy, therefore Critical Need status would be granted under the "Safeguarding Children" category.

In all cases there will be a recommendation from the appropriate body within the Council.

The above is intended to give priority for housing where children are at risk for reasons such as family breakdown, child abuse etc. It is anticipated that these cases will be within the remit of the Child Protection Criteria.

Applicants Threatened with becoming homeless

Applicants who are at risk of homelessness within 90 days may be awarded Urgent Housing Need status providing an assessment concludes that there would be a statutory homeless duty as defined by law, should a homeless application be taken at a later stage. Applicants qualifying for this category, who would normally be demoted, will still be made an offer of accommodation; this is to avoid the household becoming statutorily homeless.

Statutory Homeless

(As defined by the Housing Act 1996 - as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)

Homelessness Category Criteria

Homelessness appears in more than one category. The following circumstances will be taken into account when assessing which category should be applied.

Critical Housing Need

Applicants will be placed in this category if the Council has an immediate need to fulfil its legislative duty toward you and/or failure to do so is likely to result in harm to yourself and/or a failure by the Council to meet its homelessness obligations.

Urgent Housing Need

You will be placed in this category if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You are Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness within 28 days
- You are eligible for housing assistance
- You are not Intentionally Homeless
- You are in priority need
- You have a Local Connection with the Borough

(Homelessness criteria, is defined by law and therefore not laid out in this policy. Additional information relating to criteria will be provided to you if you apply as a homeless person/household or upon request).

You will be expected to bid widely and actively, as after 4 weeks your case will be reviewed. If you have not placed bids your Urgent Need status may be cancelled.

In cases where Urgent Need has been granted because you fulfil the criteria, the following will apply:

If you are awarded homelessness priority and your application would not normally be excluded

You will be awarded Urgent Need status and can bid in the normal way. Whilst you are bidding we may try to identify a property suitable to your needs through a direct let. You would be expected to accept whichever offer comes first. If you do not, you will lose your homeless priority status.

If you are awarded homelessness priority but your application would normally be excluded (See Section 8)

You will only be made one suitable offer (by way of a direct let) to discharge the Council's statutory duty to you as homeless.

If the property you are offered is not ready for habitation

Where you have successfully bid for a property that is not ready for habitation the Council reserve the right to discharge their duty by making an alternative offer of a readily available property.

Substantial Housing Need

Intentionally Homeless

If following enquiries you are found to be homeless because of your own deliberate act or omission the Council will have limited duties towards you. You will be entitled to advice and assistance and if you are in Priority Need you will be entitled to temporary accommodation for a maximum period of 28 days to allow you some time to find alternative accommodation.

If you are intentionally homeless but fulfil priority need criteria and your application is not excluded from the Housing Register, you will be placed in the Substantial Need Category. Within this category people who qualify under different criteria (e.g. medical or overcrowding) will be given priority over applicants who are "intentionally homeless".

Non-Priority Homeless who are not intentionally homeless

If you are homeless through no fault of your own, but are not in priority need you will be awarded Substantial Need status.

Homeless Appeals

As a homeless applicant you have the right of appeal against the decision made regarding your homelessness case.

Within 33 working days of making an application you will receive a letter (called a Section 184 notification), which will advise you of the decision reached. In order to request an appeal you must complete a proforma by stating why you are unhappy with the decision.

If you are accepted as homeless and are then offered a property that you feel is unsuitable, you can appeal against the "reasonableness" of the offer. You can do this even if you accept the property and move into it.

Appeal forms must be returned complete within 21 days of the date that you received your Section 184 or final offer notification. Your request for an appeal will be considered by an independent appeals panel made up of three elected members. Any request received outside of

this time scale will not be accepted for a panel appeal, such requests will be reviewed by an independent senior officer.

Domestic Violence/Abuse

You may be awarded Urgent Housing Need status if you are suffering Domestic Violence and remaining in your current home is likely to result in ongoing or escalating abuse.

Applicants needing to move immediately by requiring the Council to provide temporary emergency accommodation or a Refuge placement, will need to request homelessness assistance.

Overcrowding

When carrying out assessments the following will be applied:

Anyone living in a household who has been there for over 6 months will be recognised as part of the household.

Unborn babies will be recognised as part of the household once the pregnancy reaches six months

Other people may also be included if there are exceptional circumstances.

Children of opposite sex over 5 years of age will be recognised as requiring separate bedrooms.

Adults (over 18 years of age) who are not partners or siblings are recognised as requiring separate bedrooms from one another.

Bedrooms large enough to hold a standard double bed and wardrobe will be counted as 2 bed spaces (or a double bedroom). Rooms smaller than this, but large enough to hold a standard single bed and wardrobe would count as 1 bed space (or a single room).

Bedsits count as one bed space only

Urgent Housing Need

Households that need 3 or more bed spaces to meet their housing need will be recognised as having an "Urgent" housing need.

People living in one bedroom flats requiring an additional 2 or more bed spaces will be recognised as having an "Urgent" housing need.

People living in one bedroom flats with a child sharing a bedroom with parents will also be placed in the "Urgent" need category.

Substantial Housing Need

Households requiring 1 additional bed space but under 3 bed spaces will be recognised as having a “Substantial” housing need.

Financial Hardship

Households that can demonstrate that they are suffering from financial hardship, which has occurred due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control will be awarded a “substantial” need housing award. This will only apply where moving to an alternative property will alleviate the financial hardship.

Demolition or Change of Use of Property

Each time properties are identified for demolition either as part of a clearance area or on an individual basis, the Council will consider by a separate process whether residents qualify for Urgent Housing Need.

In order to prioritise between bids from applicants within this category consideration will be given to the date that the category was awarded. In circumstances where more than one applicant with equal priority (the same category award date) bids for the same property, the applicant with the longest tenancy at their current home will be considered first. In the unlikely situation whereby the length of tenancy is equal, the length of registration on the Housing Register will be used as the deciding factor.

Where a property is being withdrawn from the general use of stock (i.e. will no longer be available to let by the current tenant), the outgoing tenant will be awarded access to the Urgent Housing Need category.

Leaving Forces

The date of your housing application will be recorded as the date you entered the forces (continued service). You will initially be placed in the Substantial Housing Need category. Personnel leaving the armed forces will be awarded Urgent Housing Need status **three** month before their discharge date. You will be responsible for advising us once this date has been established. This will not apply to people who are discharged due to poor behaviour.

You will be able to apply this criteria to your registration for up to five years of leaving service providing you haven't found settled accommodation during this period. If you have been left more than five years and have not been able to find (or successfully manage) settled accommodation you should bring this to our attention as you will be offered support and assistance.

People Leaving Gateshead Council Tied Accommodation

This policy applies:

- Where the current employee is retiring, resigning or is redeployed from their current job

- Where the current employee has died and their partner or family member who resided with them as a permanent member of the household for at least 2 years needs to be re-housed.
- Because the property has been identified by the Council for redevelopment, demolition or sale.

(If the property is not required for a new employee, then the former employee can request to remain in their home if the property would form part of the general housing stock and they meet the letting criteria for the property)

Where an employee is wishing to register an application but is not due to leave their current employment they will be placed in the Substantial Housing Need category and their registration date will be the date that they commenced employment within their role.

Where an employee has been granted a tenancy as part of their working arrangements, to enable them to carry out their duties and this arrangement is due to cease:

A request for re-housing will be registered from the date that employment commenced. The applicant will be placed in the Substantial Housing Need Category. Whilst bidding for properties that are ranked in accordance with “date of registration”, the employment commencement date will be used. Whilst bidding for properties that are ranked according to need, the date of award of “Housing Need Category” will apply.

Employees should commence bidding no later than six months prior to termination of employment.

- Urgent Housing Need status will be applied one month before employment is due to terminate.
- A review will be carried out no longer than 3 months after the employment is terminated. At this point a direct let may be made to ensure that homelessness does not occur
- Employees may start bidding for properties sooner but should seek advice prior to commencement of the new tenancy, as they may be responsible for rent payments for two tenancies.

Where an employee of the Council or one of its partners holding a service tenancy is dismissed from their employment, they will be made a reasonable offer of accommodation within four weeks of their dismissal date. If they refuse this offer, the Council may take legal action to repossess the service tenancy.

Service tenants will be charged for use and occupation equal to the weekly rent from the day after their job ends until they leave the service tenancy.

New Tenancy upon Death of Householder

Where someone would normally have been allowed to succeed a tenancy but is required to give the property up due to the fact that they are not eligible for the property type (see Section 12) they would be awarded Urgent Housing Need categorisation to enable them to access alternative accommodation.

Best Use of Stock

There are circumstances where Urgent Housing Need category will be awarded to ensure best use of the Council's housing stock.

Although people qualifying for this may not be in housing need, they are recognised within this category due to the fact that they will be releasing a property to be allocated to someone else with greater need.

Release of property for relet to address urgent housing need

There are instances where in order to resolve an urgent housing situation we will approach an existing tenant (living in a property that they may not need) and request that they consider a move to another home in order to free up their current home for someone else who needs it.

This may include people living in supported accommodation where they no longer require the support.

Under Occupation

If you are an existing Gateshead Council tenant and are currently under-occupying your home, you may be considered for access to the Urgent Housing Need category. The following criteria will be used to assess your suitability, but may be disregarded (in part) if your home is needed urgently for another household.

- Your rent account is clear and there are no outstanding debts to the Council
- You have no breaches of tenancy, including investigations for anti-social behaviour
- Your property is in a reasonable condition
- Your current home is not scheduled for sale or demolition
- You currently live in a house with at least one more bedroom than you require, and you will be moving to a smaller home.
- You are requesting a move to a property type that is frequently available and there is more demand for the home that you are leaving than the one that you are requesting.

Being given Urgent Housing Need categorisation may not enable you to access your preferred property type if your choice of home is required to meet housing need by other higher need groups.

Council tenants may be offered incentives to free up larger properties when they no longer need them.

Single Gateway

Single Gateway applicants will generally be categorised as Urgent Housing Need. There will be instances where a direct let is made to the applicant to ensure they secure an environment that is appropriate to their circumstances and needs as well as those of the community.

To be part of the Single Gateway Scheme you will have been excluded (or are likely to be excluded) from the Housing Register but can demonstrate a need to be re-housed in the Gateshead area and a willingness to accept a full support package.

You will have been working for three months with a designated support provider who is specifically linked to the Single Gateway Scheme and be in a position to maintain a tenancy.

You cannot be an existing Council, private rented or housing association tenant) and must not be involved in anti social behaviour or offending. If there is a specific issue i.e. substance misuse, you will be receiving treatment or specialist support for this.

You can be re-housed from supported housing provision but you should have lived there without any issues for at least 3 months and have your application endorsed by your key worker.

You must be prepared to provide full information about yourself, your current circumstances and agree to a Police vetting check.

You will not be able to bid for property but will have a designated officer working with you who will identify a property in consultation with you, your support worker and the estate officer from The Gateshead Housing Company.

You must be seeing your support worker at least once a week to qualify for re-housing under this scheme and continue to do so when you are re-housed for a minimum period of three months.

Children leaving care (age 16-21 extended to 24 years if in further education)

Where you are a child in the care of Gateshead Council, you will be placed in the Urgent Need Category. This will also apply to children outside of Gateshead who have been accepted by the Leaving Care Team as being the responsibility of Gateshead.

Where the initial tenancy is of a supported nature or is a non-secure tenancy, your status will apply up until you have been given a secure tenancy. If you move on from a secure tenancy, you will not be given Urgent Need Status unless you qualify under an alternative qualifying criteria as covered under other headings within this section.

Children in Flats

Households living in multi storey flats with children under the age of 16 (in permanent full time residence) will be recognised as having Substantial Housing Need.

Foster Carers

An "urgent" overcrowding priority will be awarded based on fostering arrangements were the Council has confirmed that a larger home will be needed on a long term basis for a Gateshead foster carer.

Section 13 – Direct Lets

If you have an urgent or immediate need for re-housing due to circumstances, which are not covered by the lettings policy. A direct let may be considered necessary.

This course of action will only be approved if re-housing cannot be resolved or resolved quickly enough through the Housing Register to avoid serious detriment to either the Council, the community or yourself. A move granted under this category will generally be approved under the most serious circumstances. An offer will therefore be made that meets needs and whilst preference will be taken into account, the availability of accommodation will be the deciding factor.

Where a reasonable offer that would have met the identified need is refused, your housing application will revert to the appropriate category on the Housing Register.

Emergency

Where emergency, interim or temporary accommodation is required for an existing Council tenant. This criterion is likely to be used in the case of fire, flood or circumstances that render an existing Council tenancy uninhabitable.

In such cases the tenant's initial tenancy will continue and the tenant will return to their home once the work is complete. Exceptions may be made whereby return to the initial tenancy is likely to cause harm to the household e.g. if the household are of ill health and cannot cope with the upheaval of a second move. Where this situation is evident prior to allocation of an alternative property, it may be agreed to make a "like for like" permanent offer of accommodation.

These criteria may also be applied to owner-occupiers and tenants of other landlords as part of the Council's Emergency Plan following a local disaster.

Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA)

Where housing requirements have been identified as part of MAPPA arrangements. Exclusion criteria will not apply to these cases.

Request for or Release of Adapted or Adaptable property

Where an adaptable property is identified which would meet an urgent need, which cannot be met by existing adapted housing stock.

Threat of or Fear for Life

Where a household has been referred to the Council by the Police Authority as needing urgent relocation.

A direct let will not be granted where safe accommodation has already been provided. This may comprise of temporary accommodation provided by partner agencies, (including the Police

Authority), in this instance Critical Need status will be awarded within the “Severe Harassment” Category.

Key Workers

Key workers are defined as those people who provide essential services necessary for continued economic growth or to sustain the quality of life within Gateshead.

Direct lets will be deployed for this group of people when there is a recognised difficulty in recruiting and retaining key workers.

A senior officer of the Council will approve direct lets for key individuals required to fulfil a specific role within Gateshead.

Where there is a skill shortage involving groups of people a strategic decision will be made at director level.

Domestic Violence/Abuse

Where there is a need to remove a perpetrator of domestic violence (usually a joint tenant) from a family home, into alternative accommodation to enable a victim to remain.

Social Care Preventative Lettings

This category will apply where following a social care assessment it is deemed that failure to provide suitable accommodation would result in the requirement of a social care package or could lead to a permanent admission to institutional care. This would also apply to applicants returning from supportive living schemes where failure to provide suitable accommodation would determine a need to return to a care setting and loss of independence for the individual.

Homelessness

Direct Lets may be given to homeless applicants to enable the Council to discharge its legal duty.

Extenuating or Unusual Circumstances

You have an urgent or immediate need for re-housing due to extenuating or unusual circumstances, which are not covered by the lettings policy. A move will only be approved if re-housing cannot be resolved or resolved quickly enough through the Housing Register to avoid serious detriment to either the Council or yourself. A move granted under this category will generally be approved under the most serious circumstances.

Section 14 – Local Lettings Plans

What are Local Lettings Plans?

Local Lettings Plans (LLP) are additional policies that complement Gateshead's Lettings Policy by addressing barriers to accessing housing and delivering better outcomes to improve life chances for current tenants and future residents in particular localities.

How will the need for a LLP be identified?

In identifying the need for a LLP, a stock and demand profile of the area will be developed. Demographic studies will be carried out and neighbourhood issues will be considered such as sustainability, social trends and equality and diversity implications.

If clear grounds are identified, consultation of partner landlords and local tenant and resident groups will be carried out to involve them in further development of plans.

Possible outcomes of LLPs

The following criteria are examples that may be included in a LLP but is not exhaustive:

- Maximum or minimum age limits for properties.
- Preference to tenants/applicants with a local connection or who already live or work in that area.
- Preference to people who are employed.
- Preference to household types who would not normally be eligible under the Council's Lettings Policy - this could be to attract smaller households to areas where a high density of large families is causing disharmony within the neighbourhood due to noise nuisance.
- Preference to people from BME and religious cultures.
- Providing furnishing to encourage the inclusion of specified groups/types of household.

Impact of Local Lettings Plans on the Lettings Policy

Once a report with recommendations has been agreed by the Council, the eligibility criteria established, will be implemented within the designated area and will override the Lettings Policy eligibility criteria except where:

An age restriction is imposed, which prevents a household awarded medical priority, from accessing a certain type that would meet their needs or where a property is required to meet the Council's statutory duty and including MAPPA arrangements.

Review of Local Lettings Plans

The introduction of LLPs will be publicised. The plans will be monitored periodically and reviewed with timescales set by the Council. Tenants and residents will be consulted as part of the review.

Section 15– Succession, New tenancy upon death of householder, Assignment or a Mutual Exchange

The table below shows the smallest household size allowed to remain in the property following a succession, a new tenancy upon death of the householder, assignment or a mutual exchange.

Property type	Smallest household size allowed
Bedsit	Single person
One bedroom house, flat or maisonette	Single person
Two bedroom house, flat or maisonette	Single person
Three bedroom house, flat or maisonette	Household of two people Single person subject to criteria *(see below)
Four bedroom house or maisonette	Family with three children or household of five people
Five bedroom house or maisonette	Family with five children or household of seven people

*Single Persons eligibility for a three-bedroom property:

- A single person would not normally be permitted to exchange into a 3 bedroom property (see section 16)
- A single person with a right to succession on the death of the tenant would be permitted to occupy a 3 bedroom property (see below)
- A single person without the right to succession but meeting one of the criteria in section 'What if you do not qualify for a succession by law' may be granted a new tenancy of a three-bedroom property in which they had been living. However this would not apply to a three-bedroom 'parlour' type house, when alternative accommodation would be offered instead.

Succession

Succession is where you take over a tenancy when the tenant dies. The rules around succession are written in law and clearly state when you are entitled to “succeed” a tenancy. Where reference is made to “partners”, this includes same sex partnerships.

When can a person succeed a tenancy?

A succession will only be allowed once, i.e. the tenancy has not previously been succeeded to. The successor must be the tenant’s husband, wife, partner or civil partner or another member of the tenant’s family. If the person wishing to succeed is not the husband, wife, partner or civil

partner, they must have lived with the tenant continuously for the twelve months before their death.

Joint tenancies will not be granted on succession.

If you have the right to succeed the tenancy of a property, which is larger than you need or was built or adapted for a person with medical needs, or there is an age criteria and you do not qualify; we may require you to move to another suitable home by awarding you a “direct let”. If you are asked to move to a more suitable property, you will be given notice no sooner than six months, but no later than 12 months after the death of the tenant.

If you succeed to the tenancy of a larger property than you need, and would prefer to move to a property with fewer bedrooms you may be given a “direct let” under “Best use of Stock”.

How will a decision be made if more than one person wishes to succeed?

The tenant’s husband, wife, partner or civil partner will be given priority over any other member of the family.

In the absence of a husband, wife, partner or civil partner the member of the family who has continuously lived in the home the longest (in excess of 12 months) will succeed to the tenancy.

If the household decide that a different member of the family (who has lived continuously within the home for at least 12 months) should succeed the tenancy, this will be allowed.

What if you do not qualify for a succession by law?

The law states that there is only one legal right to succeed to a tenancy. Therefore if someone has already succeeded to the tenancy a further succession would not be granted. However, the Council may grant you a new tenancy under certain circumstances as follows:

- You are a partner or relative who has lived in the property for at least the last two years of the tenant’s life.
- You have accepted responsibility for the tenant’s dependants.
- You have lived with the tenant for at least the last ten years of the tenant’s life and were not paying money to the tenant as rent.

In circumstances where you qualify for a new tenancy (as outlined above) but the property is too large for you and you would prefer to move to a smaller home we will offer you an alternative suitable property.

Properties set-aside for older people or people with mobility needs, four bedroom homes and 3 bed parlour type homes.

If the property is larger than you need or was built or adapted for a person with medical needs or has an age criteria, and you do not qualify for this property type you may be made a reasonable offer by way of a ‘direct let’ to enable you to move into another more suitable

property. If you refuse re-housing a final offer will be made to you before legal action is taken to repossess the property.

Assignment

There are legal requirements relating to when you have the right to assign or sub-let your home.

Assignment in general is prohibited however if you are a secure tenant and have not succeeded to that tenancy you may apply to assign the tenancy to a member of your household. The person you wish to assign to must have lived with you for a continuous period of twelve months prior to assigning the tenancy.

Assignment may be allowed in the following circumstances:

- Where the assignee could have succeeded to the tenancy if the tenant had died immediately before the assignment.
- Where the assignment is required in order to ensure that children are safeguarded under the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act. This is where the family home (or tenancy) has been awarded by the court to the parent taking sole responsibility for children.
- The current tenant is transferring for medical or disability reasons and the new home is not large enough for the potential assignee to live there with them;
- The tenant is transferring to somewhere to be cared for, such as a residential home and the potential assignee is not permitted to go;
- The tenant is going to live with a new partner and the partner's home is not large enough for the potential assignee to live there; or
- The tenant is moving to a different part of the country and the potential assignee has strong links with Gateshead, for example they work or study here.

If the assignee would not qualify for the property because it is larger than they need or was built or adapted for a person with medical needs or has an age criteria which is not met for this property type they will be made one reasonable offer by way of a "direct let" to enable them to move into another more suitable property.

The current tenant and the potential assignee must meet the requirements on debt, anti-social behaviour and condition of the home as set out at Section 8.

Joint tenancies

Joint tenancies will be granted if:

- You are married.
- You are living together as a couple (cohabiting). (Including same sex couples).
- Two or more people have originally joined the Housing Register together.

Sole to joint tenancies

As a sole tenant you can ask for a new joint tenancy to be granted if both parties are eligible to be on the Housing Register, are not subject to exclusion (see Section 8) and the other person:

- Is your husband or wife or civil partner; or
- Has lived with you as a partner (cohabited) for the last 12 months; or
- Would be offered that property on their application.

Section 16 – Mutual Exchanges

If you hold a secure tenancy with Gateshead Council, you can apply for permission to mutually exchange your home with another Council tenant, a housing association tenant, or a tenant from another Council.

As a Gateshead Council tenant you can exchange like for like (that is, the same size of property or the same number of people living there). A mutual exchange must not result in you worsening your circumstances relating to overcrowding, e.g. an overcrowded household requiring a four bed house may move from a 2 bed property into a 3 bed property where overcrowding will still exist but to a lesser degree.

Your application may be refused if:

- You, or the person you wish to exchange with has to give up the tenancy under a court order
- You or the person you wish to exchange with has been served with a Notice of Seeking Possession.
- An injunction, an Anti-social Behaviour Order or a possession order granted on the grounds of nuisance is in force. Or if court action to obtain such an order or a demotion order is pending against the tenant, the proposed assignee or a person who resides with either of them.
- Your home is larger than the needs of the household you wish to exchange with unless like for like.
- Your home has been let to you as a "tied tenancy" and was allocated to enable you to carry out your job.
- Your home has been adapted for a person with a physical disability and if the exchange were to go ahead, a disabled person requiring the adaptations would no longer live in the property. (This excludes minor adaptations such as grab rails).
- Your home would normally be let to people over 60 and if the exchange were to go ahead, such a person would no longer live in the property.
- Your home is one of a group of properties let to people with support needs or a special facility and if your exchange was to go ahead someone needing those services or facilities would no longer be living in the property. This includes sheltered housing, and properties normally offered to people with mobility needs.
- Your property is the subject of a management agreement with a RSL and at least half the tenants of the properties within the agreement are members and the assignee is not willing to become a member.
- Your home is too small for the needs of the household you wish to exchange with and would result in overcrowding or would break the normal letting criteria.

- Your landlord has not granted written permission.

You will be notified in writing of the decision within 42 days of your application.

Conditional consent may be granted where you are breaking the tenancy conditions and will be able to proceed once the matter is addressed.

Your home must be in a lettable condition before the exchange will be allowed.

If you are a Council tenant and you mutually exchange with another Council tenant your housing application will be cancelled.

Section 17 – Sensitive Lets

Sensitive lets will be used to ensure that properties and/or people that have previously been involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour, which has impacted upon neighbouring households are managed in a way to ensure that the problem does not reoccur in a new tenancy.

In order for this policy to be evoked for a vacant property, the behaviour of the outgoing occupants would have been serious and ongoing and the need for a sensitive let would be supported by evidence of the need for an intervention.

In order for this policy to be evoked for a housing applicant, the behaviour of the applicant would have been serious and ongoing and the need for a sensitive let would be supported by the evidence of a need for an intervention to ensure that the person is housed within a property and area that would reduce risk to the applicant and the proposed new neighbourhood.

Allocations can be made either through the advertising process, or as a direct let, but new applicants and potential properties will be subject to a more robust vetting.

When a property is subject to a “sensitive let”, any bidder with a history of criminal or anti-social behaviour will be bypassed in the “ranking” process

When an individual is subject to a “sensitive let” any potential offer of accommodation that is likely to result in potential risk to the person or neighbourhood will be bypassed in the “ranking” process.

The criteria for each individual sensitive let will be recorded and any reason for bypassing an applicant or property during the ranking process will be recorded.

Section 18 – Garage Lettings

Anyone applying for either a garage or parking bay will be placed in Critical Need or Urgent Need depending on their circumstances.

Critical Need Tenants of Gateshead Council property
Urgent Need Other residents of Gateshead

All applicants wishing to rent a Council garage must complete a garage application form. There will be periodic reviews of the garage waiting list when applicants wishing to remain on the waiting list will be required to re-state their interest.

The garages will be let to the applicant with the oldest application date from Critical Need. If no one from Critical Need applies it will be let to the person with the oldest application date from Urgent Need.

You can only apply for a vacant garage or parking bay if you have a clear rent account (Council tenants) and owe no debt to the Council (all applicants).

Applications received from tenants (including joint tenants) who already rent a Council garage will be placed in Critical Need by date of application. Where a tenant or applicant wishes to apply for more than one garage they must register separate applications.

Due to availability, a customer may sometimes need to accept a garage tenancy in an area, which is some distance away from their home. In these circumstances the customer will be given the option of continuing their original garage application to enable the possibility of a transfer to a nearer garage at a later date. The tenancy of the first garage must be given up.

Council tenants in Critical Need who buy their home through the Right to Buy scheme, or who cease to become Council tenants for whatever reason will revert to Urgent Need but will keep their original date of application.

Where an applicant rents a garage which is to be demolished they can reapply and will be given the same date of application as the date of their original garage tenancy. People who own their own homes will be placed in Urgent Need and no additional priority will be given for second garages.

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Policy Advisory Group

26 February 2016

Report to Cabinet

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to consider and explore potential opportunities to amend Gateshead Council's lettings policy, with a view to increasing the sustainability of tenancies and making Council housing easier to access for potential appropriate new customers.

Summary of Advice:

- How will we assess tenants for Pay to Stay?
- Can we not manage our housing stock in a different way, if the government force us to sell off the higher value stock we are going to be left with the cheaper tenure/low turnover stock. We may just end up as a dumping ground of poor stock.
- Lot of competition from right to buy properties and this is only going to get worse.
- Is there anything we can do about absentee landlords as they also seem to be on the increase.
- It is easier for people to just walk in and get a private rent and we cannot compete with this.
- We need to look at inherited tenancies too – will await the legislation on this with interest.
- The principle of succession with good families should be encouraged.
- Could we asset transfer the communal lounges?
- Could we look at different ways of marketing the communal lounges?
- Is there a potential to provide play provision where there has been none before to encourage more families ie multi storey flats.
- Could we look at lifting the age restriction on some properties ie bungalows and some flats.
- What type of property is the biggest problem for us. Could we market test increasing the push for these hard to let properties for a limited time as a trial?

- We have to acknowledge that family dynamics are not what they were and we need to look at adapting our policy to take this into account. Many parents live apart and share custody of children.
- Can we look at allowing pets into flats if this was proving to be a barrier to letting the property.
- There are direct links to poor housing and poor mental health and we need to look at this as a matter of course.
- Increasing sustainability and reducing administration should be also a priority – how much time is wasted on people who never come back or do not provide us with the correct information from the outset.
- Changes in policies need to be done asap and brought back here on 23 March 2016 for consideration.

Chair: J Turnbull

Members Present: Councillors J Hamilton, L Caffrey, L Twist, C McHugh

Officers Present: Lisa Philliskirk –Housing Services Manager
 Kevin Johnson – Head of Customer Services, TGHC
 Jon Mallen-Beadle – Managing Director TGHC
 Jackie Armstrong – Customer Services Manager TGHC
 Helen Conway - Corporate Services and Governance

Policy Advisory Group

23 March 2016

Report to Cabinet

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to consider and explore potential opportunities to amend Gateshead Council's lettings policy, with a view to increasing the sustainability of tenancies and making Council housing easier to access for potential appropriate new customers.

Summary of Advice:

Demoted Applicants

Agree that in order to be allowed to bid, demoted applicants must demonstrate that they have attempted to make repayments to reduce arrears (or modify behaviour if demoted through ASB)

Welcome the discussions which take place with tenants if a tenancy is to be moved from demoted to suspended to understand any mitigating circumstances and provide support where necessary

Undertaking financial assessments is key where it is evident a person may not be able to sustain their tenancy

Welcome the opportunity for officers to be able to use their discretion when considering individual cases

Need to ensure that 'discretion' does not lead to additional levels of bureaucracy

Look to include within the policy what is deemed as acceptable behaviour for a tenancy to help to address incidents relating to ASB

Eligibility for Transfers

Agree that unless there is a significant housing need, tenants should remain in their homes for a period of twelve months before they can register for a transfer of property

Agree that where a request for a transfer is received, a tenant's home is inspected to ensure that it is to a lettable standard

Need to take into consideration the wider interest of the area if a person does not move

Would like to promote more widely the opportunity for mutual exchange of properties

Children in Flats

Some councillors receive complaints from tenants in relation to noise where there are children residing in flats

Do not think that children under the aged of 16 years should reside in the large multi storey flats

The upper age of 16 years is too high

Children reside in flats in other countries and this is acceptable

In a situation where we have vacant properties it is better to give people the choice if they have children as to whether or not they wish to reside in a flat

There should be more mixed age communities to create more community support networks

Would like to see mixed age communities but this does not always work

Should the policy for children in flats change, the 25 families that currently have a priority award should have their award protected, but there should be no further awards to new tenants

Pets in Flats

(this is an issue within the tenancy agreement and comments will be fed in to any forthcoming reviews)

There is a need to determine what type of pet and the number of pets which would be allowed

Recognise the benefits that pets bring to some people but the number of pets could be limited

Pets should not be allowed where there are communal entrances to properties

Recognise problems if there are pets and there are communal entrances but are there opportunities where this could be relaxed

Need to look at how pets are managed by tenants

Look at good practice elsewhere

Age Restrictions

Agree that the age limit for two bedroom bungalows should not change

Recognise where age limits have been lowered previously this has had little impact on being able to let specific properties

Recognise that some schemes may need to be re-registered if age limits are lowered (where previously older persons sheltered accommodation where a warden is on site) and the wider impacts this may have

Suggested that where an age limit is lowered, the policy include that OAP's would get a higher priority for the property

Suggested that if a property is advertised and cannot be re-let then the possible reduction of age limit be looked at, taking into account any potential impacts

Affordability

Agree that a financial assessment be undertake and that officers reserve the right to refuse an offer if the assessment demonstrates that the tenant would not be able financially to sustain the tenancy

Welcome the work that would be undertaken by officers to help people to bid on properties that would not place them in financial hardship

Downsizing

Agree that there should just be one scheme for downsizing and priority given to those moving into smaller properties that are in lower demand

Where people are registered under the existing downsizing scheme as a result of Welfare Reform, their current award should be honoured but there should be no new awards given.

Foster Carers

Recognise that where a person wishes to foster, they must have appropriate accommodation to do so

Concerns that some foster placements may be short term.

Would fixed term tenancies be acceptable?

Welcome the work which currently takes place with social workers and fostering team to look at each case on an individual basis

The Council encourage families to foster and the steps which officers are currently taking for accommodation requests are reasonable

The policy should include that the Council recognise that fostering is a priority and that each case for housing would be looked at on an individual basis

Chair: J Turnbull

Members Present: Councillors L Caffrey, B Goldsworthy, M Graham, M Hood, J Lee, P Mole and L Twist

Officers Present: Lisa Philliskirk –Housing Services Manager
Kevin Johnson – Head of Customer Services, TGHC
Jackie Armstrong – Customer Services Manager TGHC
Karen Robson - Corporate Services and Governance



COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

CHARGING STRUCTURE FOR GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS 2017

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the charging structure for garden waste collections 2017.
2. It is proposed that the Council implements an increase in the charge for garden waste collections that will take place from April to October 2017.
3. This proposal has been included on the savings proposal for 2017/18 for Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance.
4. Residents will receive a letter in November 2016 confirming the details of the service and confirmation of the charge for the service.
5. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

6. It is recommended that Council:
 - i) Approve the charging structure for garden waste collections for 2017 as set out in the attached report
 - ii) Approve the inclusion of the £31 and £33 charges on the fees and charges schedule for 2016/17 so that payments can be taken from November 2016.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Charging Structure for garden waste collections 2017

REPORT OF: Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Development and Enterprise

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval of the charging structure for garden waste collections 2017.

Background

2. In November 2015 Cabinet approved the increase in charging for the collection of garden waste, the cost for the service was £25 for those signing up by 31 January 2016 and £27 for those signing up after this date. The charge was for 15 fortnightly collections between April and October 2016.
3. Over 28,000 residents opted into the scheme via 3 alternative payment methods - online, by telephone or by face to face contact.
4. The service achieved its additional budgeted saving of £140,000 from garden waste charging for 2016/17.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that the Council implements an increase in the charge for garden waste collections that will take place from April to October 2017.
6. This proposal has been included on the savings proposals for 2017/18 for Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance. The proposed minimum charge for 15 collections of a garden waste bin during 2017 is £31.
7. Residents will receive a letter in November 2016 confirming the details of the service and confirmation of the charge for the service. Those wishing to participate will be asked to sign up by 31 January 2017 in order that routes can be designed to ensure collections take place from beginning of April 2016.
8. Residents will also be advised that those signing up after the deadline will pay a fee of £33.
9. Appendix 1 provides information on the charging structure and the reasons for incentivising early sign up.

Recommendations

10. Cabinet is asked to recommend Council to:

- (i) Approve the charging structure for garden waste collections for 2017 as set out in the report.
- (ii) Approve the inclusion of the £31 and £33 charges on the fees and charges schedule for 2016/17 so that payments can be taken from November 2016.

For the following reasons:

- To achieve an estimated further £168,000 savings which will assist the Council in achieving the overall savings required to deliver its budget for 2017/18.

CONTACT: Colin Huntington extension: 7402

Policy Context

1. The proposal in this report is consistent with the Council's vision and medium term objectives as set out in Vision 2030 and the Council Plan, in particular 'Ensuring a Sustainable Gateshead' by ensuring best use of resources to deliver value for money services and long-term financial sustainability.

Background

2. The incentivised charging for garden waste was implemented in 2016 with payments being taken from November 2015. 63,000 properties were contacted via a letter in November 2015 advising of the increased charge and were requested to sign up before 1 February 2016 otherwise the charge would be £27.
3. Approximately 22,500 bins were signed up by the deadline which made it easier to plan routes, and send data for the printing of stickers and calendars. It also reduced disruption to residents during the first few weeks of collections.
4. Residents have continued to sign up throughout the collection period although at reduced numbers compared with 2015 when there was no incentive to sign up early.
5. Of those bins currently signed up 60.5% were done so on line which is the most cost effective way for the Council, approximately 29% by phone and 10.5% via face to face contact.
6. The proposal aims to continue with the incentivised early sign up to enable effective route planning and ensure residents can receive their full 15 collections, whilst reducing administration costs. Residents will be asked to sign up by 31 January 2017 and pay £31. Those signing up after this date will have to pay an increased fee of £33.
7. This charging structure treats all residents equally, no matter how they choose to sign-up (whether before or after the deadline), but provides a financial incentive to those that chose to do so within the agreed deadline.
8. Letters will be sent to residents in early November requesting them to sign up for 2017 garden waste collections.
9. The charges of £31 and £33 apply to all residents with no concessions.
10. Residents will still be able to pay via the internet, over the telephone or in person at the Civic Centre; however, the letter will not refer to face to face payments being taken at the Civic Centre, to encourage the use of more cost effective payment methods. This links to the channel shift work programme. Face to face payment is the least cost effective way to take payments.
11. Residents can join at any point after the deadline however the price will remain at £33.

Consultation

12. Consultation has taken place with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members for Environment and Transport.

Alternative Options

13. Other options were considered but this incentive scheme was chosen as it is the most viable in terms of budget stability. It allows advance notification to be given to residents opting into the scheme outside of the normal process of approval of fees and charges.

Implications of Recommended Option

14. Resources

a. Financial Implications – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that it is estimated that the increase to the charge for garden waste collections on an estimated participation rate of 28,000 properties minus the costs to run and administer the scheme would generate additional savings of £168,000.

b. Human Resources Implications – Nil

c. Property Implications – Nil.

15. **Risk Management Implications** - The risks associated with the impact on demand for the service have been assessed when considering introducing an increased charge for this service. This report sets out the reasons why the Council believes the proposed implementation of a charge is reasonable however as with any increase, the reasonableness of the charge is open to legal challenge.
16. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - A Comprehensive Impact Assessment (CIA) for the introduction of charging for garden waste collections was previously prepared and was reviewed in July 2016.
17. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There is potential that some residents may dispose of their waste by fly tipping in lanes and over back fences onto public open spaces.
18. **Health Implications** - Nil
19. **Sustainability Implications** – There will be an impact on the overall recycling rate as a result of the increase of the charge. It is estimated that the tonnage collected for recycling of garden waste will fall by approximately 10% from this year as a result 3000 less bins collected during 2016.
20. **Human Rights Implications** - Nil
21. **Area and Ward Implications** – The proposed charging would apply to garden waste collections that are provided across the borough.



COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

STRATEGIC REVIEW OF FLOODING RESPONSE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SANDBAGS

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to inform of the findings and outcomes from a Strategic Review of Flooding Response and to seek approval of a Sandbag Policy for Gateshead.
2. Gateshead experiences severe weather on a frequent basis, most recently heavy rain and subsequent flooding in January 2016. As this type of incident can occur at any time there needs to be an assurance to the public that the Council has the capability and capacity in place to respond to flooding incidents within Gateshead, including having a clear and concise policy on the approach to sandbags.
3. Following severe weather experienced in 2008 a sandbag allocation and distribution protocol was developed but this has now been reviewed and updated and is detailed in Appendix 3 of the attached report.
4. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

5. It is recommended that Council approve the Sandbag Policy for Gateshead as set out in Appendix 3 of the attached report.

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TITLE OF REPORT: **Strategic Review of Flooding Response and Distribution of Sandbags**

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present findings and outcomes from a Strategic Review of Flooding Response and for Cabinet to endorse and recommend Council to approve a Sandbag Policy for Gateshead.

Background

2. Gateshead experiences severe weather on a frequent basis, most recently heavy rain and subsequent flooding in January 2016. A debrief of events was undertaken by all responding officers which resulted in a strategic review of flooding response with a summary of lessons learned identified for future flooding incidents. As this type of incident can occur at any time there needs to be an assurance to the public that the Council has the capability and capacity in place to respond to flooding in Gateshead, including having a clear and concise policy on the approach to sandbags.
3. Currently the Council will provide sandbags to residents and businesses who contact us in a flooding event, pending an assessment. A decision is then made as to whether to provide sandbags or not but this is an informal process. The production and distribution of sandbags has a significant impact on the capacity and capability of the operational teams responding to a flooding event and stretches limited resources during the response phase. Some flooding incidents occur with little or no warning and it can be difficult to deliver sandbag supplies to communities in time to be of any benefit to prevent flooding.
4. Whilst the use of sandbags may restrict some flooding, they will not completely prevent the encroachment of floodwater into a property. Sandbags may be used to manage surface water on and from the public highway and can be effective in deflecting running water. However there are more effective flood defences that if prepared in advance of a flood event, can provide more effective protection to properties than the issuing of sandbags to individual residents and properties
5. A Corporate Resources Advisory Group considered an options paper on the Council's emergency response arrangements to flooding, in particular around the current and possible approach to issuing sandbags. The Group provided

views on the potential options for a future Sandbag Policy in Gateshead and a summary of the Group's advice is attached at appendix 2.

6. The proposed draft Policy is attached at appendix 3 and a draft communications strategy is attached at appendix 4.

Proposal

7. It is proposed that Cabinet endorses and recommends Council approves a Sandbag Policy for Gateshead that in summary will mean the Council will not provide sandbags to individual residents or businesses in a flooding event.

Recommendations

8. Cabinet is asked to recommend the Council to approve the proposed Sandbag Policy for Gateshead as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure more sustainable prioritisation of operational resources during a flooding incident therefore increasing the Council's capacity and capability to respond
- (ii) To instil an onus on the community to become more resilient and rely less on the Council to pro-actively protect their properties from flooding – achieving more together.
- (iii) To ensure communities utilise more effective protection methods to protect their own properties from a flooding event.

CONTACT: David Patterson extension: 2807

Policy Context

1. The proposed draft policy is in line with Vision 2030, and in particular will support the creation of sustainable and thriving communities, and prosperous communities with a focus on the environment. The overall aim is to strengthen response arrangements in all communities and for volunteers to work with us during an emergency, with the overall objective of 'achieving more together'. The proposal also supports Gateshead Volunteers to encourage more of us to volunteer and contribute to our communities.
2. The proposal is in line with the Council Plan 2015-2020 and supports the delivery of all policy objectives within this. The proposed policy is also consistent with the aims and objectives of the Council's new Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Background

3. Gateshead experiences severe weather on a frequent basis, most recently heavy rain and subsequent flooding in January 2016. A debrief of events was undertaken by all responding officers which resulted in a strategic review of flooding response. A summary of lessons learned was identified for responding to future flooding incidents which included:
 - Clarification of the role of Councillors in an emergency situation or major incident
 - Considering and revisiting the implications of statutory legislation, national directives, initiatives and obligations relating to the flooding
 - Further development of the strategic approach to areas regularly affected by flooding and how this will be supported in the short term
 - Gaining a greater understanding of the various metrological warnings and alert systems, adapting our response to the expected impacts
 - Reviewing the multi-agency co-ordination and response plans, in relation to responding to flooding issues to ensure there is sufficient resources, capacity and capability
 - Ensuring all flooding hazards, risks and infrastructure are identified and mapped within Gateshead
 - Strengthening relationships and networking arrangements between partner organisations and the local authority
 - Improving communications with the public and managing the expectations of each partner organisation
 - Reviewing the sandbag allocation and distribution protocol for Gateshead utilising best practise from partner organisations and other local authorities
4. As this type of incident can occur at any time there needs to be an assurance to the public that the Council has the capability and capacity in place to

respond to flooding in Gateshead, including having a clear and concise policy on the approach to sandbags.

5. Traditionally, sandbags have been used to block doorways, drains and other openings into properties to prevent water backing up. Advice provided by the Environment Agency states sandbags can keep water out for short periods; can filter out some muddy sediment found in flood waters and are cheap and easy to obtain. However, sandbags are relatively ineffective when compared to purpose-designed flood protection products. Sandbags are a poor form of flood protection and effective flood defences prepared in advance of a flood event can provide far more effective protection to properties.
6. There is no statutory requirement for the Council to provide sandbags or protection to private property from flooding. However under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council and other emergency responders have a statutory duty to respond to incidents deemed as emergencies and risk to life incidents which may include flooding.
7. Following severe weather experienced in 2008, a sandbag allocation and distribution protocol was developed for flooding incidents which provided operational information on stocks and supplies, local distribution points, priorities for provision, collection / disposal and the associated health and safety issues. This is now outdated and requires a review.
8. Currently the Council will provide sandbags to residents and businesses who contact us in a flooding event, pending an assessment. A decision is then made as to whether to provide sandbags or not but this is an informal process. The production and distribution of sandbags has a significant impact on the capacity and capability of the operational teams responding to a flooding event and stretches limited resources during the response phase. Some flooding events occur with little or no warning and it can be difficult to deliver sandbag supplies to communities in time to be of any benefit to prevent flooding.

Proposed Policy

9. In light of advice set out in paragraph 5 above, the proposed policy is that the Council will not provide sandbags to individual residents or businesses. The onus would be on the community to become more resilient and rely less on the Council to pro-actively protect their properties from flooding.
10. Instead, the Council's main focus will be to provide community resilience via interactive information and advice to residents and businesses about more effective methods of protecting their own properties.
11. The proposed policy will build on the cohort of Community Resilience Volunteers to assist their communities in the known flood risk areas and will relieve the pressure on operational teams responding during a flood incident and increase the response capacity and capability. This approach is also

consistent with the majority of approaches throughout the north east and around the country.

12. A pro-active communication campaign will be undertaken to all residents and businesses to advise residents on what the Council will do in the event of flooding, and will be up front advising people that sandbags will not be provided anymore. Awareness raising sessions will also take place with all operational Council staff on the implemented policy. A detailed briefing will also be produced for all councillors with information to provide to constituents when required.
13. The draft Communications Strategy is attached at appendix 4.

Consultation

14. Consultation has taken place with a small internal task and finish group that was established with representatives from key Council services which included The Gateshead Housing Company. An options report has also been presented to the Cabinet Members for Communities and Volunteering who support this policy direction of not issuing sandbags to individual residents and businesses.
15. The views of members were sought with a Corporate Resources Advisory Group held. Members considered an options paper on the Council's emergency response arrangements to flooding, in particular around the current and possible approach to issuing sandbags. The Group provided views on potential options for the future Sandbag Policy in Gateshead and a summary of the Group's advice is attached at appendix 2.
16. The Gateshead Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group which includes our multi-agency partner organisations have been briefed in relation to the proposed policy. It was acknowledged by partners that this is the policy approach being undertaken in many areas across the country.

Implications of Recommended Options

17. Resources:

a) Financial Implications – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms there may be long term savings however this is difficult to quantify as only estimated figures exist for current costs of sandbag provision.

b) Human Resources Implications – There are no human resources implications from the recommended options. Operatives who are involved in the production of sandbags will be allocated other roles within the response.

c) Property Implications - There are no property implications from the recommended options

18. **Risk Management Implications** - There is potential for residents to attempt to claim damages from the Council as a result of the policy decision not to provide sandbags. This is difficult to quantify. All claims would be strenuously defended. The policy does not breach any statutory duties so no liability would attach to the Council.

The policy will be fully communicated and publicised to all members of the public, staff and councillors before implementation.

19. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - None
20. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications from the recommended options.
21. **Health Implications** - Effective management of responding to flooding incidents is important in protecting people from the adverse health impacts of the issues, including immediate threats to health and safety. Any sandbags used in a flooding response will be the responsibility of the Council to remove after the event and possible implications to consider may include contamination and safe disposal.
22. **Sustainability Implications** - There are no sustainability implications from the recommended options
23. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications from the recommended options
24. **Area and Ward Implications** - This report affects all wards.
25. **Background Information**
- Sandbag Allocation and Distribution Protocol (Gateshead Council, 2008)

Corporate Resources Advisory Group

12 July 2016

Report to Cabinet

Strategic Review of Flooding Emergency Response and Distribution of Sandbags

Purpose of the Meeting

This Advisory Group was asked for views on the Council's emergency response arrangements to flooding, in particular around the current and possible future approach to issuing sandbags.

The group was taken through a PowerPoint presentation which detailed the strategic review of flooding emergency response, the current approach to using sandbags and potential options for a future Sandbag Policy in Gateshead.

Summary of Advice:

- Concerns were raised that some vulnerable residents would not receive sandbags and it would be prudent to have stores of sandbags near flooding hotspots. It was clarified that response teams would still use sandbags as and when appropriate rather than giving them to individuals.
- The group agreed that the main issue would be communicating to residents why sandbags would no longer be provided and that work needed to be undertaken with residents to identify problems and ensure they know how to respond if an event occurs.
- It was suggested that more should be done to protect Council housing stock. It was confirmed that the response to flooding is tenure blind and that any issue would be dealt with by response teams and could potentially involve the use of sandbags, however the aim would be to use current stock better rather than distributing them to residents.
- It was queried whether currently the use of sandbags is monitored and whether there are any alternatives to deflecting flood waters. It was confirmed that the Flood Risk Management team do monitor use once distributed. It was also noted that alternative forms of protection are being looked at and better links between services have been made in order to alleviate the risk and occurrences of flooding.
- It was suggested that potential flooding risks should be identified in each Ward so that Councillors are aware of what is going on, this should also include other local authority boundaries and maps of localised flooding.
- It was commented that option one was not effective because often it is too late once sandbags are received by residents, also this is too labour intensive and responders would be better placed elsewhere during a flooding event.

- It was also commented that option two is good in theory, however when in crisis residents will panic therefore it is essential to inform people so they understand what they need to be doing. It was suggested that option two would be preferable if sandbags were placed in strategic places.
- It was noted that option three would inevitably mean trading at a loss because the infrastructure would initially need to be set up and would not look good if old and vulnerable residents were being charged.
- The group agreed that there should be a general communications strategy to advise residents on what the Council will do in the event of flooding. It was also noted that the communications should be upfront in terms of advising people that sandbags would not be provided anymore.
- It was suggested that more permanent measures be looked at in those areas prone to flooding, therefore save money in the longer term through implementing preventative measures.
- It was suggested that 'Aqua Sacks' be used rather than sandbags as they have a longer shelf life and are easier to store. It was also suggested that a one-off education programme be rolled out to places such as community centres where there has been flooding in the past. It was confirmed that the Emergency Response team is currently working with community centres so links have been made already and such programmes could be looked to be rolled out.
- The group agreed that option two should be taken forward, and should include an effective communications strategy.

Chair: M Gannon (Chair)

Councillors Present: G Haley, M Hood, J McElroy, I Patterson, J Wallace, P Mole, M Charlton, L Twist, M Henry and T Graham

Officers Present: Anthony Alder – Communities and Environment
David Patterson – Communities and Environment
Rosalyn Patterson – Corporate Service and Governance

APPENDIX 3

Sandbag Policy

Overview of Sandbag Policy

1. Gateshead Council will not provide sandbags to individual residents or businesses in a flooding event
2. The Council may use sandbags to protect the public highway from surface water flooding
3. The Council will provide information and advice to residents and businesses as to how best protect their property from flooding

Section 1 – Background Information

- 1.1 There is no statutory requirement for Gateshead Council to provide sandbags or protection for private property from flooding.
- 1.2 Sandbags are a poor form of flood protection, and proper flood defences, prepared in advance of a flood event, provide far more effective protection to properties
- 1.3 The distribution of sandbags during a flood event can have a significant impact on limited resources that are already stretched.
- 1.4 With little warning of some types of flooding occurring it is also difficult to get supplies to communities in time to be of any benefit to prevent flooding of property.
- 1.5 Therefore our approach to responding to flooding rather than supplying sandbags is to promote the benefits of preparing for flooding in advance of it occurring.
- 1.6 Residents and business owners are in a better position than the Council to respond to the threat of flooding, which can be unpredictable and happen quickly. This means that property protection measures can be deployed sooner than the Council could provide sandbags or mobilise other resources.
- 1.7 Gateshead Council aims to inform residents and business owners of the level of help that will be available during a flood event so that they can prepare themselves accordingly.

Section 2 - Sandbag Provision

- 2.1 Whilst the use of sandbags may restrict some flooding, they will not totally prevent the encroachment of floodwater into a property. Sandbags may be used to manage surface water on and from the public highway and can be effective in deflecting running water.

- 2.2 Gateshead Council holds a stock of sandbags which is primarily to assist the response in preventing flooding of the highway and assisting with the response in known 'at risk' flooding areas.
- 2.3 Sandbags will no longer be provided by the Council to individual residents and businesses to deploy on their own properties, and are encouraged to undertake the advice in Section 3 for protection of property.

Section 3 - Protection of Property

- 3.1 The responsibility for the protection of private property rests with the owner as does the chosen method of protection. Gateshead Council encourages everyone to be aware of the flood risk in their area and take any appropriate measures to protect themselves and their property such as purchasing their own flood protection equipment prior to a flood event.
- 3.2 There are more effective methods for protecting property than the use of sandbags such as purpose built door gates/barriers and air brick covers. These are easier to install, form a more effective seal, can be cleaned and re-used, and are more cost effective. Property owners should consider the type of flooding they may be at risk from and the potential water depths likely to be experienced when choosing which property protection methods to use. Useful websites include:
 - <http://www.smartfloodprotection.com/data-collection-form-2/>
 - <http://www.bluepages.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood/find-out-if-youre-at-risk>
- 3.3 Gateshead Council recommends that if property owners are considering using property level protection measures they carefully consider all the potential entry points that floodwater can use and seek professional advice where needed.

APPENDIX 4

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communities and Environment

Sandbags

Page 127

BRIEF SUMMARY OF CAMPAIGN			
Notify public of changes to council’s policy regarding sandbags			
Comms lead	Graphics lead	Service contacts	Partners/others contacts
Emma Richardson	n/a	David Patterson, C&E	TGHC
Budget/Cost codes	Timescales	Key audiences	Proposed comms channels
tbc	September – December 2016 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public • Councillors • Employees • Businesses • Volunteer wardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council website • Publications - Council News, Members’ Briefings, Employee briefings via team brief (service level) • Social Media • Gateshead Now e-bulletin • Business e-newsletter • TGHC website and newspaper
SERVICE OBJECTIVES/GOALS/POLICY CHANGES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a responsibility to ensure that measures are in place to plan for, prepare for, respond to and recover from any emergencies that occur in or have an effect upon Gateshead. • In the past the council have given out sandbags to residents and businesses to help them protect their properties. This policy has been reviewed and sandbags will no longer be given to individual residents and businesses on request to use on their own properties. • The Council will hold a stock of sandbags which are primarily to assist the response in managing surface water flooding on the highway and assisting with the response in known ‘at risk’ areas 			

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SERVICE GOALS	
Action 1	Council website to be updated with new advice and information on how to prevent flooding/policy change re sandbags
Action 2	Advice leaflet for residents on what the Council does in a flooding event and how residents can reduce the impact of flooding on their homes
Action 3	Members Briefing to be issued explaining new policy and process
Action 4	Employee briefings in relevant service areas (customer services, construction services). Volunteer wardens to be notified.
Action 5	Social media messages to go out if Met Office warn of risk of flooding – residents to be warned that no sandbags will be given and to look at council website for advice
Action 6	Council News article in Winter 2016 issue and Autumn 2017
Action 7	Gateshead Now (e-bulletin) item to direct residents to new web page showing flooding prevention advice – October 2016
Action 8	Item in Business Newsletter to inform businesses that they can no longer request sandbags

KEY MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council will no longer provide sandbags to individual residents or businesses in a flooding event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandbags outside individual properties are not the most effective way to protect properties from flooding - there are more effective flood defences that if prepared in advance of a flood event, can provide more effective protection to properties than individual sandbags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandbags may be used to manage surface water on and from the public highway and can be effective in deflecting running water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandbags that are used will be used differently to deflect water, this will still give protection to many properties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and businesses need to take more personal responsibility for protecting their own properties – need to rely less on the council to protect their properties from flooding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling sandbags and delivering them can be time consuming for the council so by the time the bags are filled it may be too late to offer any benefit to prevent flooding. By not filling sandbags this will ensure more sustainable prioritisation of operational resources during a flooding incident therefore increasing the Council's capacity and capability to respond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council does not have a statutory responsibility to protect private properties and businesses from flooding. We do have a responsibility to protect our own properties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective information and advice to prevent flooding is available on the council's website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a team of Community Resilience Volunteers across the borough who will assist their communities during a flooding incident

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN			
ACTION 1 - Website	Deadline	Status	DONE
Write copy for website/amend existing web pages	31 Aug	DP to redraft webpages and consult with key officers	
Web team to create web pages	16 Sept	Web team to update web pages in conjunction with launch of policy	
ACTION 2 – Advice Leaflet			
Draft an advice leaflet for residents and councillors on what the Council does in an event and how residents can help themselves to protect their properties	31 Aug	DP to draft leaflet and ER to arrange for Graphics Team to design	
Arrange for a print run for councillors and update website with a PDF copy	16 Sept	DP to liaise with Print Unit, web team and members’ services	
ACTION 3 – Members Briefing	Deadline	Status	DONE
Write and issue members briefing if cabinet approve policy on 13 Sept	16 Sept	DP to draft and issue via members’ services	
ACTION 4 – Employee briefing	Deadline	Status	DONE
Update and amend Customer Services scripts for call takers to follow when a call is received	31 Aug	DP to meet with Heather Marshall Customer Services to map out new process for call takers following the implementation of the	
Write employee briefing note if cabinet approve policy on 13 Sept	16 Sept	DP and ER to draft, and circulate to key groups and services	
ACTION 5 – Social media messages	Deadline	Status	DONE
Draft social media posts, Twitter/Facebook	As & when	ER to draft	
ACTION 6 – Council News article	Deadline	Status	DONE
Draft item for Winter 2016 Council News	24 Oct	ER to draft	
ACTION 7 – Gateshead Now			
Book space in future issue of Gateshead Now	31 Aug	ER to book	done
Draft text for Gateshead Now	16 Sept	DP and ER to draft	
ACTION 8 – Business e-newsletter	Deadline		DONE
Book space in October issue of Business e-	31 Aug	ER to contact Joanne Proud	done

newsletter			
Write copy for Business newsletter	16 Sept	ER, JP and DP to draft	
Promote business continuity messages as part of article	16 Sept	DP to co-ordinate	



COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/17

Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2016-2017.
2. It is a requirement for Youth Offending Teams to produce an Annual Youth Justice Plan, which is one of the grant conditions for Local Authorities.
3. The Plan has been prepared following a Capacity and Capability self-assessment undertaken by the Youth Offending Team Management Team. The Plan also takes account of the recent HMIP Short Quality Screening inspection – May 2016 and also any actions from the Community Safeguarding and Public Protection incidents that have occurred during 2016.
4. The annual plan reports on performance, financial management and the work of the Youth Offending Team during the previous year and identifies recommendations, priorities and risks for the service in the coming year.
5. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

6. It is recommended that Council endorse the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17

REPORT OF: Sheila Lock, Interim Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2017.

Background

2. There is a requirement for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to produce an Annual Youth Justice Plan, which is one of the grant conditions for Local Authorities. The YJB has produced new guidelines on what should be incorporated, however this is not restrictive – contents as follows:
 - Introduction
 - Performance (including Restraints in Custody)
 - Structure and Governance
 - Innovation and Promising Practice
 - Partnership Arrangements
 - Resources and Value for Money
 - Staffing Structure
 - Key Priorities
 - Risks to Future Delivery
 - What do People Say
 - Work with Victims
 - Awards received for our Young People's Artwork
3. The Plan should be endorsed by Cabinet, Council and the YOT Board and requires signatories from Northumbria Police, Northumbria Probation Service, Public Health and the Interim Strategic Director for Care, Wellbeing and Learning.

Proposal

4. The Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan has been prepared following a Capacity and Capability self-assessment undertaken by the YOT Management Team. The Plan takes account of the recent HMIP Short Quality Screening (SQS) inspection - May 2016 and also any actions from the Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents that have occurred during 2016. The annual plan reports on performance, financial management and the work of the YOT during the previous year and identifies recommendations, priorities and risks for the service in the coming year.

5. Key priorities for 2016/17 are:

- Implement Charlie Taylor Review recommendations which are likely to include legislative, financial and structural reviews across all areas of youth justice service delivery.
- Continue to monitor the implementation of AssetPlus across both Prevention and Statutory areas of business.
- Improve access to general health assessments for young people who enter the Criminal Justice System.
- Increase the number of Families Gateshead cases where crime is a contributing factor.
- To be at the forefront of protecting children from sexual exploitation specifically linked to internet use and online abuse.
- Continue improvements in Restorative Justice (RJ) specifically to create more opportunities for victims to receive direct reparation.
- Explore alternative methods of funding to enable development of emerging areas of concern.

6. Risks to Future Delivery

- The Charlie Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales will be published in September 2016 and early indicators suggest that this will provide both opportunities as well as challenges for Gateshead Youth Offending Team. At the present time we are unable to say how much of a risk to service delivery this will create. The interim report findings (February 2016) advocated that a separate youth justice system should be maintained; a smaller education led custodial estate to be created; investment in targeted prevention work and potential devolution of funding to local areas alongside changes to legislation. Gateshead YOT will be required to undertake a review of their current delivery model once the final report is published.
- Remand episodes remain a significant financial risk to Gateshead Local Authority. Contingencies for reducing remands are in place including robust monitoring systems; dedicated weekend court cover; bail supervision and support programmes alongside regular reviews of current remand cases. However, the nature of remands are that there are occasions where a young person requires a longer term remand and with the current remand budget allocation being set at £2.6k, which would fund only 15 nights in a Young Offenders institution or 5 nights in a Secure Training Centre, the financial risk to the Local Authority is high and is identified as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register.
- Potential future budget efficiencies, reductions in partner contributions and changes in future YJB funding linked to Business Rates. There is currently a consultation running up to the 26th September, which is proposing that Local Authorities can retain 100% of their business rates they raise to fund local public services. Part of the consultation invites the views on existing central government grants that could in future be replaced by retained business rates. This includes local authorities' responsibilities for the operation and provision of youth justice services.

- Maintaining and improving performance in the face of on-going budget reductions.
- Implementation of the planned Early Intervention Model of Children Services across Gateshead could provide challenges for Youth Justice Services.
- Heightened threats and perception of the rise of radicalisation and extremism linked to terrorism amongst communities.

Recommendations

7. Cabinet is asked to recommend the Council to endorse the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17.

For the following reason:

To allow the Youth Offending Team to fulfil its strategic and operational responsibilities.

CONTACT: Susan Butler

extension: 4596

Policy Context

1. It is a requirement of Grant Funding from the Youth Justice Board that an annual strategic plan is produced for all Youth Offending Teams/Services. The annual plan contributes to the Council Plan aspirations and to the 'Reducing risk and promoting resilience' priority in Children Gateshead, the plan for children young people and families in Gateshead.

Background

2. The Annual Strategic Plan will be circulated to the YOT Board members for comments as the YOT Board meeting cycle has recently changed and the Plan has to be submitted prior to the next Board meeting in October. The Strategic Plan is to be submitted by 30 September 2016 and covers the following sections:
 - (i) Introduction
 - (ii) Performance (including Restraints in Custody)
 - (iii) Structure and Governance
 - (iv) Innovation and Promising Practice
 - (v) Partnership Arrangements
 - (vi) Resources and Value for Money
 - (vii) Staffing Structure
 - (viii) Key Priorities
 - (ix) Risks to Future Delivery
 - (x) What do People Say
 - (xi) Work with Victims
 - (xii) Awards received for our Young People's Artwork.
3. Once approved by Cabinet and Council, the Plan will be submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The YJB will forward the Plan to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and Ministers.
4. The Plan will be used by HMIP along with performance data, information from the YJB etc., to determine whether or not Gateshead YOT will be subject to either a Short Quality Screening or Full Joint Inspection – both are unannounced.

Consultation

5. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and the YOT Board have been consulted.

Alternative Options

6. There are no alternative options. An Annual Report and Business Plan requires updating on an annual basis and is a statutory requirement for YOT's.

Implications of Recommended Option

7. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms there could be financial implications – depending on the Review of Youth Justice Services due in September 2016, consultation on the use of retained business rates to replace the Youth Justice Board grant funding and any further reductions from the Local Authority or statutory partners.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There could be human resource implications – this will be dependent on any further cuts to grant funding – see financial section above as any changes in funding could result in reductions in posts.
- c) **Property Implications** - There are no property Implications.

8. **Risk Management Implication** - The risks in future external funding has been identified within the Plan, the further reduction in the grant for Secure Remand is identified as a Corporate Risk and the consultation on the use of Retained Rates to fund public services eg Youth Offending Teams.

9. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - The work of the YOT contributes to the Families Gateshead Programme and the improved emotional health and well-being for children, young people and their families.

10. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – The YOT includes professionals who specialise in parenting, drug and alcohol use, emotional mental health, education and offending behaviour work. The YOT supports multi agency interventions and will work with families where issues around anti-social behaviour and those young people on the cusp of offending have been identified, or where there is a potential risk that there may be in the future. Over the last two years the YOT has developed areas of business which include: Child to Parent Violence work; worrying sexualised behaviour worker linked to NSPCC; and staff have benefitted from Extremism and Anti Radicalisation Training which does not feature highly in our work, but remains an area of work which we regularly review.

11. **Health Implications** - The YOT works to improve and minimise the potential for substance misuse and emotional mental health of all of the young people where this is identified as an issue. The YOT is working with the Children's Health Commissioner to try and identify resources that will enable young people known to YOT to access a general health nurse – which is identified as a gap in service provision.

12. **Sustainability Implications** - The YOT model delivers a responsive and flexible support to young people and their families to ensure that we provide effective interventions and intervene as early as possible

13. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

14. **Area and Ward Implications** - Gateshead YOT covers all areas and wards within Gateshead and YOT staff regularly see young people and their families within their homes or local community settings. Reparation projects cover all areas and wards.

Background Information

15. See attached copy of Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2016/17.



Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016-17

Page 139



Gateshead
youth
offending
team

Foreword

I have pleasure in presenting Gateshead Youth Offending Team's Strategic Plan for 2016/17. The plan is part of our continued commitment to keeping the Youth Justice Board, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, Board Members, partner agencies and employees up to date with the work of the team.

The report provides an update on the Key Priorities set for 2015/16 and progress and successes achieved during the last year. The strategic plan looks forward to how, with partners, the team will continue to deliver improved outcomes for some of our most vulnerable young people and help to steer them from offending behaviour into education and positive activities so that they can achieve their full potential.

During 2016 Gateshead YOT hosted a visit by Charlie Taylor, who is undertaking a review of Youth Justice Services on behalf of the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. His interim report of emerging findings was published on 9th February 2016 with the final report due in July 2016. However, changes within the political landscape brought about by Brexit have meant that the final report will not be published until after the Parliamentary Recess in September 2016.

In May 2016 Gateshead YOT was subject to an HMIP Short Quality Screening Inspection and the summary in the report was as follows:

'The published reoffending rate for Gateshead was 32.6%. This was better than the previous year and better than the England and Wales average of 37.8%.

Overall, we found that work to reduce reoffending, to protect the public, protect children and young people, and to make sure sentences were served, was of very high quality. It was encouraging to see that the work of the Youth Offending Team had improved substantially in all areas since our previous inspection

in 2010. Staff were committed and enthusiastic, and they had a detailed knowledge of the children and young people they were working with'.

Despite the continuing period of financial constraint the YOT has continued to progress the development of key areas of business, for example, the Child to Adult Violence work which is now embedded across the team. The partnership work developed with the NSPCC in relation to the pre-pubescent worrying sexualised behaviour work, and the continued development of the prevention and early intervention work with families within the Troubled Families Programme.

During April 2015 to March 2016 the YOT began to develop a Live Tracking Tool for young people known to prevention and triage interventions. Early analysis of this work shows that of the 144 young people in this cohort; only 9 young people went on to offend becoming a First Time Entrant (FTE). This work continues to support the low figures Gateshead has for FTE into the Youth Justice System with only 65 young people becoming FTE in 2015/16 and to date (quarter 1) in 2016/17 there are only 12 FTE's.

The team continues to have a role in the development of the Early Intervention Model for Gateshead and continues to be pivotal in the development of Phase 2 of the Families Gateshead Programme, ensuring a whole family approach to the work of the YOT.

I would like to thank everyone for the hard work they do in improving the life chances and outcomes for children, young people and their families in Gateshead.



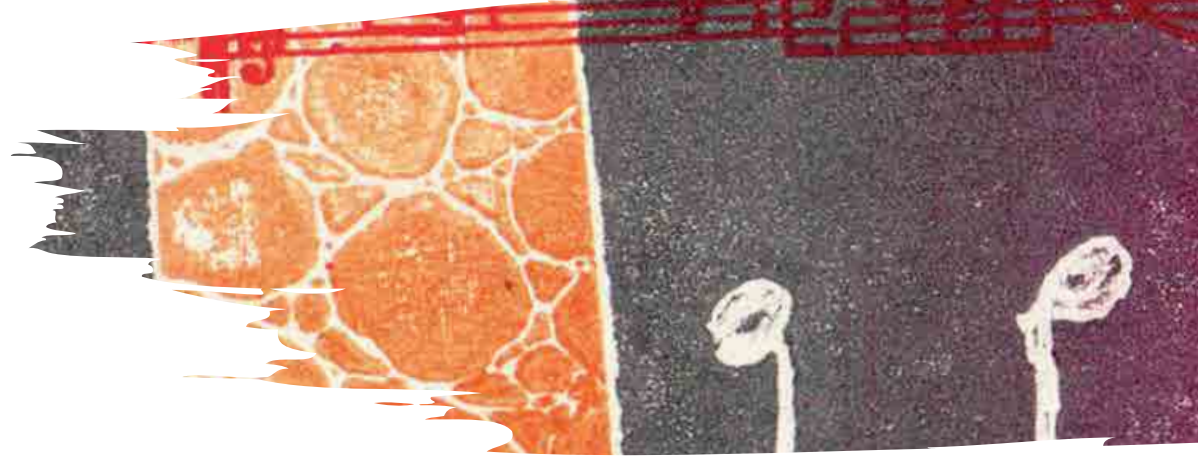
Councillor Angela Douglas
Cabinet Member
Children & Young People



Contents

Section 1	- Introduction	4
Section 2	- Performance Data 2016/17	6
Section 3	- Structure and Governance	11
Section 4	- Innovative and Promising Practice	13
Section 5	- Partnership Arrangements	15
Section 6	- Resources and Value for Money	18
Section 7	- Key Priorities for 2016/17	22
Section 8	- Risks to Future Delivery	24
Section 9	- What do People Say About Us?	26
Section 10	- Our Work with Victims	28
Section 11	- Our Young People's Art Work	34
Section 12	- Contact Us	35

1



Introduction

Children Gateshead, the plan for Children, Young People and families in Gateshead 2014/17 continues to set our priorities for children, young people and their families.

The priorities for 2014/17 are:

- **Safeguarding children and strengthening families – from early help to statutory social care**
- **Tackling child poverty and raising families' incomes**
- **Reducing risk and promoting resilience – giving children the best start in life**
- **Education – opportunity and achievement for all**

The plan is linked to the Gateshead Vision 2030 which is:

- **Local people realising their full potential, enjoying the best quality of life in a healthy, equal, safe, prosperous and sustainable Gateshead.**

Gateshead Youth Offending Service continues to review its performance in relation to the following nationally reported outcomes;

- **Reduction in the rate of first time entrants**
- **Reduction in the rate of re-offending**
- **Reduction in the rate of custody**

Despite significant financial pressures, some reduction in staffing numbers and changes to local delivery service frameworks, Gateshead Youth Offending Team has continued to deliver a high quality service which is clearly demonstrated within our performance outcomes.



Gateshead Community Safety Board

Gateshead YOT is an active member of the Gateshead Community Safety Partnership who have identified priorities for 2016/17 as:

Prevent Crime, Re-offending and Anti Social Behaviour to Reduce Demand on Services

Burglary Dwelling
Violent Crime
Criminal Damage
Anti-Social Behaviour
Deliberate Secondary Fires
High Demand Locations: Bensham, Felling, Dunston and Teams

Protect and Support Vulnerable Victims and Persons

Domestic and Sexual Abuse
Operation Encompass
Sexual Exploitation
Drug-related Deaths
Prevent Violent Extremism and Radicalisation
Hate Crime

Addressing Key and Emerging Threats

Novel Psychoactive Substances
Cyber-related Crime
Community Tensions and Cohesion
Serious and Organised Crime
Suicides
Continued Impact of Welfare Reform

There are also a number of cross-cutting issues that were found to impact on all of the above themes and priorities and these include:

Families Gateshead Programme
Early Intervention and Prevention
Improving Community Confidence in Services
Tackling Complex and Multiple Needs
Substance Misuse (Drugs and Alcohol)
Dual Diagnosis and Mental Health



Performance Data 2106/17

Reporting of performance data to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) is set against the three youth justice outcome indicators set by the UK Government:

- reducing first-time entrants (FTE) to the criminal justice system
- reducing reoffending
- reducing the use of custody

These are reported to and monitored by the YJB, and locally reported to the YOT Board. The national and local statistics show an ongoing reduction in the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system, those receiving court and pre-court outcomes, rates of custody and reoffending. The performance of Gateshead YOT in the three National Outcomes Indicators is an encouraging picture, as well as comparing favourably with other Youth Offending Teams both regionally and nationally.

First-Time Entrants (FTE) – This indicator has shown a consistent reduction since 2008. For the last three years Gateshead Youth Offending Team have invested in a prevention scheme known locally as the Youth Crime Education Programme (YCEP). The scheme aims to deliver educational intervention for those deemed to be most at risk of offending. Where previous reductions in FTE's have been attributed to changes in policing practices and external factors to the YOT, it is evident that the Gateshead YCEP programme which is aligned to the Troubled Families, Families Gateshead delivery model, has proven to be a significant factor in further reducing the numbers of young people entering an expensive and life changing criminal justice system.

The effectiveness of investment in preventative services is further demonstrated by the overall figures for prevention and triage. There were 144 young people who were worked with via a prevention intervention or via a triage programme during the period April 2015 to March 2016. Of these 144, only 9 young people have reoffended to date (reported August 2016). After conducting further research of the group and from what we know from last year's self-assessment the demographic for reoffenders on triage and prevention demonstrates that Looked After Children are at higher risk of reoffending and are less likely to engage with intervention in the first instance. Our priority is to tailor the early help offer to address the diverse needs of this group.

In order to maintain or improve our current low numbers of children entering the criminal justice system further work will be carried out to examine in full the most recent cohort of young people in order that we can effectively target our early help model. A further priority will be to examine community resolution disposals to see if any of our First Time Entrants have previously received a community resolution and whether this had any impact upon desistance. We intend to strengthen our referral routes from community resolution to YCEP and Families Gateshead to ensure families have access to relevant help as early as possible.

We reported 65 FTE's during 2015/16, a 3% reduction from the previous year's FTE of 67, continuing the downward trend experienced locally and nationally since 2010. The YJB data for this target is gathered from the Police National Computer, as well as reported by YOT's to the YJB, and stated per 100,000 of 10-17 year old population.

The latest YJB published data for January 2015 - December 2015 shows the rate of FTE's for Gateshead at 331, below the regional average (430), and also below the national average (369) demonstrating the effectiveness of the local initiatives in reducing the number of young people becoming FTE's.

FTE Data – Taken from PNC

Gateshead's FTE's	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number	267	120	115	103	82	74
Rate/100,000	1,501	691	641	576	464	428
North East	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number	3,487	2,215	2,085	1603	3,426	3,281
Rate/100,000	1,427	930	875	689	478	462
National	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number	58,457	43,111	34,931	26,127	21,118	19,660
Rate/100,000	1,180	884	696	528	431	402

Use of Custody – Reducing the use of custodial sentences has been an ongoing focus for the Gateshead YOT. Robust risk management interventions are embedded into daily practice following assessment. Alongside this, the consistent consideration of the use of alternatives to custodial orders with every high risk case has resulted in positive outcomes with regard to a reduction in the use of custodial orders. The introduction of ASSET Plus has improved the way in which we assess, plan, intervene and review cases which has improved the way in which we manage high risk young people, with a significant push towards the use of strengths based approaches.

The latest YJB published data for Apr 15 - Mar 16 shows the 12 month rate of Custody for Gateshead at 0.35, this represents 6 custodial sentences in the 12 month period and a 0.06 increase year-on-year. This is below the Regional average for this period (0.36), and also below the National average (0.37).

Gateshead's Custody Rates	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Custodial Sentences	13	14	7	11	5	6
Rate of Custody / 1000	0.71	0.78	0.39	0.62	0.28	0.35
North East	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Custodial Sentences	177	153	128	139	332	258
Rate of Custody / 1000	0.73	0.66	0.55	0.60	0.46	0.36
National	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Custodial Sentences	4349	4099	3101	2211	2064	1814
Rate of Custody / 1000	0.86	0.83	0.63	0.45	0.42	0.37

Rate of Reoffending – Reducing reoffending is the Youth Justice Board's main aim. Performance reports are used to target the most prolific offenders across the Gateshead Partnership with a drive to ensure that consideration is given to intervention plans having additionality with regard to targeted interventions and additional external requirements. Development is underway with regard to a 'YOT Cases for Concern' multi-agency forum which will provide intelligence to our wider Community Safety Partners and create a higher level of scrutiny for the most concerning and risky young people.

The latest YJB published data from PNC for the Rate of Re-offending is for the period, July 2013 – June 2014. The percentage rate of reoffending is 32.6% - this is the number of young people who go on to reoffend in the year, which is a -4.8 decrease year on year. The frequency rate of reoffending is 0.89 – this is the number of offences committed by those who reoffend, this is a -10.3 decrease year on year.

Gateshead's Proven Rate of Reoffending	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Offences/Offender	0.96	0.87	1.05	0.99	0.93
% Reoffending (# reoffender)	36.3	34.4	33.5	37.4	36.9
North East	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Offences/Offender	0.92	1.18	1.13	1.19	1.26
% Reoffending (# reoffender)	36.7	39.5	37.6	38.2	39.1
National	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Offences/Offender	0.92	1.03	1.02	1.10	1.19
% Reoffending (# reoffender)	33.3	35.8	35.4	36.5	37.9



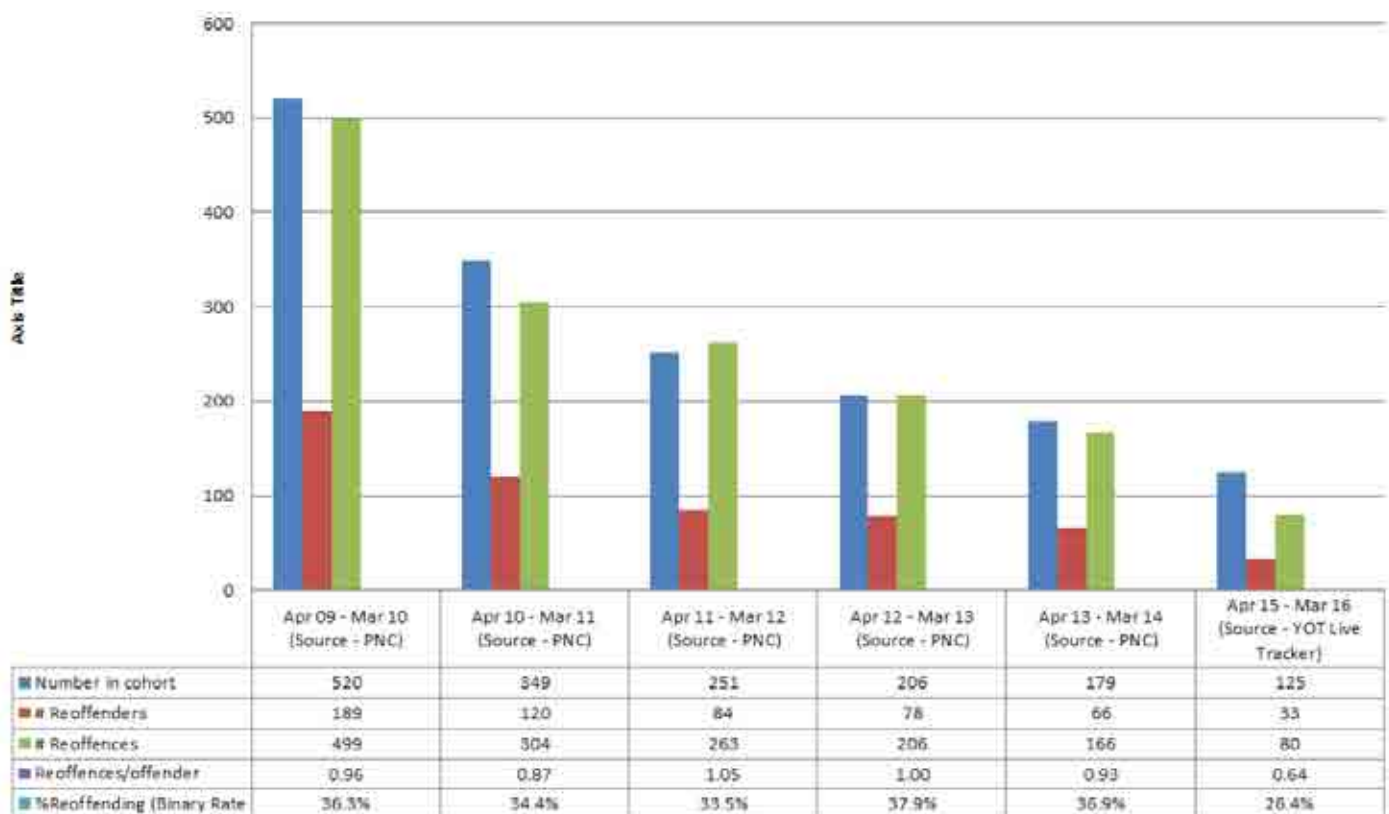
Reoffending Live Tracker Tool - The toolkit has allowed Gateshead YOT to undertake reoffending analysis locally, and to identify the actions most likely to have an impact on reoffending in our area.

In addition we continue to develop our local reoffending report which looks at live data through the use of the re-offending Live Tracker Toolkit

The current Live Tracker re-offending cohort takes the 125 young people who were in the service during Apr 15-Mar 16 and measures their reoffending rates for 12 months. To date we know that of the 125 offenders within the cohort only 33 offenders have so far gone on to re-offend, committing 80 re-offences since they entered the cohort. This gives a rate of reoffending for this group at 26.4%, and the frequency rate of reoffending currently as 0.64.

The graph on page 8 compares Gateshead’s current re-offending performance taken from the Re-offending Live Tracker, against PNC data and it is encouraging to note that since 2009 there has been a 75% reduction in cohort size this equates to a reduction from 520 young people in the service to 125 young people. There is also an 82% reduction of re-offenders, which equates from 189 re-offenders in the 2009 cohort to 33 re-offenders in the current 2015 cohort.

This demonstrates that the size of the cohort has reduced from 160 during Jan-Dec 2014 to 125 for Apr 15 – Mar 16. Changing the cohort period to financial year allows us to more easily align resources to service need and compare regional data which is reported on a financial year basis. The current cohort are complex young people who have a range of needs which in most cases extends beyond the criminal justice system.



Local Targets

Within Gateshead YOT we have continued to embed the Government's National Programme 'Troubled Families' within all areas of prevention and statutory case management. In addition we have continued to monitor the journey of Looked After Children within the Criminal Justice System and the use of restraints within secure accommodation.

Families Gateshead

The Troubled Families programme has been embedded within the YOT as a local strategy to support families, prevent first-time entrants, and reoffending within families by offering additional support to all family members using a dual allocation system, we are currently in Phase 2 of the Troubled Families Programme which began in September 2014.

During the early adopter stage of Phase 2, 504 families were allocated within Gateshead between September 2014 to March 2015. Of these 78 families were allocated to YOT, this is represented as 15.47%.

From April 2015 to March 2016, 605 families were allocated of which 59 were allocated to YOT, this is represented as 9.75%.

From the beginning of the Phase 2 programme to August 2016, 1270 families have been allocated in total, 105 of those were allocated to YOT, 8.26%.

Looked After Children

There were 39 cases of Looked after Children in the YOT during April 15 and March 16, 21 were LAC for 12 months, and 18 cases were LAC for a period during the year. Males make up 74% of the cases which reflects the general population of service users.

Recent analysis of our April 2015 - March 2016 prevention and triage cohort, (144 young people), show that 9 children (6%) did go on to offend. Of the 9 who reoffended all have been subject to a Child in Need Assessment. One was no further actioned and two have been placed with other family members. The remaining six young people are currently open to Children Services, four of whom YOT made the initial referral. This indicates that YOT prevention and statutory services are correctly identifying issues of neglect and working to ensure an appropriate statutory service is in place to meet the complex needs of those children, which will reduce both risk of family breakdown and of the child re-entering the criminal justice system.

Restraints in Secure Accommodation

Gateshead YOT continues to monitor the use of restraints of young people in secure accommodation. During the period April 2015 – March 2016 there were 9 restraints involving four young people, one of whom was restrained on five occasions. These incidents are reported to the YOT Board and the YOT team manager attends the regional Resettlement and Case Management Improvement Group meetings, where restraints are monitored and where necessary further investigation undertaken.



Structure and Governance

On 23 February 2016 a report on the restructure of Care Wellbeing and Learning, was presented to Cabinet to seek approval to recommend to Council a new senior management structure within Care, Wellbeing and Learning to ensure that there is the capacity to deliver further redesign across the Group to both improve outcomes for Gateshead residents and deliver savings.

The proposed new service group will therefore comprise five Service Directors:

- Service Director, Children and Families
- Service Director, Education and Learning
- Service Director, Early Help (Children and Adults)
- Service Director, Adult Social Care
- Service Director, Health and Social Care Commissioning and Quality Assurance.

There are currently a number of interim arrangements in place in Gateshead until the vacant Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services posts are successfully filled.

The YJB Strategic Plan for 2015/16 key priority number 10 was to review the membership and attendance level of the YOT Management Board which was achieved.

During 2016/17 a review of the function of the YOT Management Board will take place following the publication of the Charlie Taylor Review of Youth Justice Services.

The next Board meeting will take place in October 2016, (quarterly thereafter), and as well as focussing on the standing items the process of review will begin.

To aid the review there will also be a session on Developing Strong Leadership and Governance led by the YJB's Partnership Officer and supported by the Service Manager responsible for: Youth Offending Team (YOT), Family Intervention Team (FIT), Co-ordinator of the Families Gateshead Programme and Independent Domestic Violence Advisers team (IDVA).

The Board will continue to report directly to the Children's Trust Board.

The line management arrangements for the Service Manager is the Service Director of the Early Help Service who reports directly to the Director of Children's Services.

The weekly Management and Leadership Team, Chaired by the Service Manager monitors all Performance Reports that are scheduled in at regular intervals throughout the month; ensures that data is submitted to the YJB in a timely manner; ensures compliance with the secure estate placement information; coordinates the completion of national standards, audits and monitors the Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents (CSPPi). The performance, national standards and Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents are standing items on the quarterly YOT Board.

The Local Children's Safeguarding Board's performance sub group regularly reviews case file audits from both the YOT and FIT. Any CSPPi is reported to the both the LSCB and the YJB and the action plan is monitored by the YOT Board with actions shared with the Service Director, Social Work – Children and Families and the LSCB.



4

Innovative and Promising Practice

Gateshead YOT have analysed data from the Re-offending Live Tracker Tool and Risk Register for all active cases to develop a Case for Concern Framework (C4C). On a monthly basis the enhanced information will enable us to assess all cases across both the prevention and statutory teams to identify the most likely young people who may become prolific offenders. This will be used in conjunction with police PENY notifications for all disposals including No Further Action, Community Resolutions, children entering the Looked After System and school exclusions. These cases will be given priority on a rolling programme to ensure they are given all early intervention provisions available within the authority.

Gateshead YOT have expanded capacity with the Child to Adult Violence work by training a further eight staff in the Respect Youth People Programme. We continue to share an excellent working arrangements with the national programme deliverer RESPECT and the research findings for our last year's work will be published by Newcastle University Law School in September 2016.

Staff within the team have benefited from Speech, Language and Communication Training which has enabled us to strengthen our relationships and referral routes to local Speech and Language Therapy providers.

Gateshead have maintained a significant number of volunteers who continue to deliver a range of services across all areas of our work and a training programme to bring a further ten volunteers into the service concluded in July 2016.

The introduction of Asset Plus in January 2016 provided Gateshead YOT with a substantial challenge in terms of cultural and working practice change. The implementation programme alongside continuous case monitoring, revisions to quality assurance systems, staff feedback forums and peer reviewing has resulted in staff and managers developing a more robust and consistent assessment framework.

The use of the Re-offending Live Tracker has given Gateshead YOT a unique opportunity to identify potential gaps in practice, increase awareness, predict trends and created a development opportunity for staff to learn from feedback.

Young people are rarely sentenced to custody in Gateshead. All options are considered beforehand and the courts have shown to have confidence in our bail support packages. To further reduce the use of custody we have recognised that due to difficulties with some Looked After Children Placements post custody we now have specified case managers within statutory case management who hold responsibility for all Looked After Children. This has led to improved relationships and planning with Children Services for children who are leaving custody and reduced risk of placement breakdown.

The links to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) have improved as the MARAC case managers are co-located within YOT and arranged by the Service Manager

Staff have benefitted from Extremism and Anti Radicalisation Training which does not feature highly in our work but remains an area of work which we regularly review. Gateshead YOT is a member of the Gateshead Community Tensions Framework and this has enabled us to have expedited access to relevant intelligence for all ongoing and emerging tensions. We have had cause to work with our counter terrorism partners within the police using the PREVENT framework with a high level of success and a positive long term outcome.

Gateshead YOT continues to develop innovative and imaginative methods of delivering a wide range of services to victims. A recent review of the role of the Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) has resulted in the creation of a hybrid VLO and case management post.

Gateshead YOT have identified one case manager to regularly attend the local Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young Person Group (MSET). Gateshead Local Safeguarding Childrens Board have a commitment to safeguarding those young people who go missing or place themselves as risk of exploitation or other harm. There is a commitment for every 'missing episode' to attract relevant attention from a range of professionals involved with the young person and to identify gaps where a provision may be required.



5

Partnership Arrangements

Substance Misuse

Gateshead Youth offending Team continue to work with Platform Gateshead to meet the needs of young people who require substance misuse intervention. This service is commissioned by the Health Commissioner. There continues to be good links between Platform, and the YOT but there is no longer a physical presence within the YOT office. However, Platform staff working with young people are invited to risk management meetings and contribute to intervention planning. This model is reliant upon good working relationships between the services and sound communication to ensure a consistent approach to meet a young person's needs. The YOT has delivered training to Platform staff and there is a reciprocal arrangement in place. The manager of Platform and a YOT Team Manager are now working collaboratively to analyse outcome data on a regular basis and where relevant this will be reported to the YOT Board.

General Health

There continues to be health support through Platform but this service is limited to clients known to their service, therefore young people with no identified substance misuse needs are not able to access this provision. There is a need for the YOT to consider how the general health of young people can be effectively assessed and support offered. Gateshead YOT is in the process of meeting with health commissioners to redirect resources to ensure there are robust pathways in place to meet the health needs of all our client group.

Parenting

A review of parenting support in Gateshead has taken place and this has led to an innovative project being commissioned by the YOT with Barnardos. This project will specifically work with young people and their families with emotional and low level mental health concerns. This project was commissioned to start in May 2016 and has already received a number of referrals. There is a referral pathway in place and the project will be evaluated throughout the year.

The YOT has an agreement with Barnardos to deliver parenting orders on a spot purchase agreement when the Court directs a parenting order.

We have a small number of staff who have benefitted from Couple Conflict and Parents as Partners training. This allows us to meaningfully consider the importance of the couple's relationship in the context of intimate partner violence and abuse.

In addition there is a comprehensive offer made to Gateshead YOT from the Gateshead Family Intervention Team for a range of parenting programmes from pre-birth including access to support for young parents and parents of children with specific health needs.



Housing

Accommodation for 17 year olds continues to be a challenge. Young people are offered support through the YOT to access generic services within the council. Once a child is accommodated the YOT has developed a programme which can be delivered with young people to promote life skills and independent living. Advocates and case managers provide one to one bespoke support to meet each individual young person's needs.

Housing are represented within the Community Safety structures across Gateshead and this has improved relationships with individuals, departments, housing associations and private landlords. Intelligence is shared and there have been some excellent examples of evictions being prevented which would have impacted upon long term outcomes for children and families by utilising the new range of Anti Social Behaviour powers and sanctions.

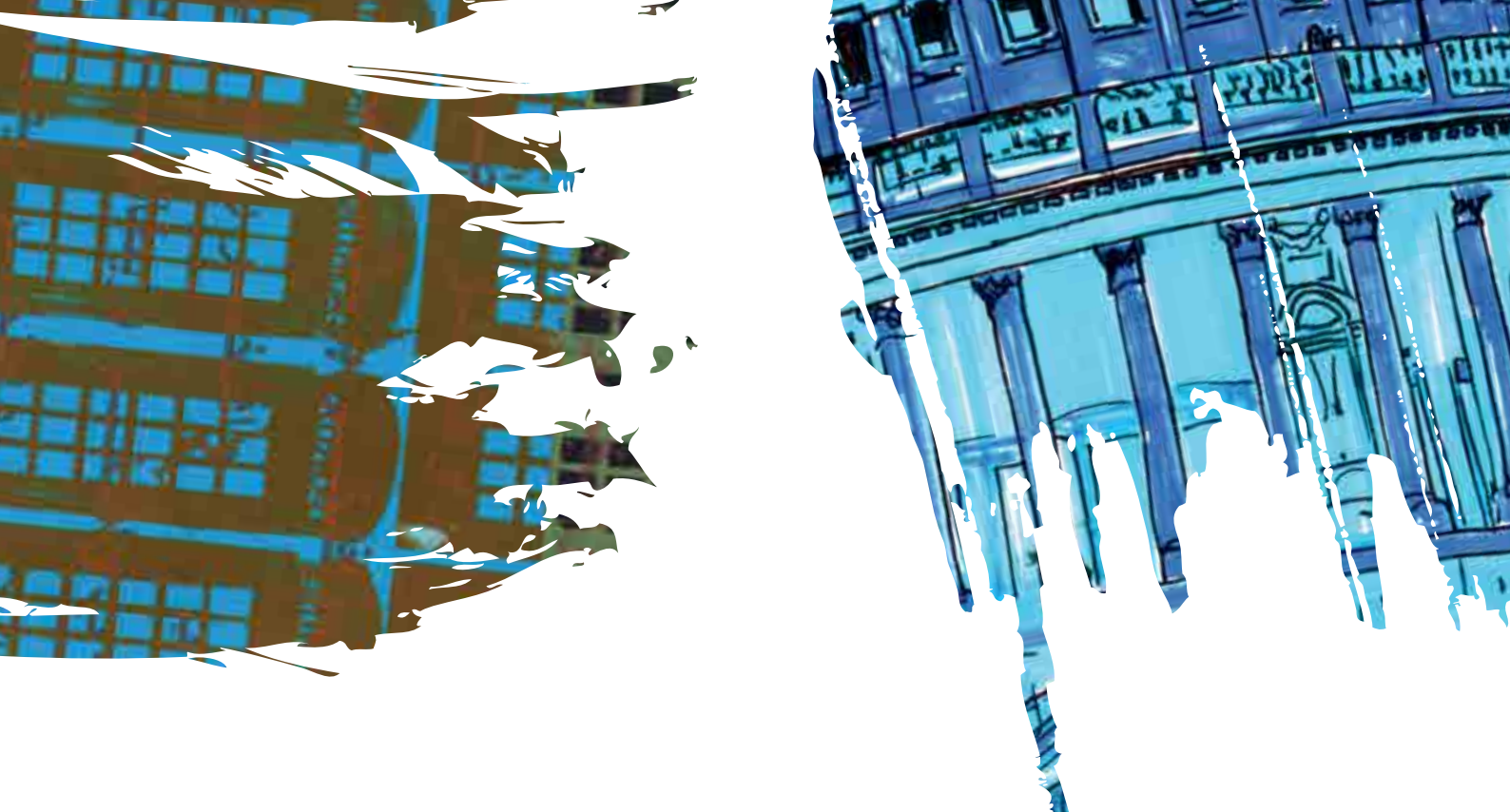
Emotional and Mental Health

The level of CYPs (Children and Young People's Service) provision in the YOT remains the same as the previous year, which is a reduction from the previous year. A referral pathway has been developed and is to be agreed. This offer would include additional training for staff and clear pathways for young people who will accept a CPYS service. The pathway also considers young people who will not engage in formal intervention but who still have outstanding needs.

A referral pathway has been agreed with the Gateshead Speech Language and Communication Needs team and an identified lead has been agreed however, Gateshead YOT does not have direct access to this service. The YOT has trained all staff in SLCN and resources have been obtained to ensure the service is continuing to try and meet the needs of young people with communication difficulties.

National Probation Service

The YOT has a full time seconded Probation Officer within the Team. There is a clear role for this officer to ensure the transitions of young people are managed effectively. The consistent use of the Y2A portal has been difficult due to a change of staff in NPS. The YOT Probation Officer has put systems in place to ensure full compliance with the National Probation Service and the National Partnership Framework for England. The Probation Officer has clear case load criteria and provides support across the team for young people in the transitions window. The role involves the assessment of transition cases to determine the most appropriate service for the young person to be transferred to and this is determined between the CRC or NPS. There is a positive working relationship between YOT and NPS however there has been limited representation on the YOT board.



Police

A good working relationship has been developed with the police and some innovative and creative partnership working has taken place. There has been recent changes in police staff within Gateshead YOT and several changes within the police management structure which has impacted on the level of attendance at the YOT board. However this is an improving picture with representation at the last two Board meetings. The YOT continue to offer assessments and interventions for young people at all stages of the Criminal Justice System including for Community Remedi, Triage and first Youth Cautions. The YOT and Police have historically enjoyed a strong working relationship which has reflected in the quality of the pre-court interventions. Recruitment has taken place and a new YOT PC has been offered the position however, she is currently on maternity leave until September. An interim arrangement has been agreed starting 22nd June 2016 until September 2016.

Education

Gateshead YOT is proud of the relationship it maintains with a wide range of education providers across the Borough. Despite structural changes to the education system creating potential barriers to access for some young people, an increase in permanent exclusions and budget constraints we have achieved some excellent outcomes for some very difficult to place and risky young people. We have achieved this by attending the pupil placement panels for children at risk of or who have been excluded, none attendance panels who consider prosecution alongside assessment of safeguarding risks. The YOT education officer for statutory school age is a member of the management committee of the local Pupil Referral Unit who are an importer of a high number of YOT children. In addition we are active contributors to the fair access process where Gateshead benefit from both primary and secondary school systems. The process seeks to reduce exclusions and more recently has considered the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. The YOT Service Manager attends the complex needs panel. In addition we have a dedicated Youth Crime Education Programme Officer who works with children age 8 – 18 years in a range of education settings. The programmes we deliver include safe internet use, recognising the signs of sexual exploitation, dangers of sexting, anti-social behaviour, peer pressure, positive relationships in the community, victim awareness, joint enterprise and where relevant bespoke programmes which have been particularly relevant where child deaths have taken place.

6

Resources and Value for Money

The table below shows how funding for the Core YOT functions have changed between 2015/16 and 2016/17

	2015/16 Budget			2016/17 Budget			
	Cash	In-Kind	Total	Cash	In-Kind	Total	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income							
YJB Grant	483	0	483	382	0	382	-101
Police	0	49	49	0	51	51	2
Probation	25	44	69	12	45	57	-12
Health	62	30	92	62	26	88	-4
Gateshead MBC	810	33	843	664	34	698	-145
	1,380	156	1,536	1,120	156	1,276	-260
Expenditure							
Salaries	1,270	156	1,426	1,073	156	1,229	-197
Activity	92	0	92	33	0	33	-59
Overheads	17	0	17	13	0	13	-4
Equipment	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
	1,380	156	1,536	1,120	156	1,276	-260

The YJB Grant has been reduced by £101K to £382k. Specific grants for Restorative Justice and Unpaid Work are no longer received.

The Police and Crime Commissioner YOT Grant is no longer received as a matter of course although bids are accepted for project work; however the 2016/17 £30k bid was unsuccessful.

The YOT receives the services of a full-time Police Officer. The National Probation Service contribution has reduced by £13k in 2016/17 to £12k and this will reduce to £5k from 2017/18 additionally receive the services of a full-time worker.

The cash contribution Gateshead YOT receive from Health has been maintained, however the staff provision has been reduced to 0.3 FTE.

Gateshead Council continues to need to make significant savings across all Directorates due to an increased funding gap. The 2016/17 savings for YOT amounted to £195k equivalent to 5.37 full-time equivalent posts. Overall the major reduction in the income to the YOT has continued with a drop of £260k in cash terms. In-kind contributions have remained static overall.

Gateshead YOT complies with the minimum staffing requirements set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Although we do not benefit directly from a Children Services seconded Social Worker we are co-located with Children Services Social Care Teams.

Gateshead's current staffing structure is outlined overleaf and in addition we have 20 volunteers of whom 15 are female and 5 are male. With the exception of one male case manager (White Irish), all staff and volunteers are White European.

Twelve staff and all volunteers are trained Restorative Justice Facilitators, in addition we have two Restorative Justice Trained Trainers. Two staff and two managers are currently undertaking level four Restorative Justice qualifications.

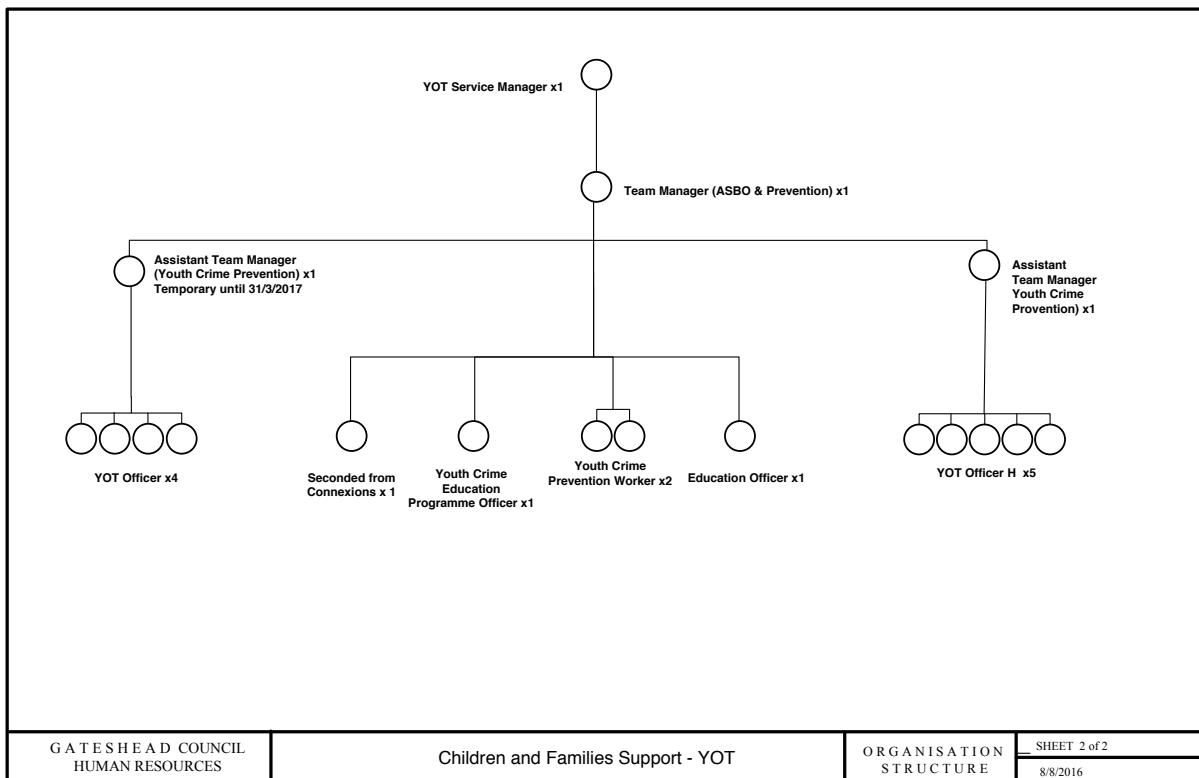
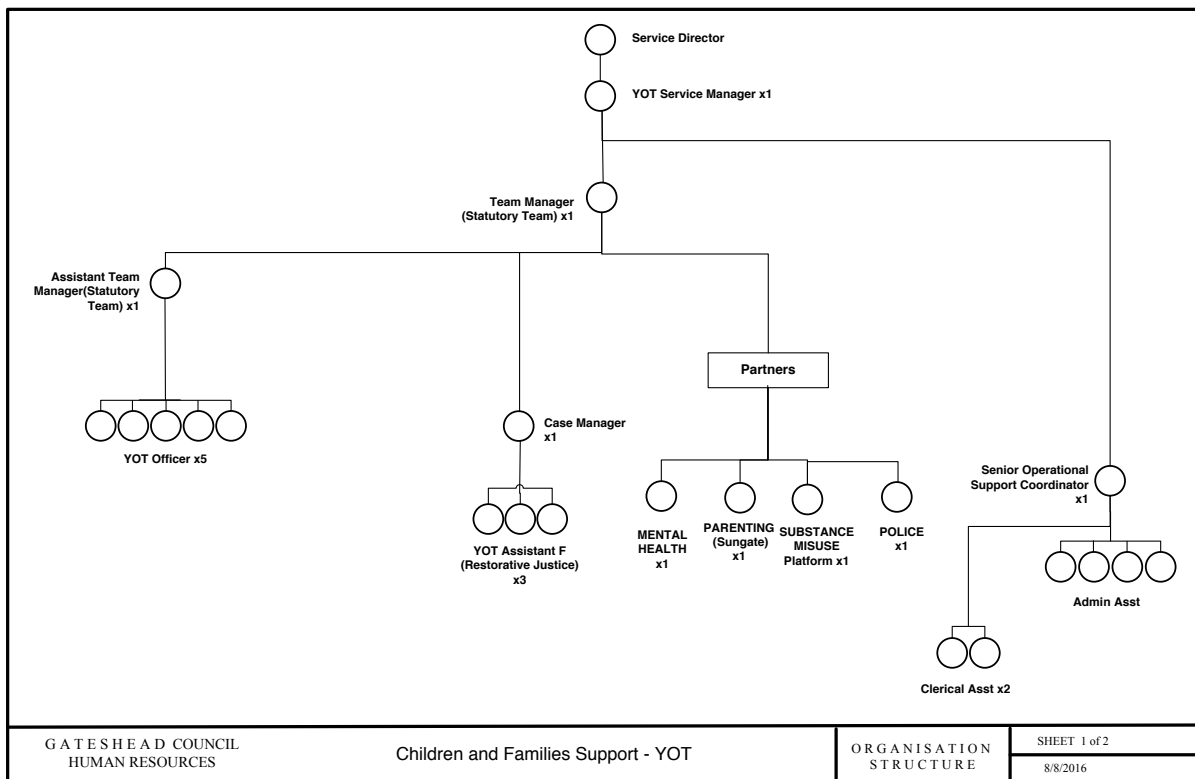
Remand

The Remand Grant reflects low historical usage of remand beds in recent years by Gateshead YOT.

The budget was set based on the 2015/16 level. It is worthy of note that the £2.6k allocated to Gateshead YOT will only fund 15 Youth Offender Institute nights at £177 or 5 Secure Training Centre nights at £472. Current spend for this financial year to date is 256 nights in a Youth Offender Institute (£45k).

	2015/16 Budget			2016/17 Budget			
	Cash	In-Kind	Total	Cash	In-Kind	Total	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income							
YJB Grant	12	0	12	13	0	13	1
	12	0	12	13	0	13	1
Expenditure							
YOI Recharge	12	0	12	13	0	13	1
	12	0	12	13	0	13	1

Staffing Structure





7

Key Priorities 2016/17

Gateshead Youth Offending Team Priorities for 2016/17

- 1 Implement Charlie Taylor Review recommendations which is likely to include legislative, financial and structural reviews across all areas of service delivery.
- 2 Continue to monitor the implementation of Asset Plus across all areas both Prevention and Statutory areas of business.
- 3 Improve access to general health assessments for young people who enter the Criminal Justice System.
- 4 Increase the number of Families Gateshead cases where crime is a contributing factor.
- 5 To be at the forefront of protecting children from sexual exploitation specifically linked to internet use and online abuse.
- 6 Continue improvements in RJ specifically to create more opportunities for victims to receive direct reparation.
- 7 Explore alternative methods of funding to enable development of emerging areas of concern



8

Risks to future delivery

The early indicators from the Charlie Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales which will be published in September 2016 and will provide both opportunities as well as challenges for Gateshead Youth Offending Team. At the present time we are unable to say how much of a risk to service delivery this will create. The interim report findings advocate that a separate youth justice system should be maintained; a smaller education led custodial estate to be created, investment in targeted prevention work and potential devolution of funding to local areas alongside changes to legislation. Gateshead YOT will be required to undertake a review of the current delivery model once the final report is published.

Remand episodes remain a significant financial risk to Gateshead Local Authority. Contingencies for reducing remands are in place including robust monitoring systems, dedicated weekend court cover, bail supervision and support programmes alongside regular review of current remand cases. However, the nature of remands are that there are occasions where a young person requires a longer term remand and with the current remand budget allocation being set at £2.6k, which would fund only 15 nights in a Young Offenders institute or 5 nights in a Secure Training Centre.

Potential future budget efficiencies, reductions in partner contributions and changes in the Youth Justice Board funding linked to Business Rates. There is currently a consultation running up to 26 September 2016 which is proposing that local authorities can retain 100% of the Business Rates they raise to fund local public services. Part of the consultation invites the views on existing central government grants that could in future be replaced by retained Business Rates. This includes local authorities' responsibilities for the operation and provision of youth justice services. .

Maintaining and improving performance in face of on-going budget reductions.

Implementation of the planned Early Intervention Model of Children Services across Gateshead could provide challenges for Youth Justice Services.

Heightened threats and perception of the rise of radicalisation and extremism linked to terrorism amongst communities.



9

What do people say about us?

"My YOT worker was the first person who has changed my thinking. I've stopped using drugs, things are better with my family and better at home. Nothing was bad about coming to the YOT, they have helped me and I would even do reparation again."

Young person – closure assessment April 2016

"I now get on with my family, I have changed my behaviour, I talk about my feelings, I'm not as 'radgie' and there are less arguments since I have worked with my YOT worker."

Young person – review assessment July 2016

"I want to thank Gateshead YOT for the work they have done with my Grandson. If the YOT had not been involved our family unit would have broken down and he would not have been able to stay with me. The YOT have changed our lives. My grandson's anxiety levels are more manageable, he is calmer, less aggressive and he has moved up a target set at school. I like the fact that if things become worse again I have been told I can come back for more help. Thank you."

Young persons' carer – closure interview June 2016

"Thank you so much for teaching us so much over our sessions. We now know how important it is to keep out of trouble when we are out and about"

14 year old female from Thorp Academy

"I really appreciate all of the effort you have put into my family. My son has been quite good at home much better than he was and it's like am getting my boy back but a more mature one. He is starting with a training provider on Monday and he has told me he is 'buzzing'. I am so grateful for the hard work you have all put in with us and want to say thank you."

Parent feedback – August 2016

"Being taught about and made aware of sexting and CSE, I now know how I can stay safe"

15 year old boy Thorp Academy

"I found the YOT officer to be very helpful and I understand more about child sexual exploitation. He also got into character and role played a lot which helped to have a laugh and understand a lot better. I will be using all the information learnt as I am hoping to become a social worker, these sessions will have a massive positive impact on my life and future careers"

15 year old girl from Heworth Grange Comprehensive

"I found the sessions mint, a really fun way to teach how to keep myself safe"

13 year old boy from Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

"The sessions were very helpful on how to keep safe, especially on social media"

15 year old girl from Heworth Grange Comprehensive

10

Our Work with Victims

Gateshead Youth Offending Team is very proud of the high level of service we offer to a wide range of victims across the Borough. We were awarded the Restorative Justice Council Quality Mark in June 2015. The award demonstrates that services are delivering good quality, safe and sustainable restorative services that meet the six Restorative Service Standards.

We constantly review our victims offer to ensure we are offering a range of imaginative and meaningful Restorative Interventions.

The following pages demonstrate both direct and indirect forms of our reparative work alongside feedback from some of our beneficiaries.



Case Study – Restorative Conference with four youths who were charged with Causing Intentional Harassment, Alarm or Distress.

Bensham is an area in Gateshead well known due to the sizable Jewish community and the prestigious college for Jewish young people. The College is among the best known and largest of its kind in the world, with student's coming from all over the world to study there.

The Jewish community of Gateshead is unique among provincial communities in the UK, being almost exclusively ultra-Orthodox and first settlements have been recorded from as early as the 1800's.

An incident occurred whereby a large group of over 15 young people were in the local park which is located opposite the Jewish College. Two Jewish men got out of their car and walked towards the college. As they did the group started shouting and throwing objects at the two gentlemen. They were left feeling intimidated and threatened by this group; they also felt angry due to the racial and sensitive nature of the words that were being used. As the Police arrived the group dispersed but Police apprehended four young people and they were given Conditional Cautions.

Following assessment the plan identified the young people should complete victim awareness work, group work facilitated by Show Racism the Red Card and community reparation. The young people had also stated a willingness to take part in a voluntary Restorative Meeting with a member of the Jewish community and this was included in the plan.

Over the period of the intervention, the young people showed a great level of engagement and motivation which led to them having a greater understanding of the impact of their actions on the Jewish community. Utilising the services of 'Show Racism the Red Card' allowed us to use their expertise and this gave the young people very specific and extensive information about the escalation of hate crime which allowed them to understand the actual impact of their behaviours on others to a greater extent. This session gave the young people time to reflect on how different communities can and should live together without hatred or division.

Following this work the Youth Offending Team and Northumbria Police arranged with the Jewish Community Council that a Rabbi from within the Jewish Community would meet with the young people to discuss the harm caused.

Within the Restorative Meeting the Rabbi in attendance told the boys that what's done is done and in the past. He did not want to dwell on the actions of that night but wanted to focus on moving forward in a positive way. The young people initially struggled to comprehend that the Rabbi was willing to look at the positives rather than dwell on the negatives. The meeting progressed and all boys apologised to the people who had been affected on the day of the incident and the wider Jewish Community.

To end the meeting, the young people thanked the Rabbi for his time and following the meeting the young people spoke positively of the whole process. They were impressed by the Rabbi's positivity and were fascinated by stories he told. They said they had gained a greater understanding and developed a positive opinion of the Jewish community. One of the young people spoke of his amazement at how 'after being so abusive to them, that the Jewish community had offered him work.'

Quote from Leader of the Jewish Community Council in the North East (February 2016)

"This was a very positive experience for all involved and shows that Restorative Justice is the best way for young people to make amends for their mistakes and move forward in a positive way. It also allows for the whole community of Gateshead to hear the positive outcome of what was initially a negative event."

Examples of recent Community Reparation

Project working with Virgin Media to combat the anti-social menace of graffiti.



"We are delighted to be working with Gateshead Youth Offending Team to combat the anti-social menace of graffiti."

We are confident the joint efforts will result in a significant improvement in the local environment."

Nigel Myers,
spokesman for Virgin Media

"Just to say thank you very much for the cheque and to ask you to pass on our gratitude to the staff and service users who worked so hard to collect the money for us."

"I'm not sure if you'd been told but although we're all volunteers providing the service without charge our fuel bill alone is regularly over £2,000 per month so the £1,000 will enable us to keep our fleet fuelled and on the road for around two weeks and at 700 jobs per month that's probably 300+ potentially lifesaving journeys the YOT has helped pay for!!"

Once again many thanks and best wishes to you all for the future."

Peter, Blood Bikes,
Great North Air Ambulance

Gateshead Youth Offending Team utilise the skills of young people undertaking reparation to make a range of products which can be sold to benefit a different charity each year. During 2015/16 our young people have made a range of stone garden ornaments and hanging baskets allowing us to donate a substantial sum of money for the Great North Air Ambulance Blood Bikes.





Support for Alive Lunch Club at St Chad's Church



"I write to express our appreciation for the work that the Youth Offending Team do for the Alive Lunch Club based at St Chad's Church.

"The Lunch Club meets every Thursday. The young people arrive around 10.00am and help prepare the room, arranging the room, setting the tables, getting out the crockery and other equipment, making tea and coffee for people as they arrive. Today I saw a young man playing a ball game with Sid (95).

"Sometimes the young people are able to engage with the older people - and that is excellent when it happens, because people develop a better understanding across generations, both young and old.

"We do our best to welcome the young people and make them feel welcome and appreciated - I hope that helps them."

Meg Gilley, Rector of Bensham & Teams,
Alive Lunch Club

Maintenance to cemetery at St Oswald's Church, Wrekenton, following request from Father Kevin Cummins



Dear Youth Offending Team,

I would be very grateful if you could help me. We have a small cemetery at the back of our church - St Oswald's High Street, Wrekenton. It is closed, apart from very occasionally if there is room in a grave for a family member. As we are all getting old it is impossible to get volunteers to cut the grass occasionally and keep it tidy. It got out of hand last June and got very overgrown and as a result I and Bishop's House got some nasty letters about the disgraceful state of it. Two worshippers took pity on us and paid for it to be cut back. Sadly they have moved on. This is where you might be able to help.

Thank you,

Father Kevin Cummins,
St Oswald's Presbytery, High St. Wrekenton.

"The Parishioners and I are very happy with the work that you are doing within the graveyard. It is looking a lot better and shaping up very well."

Father Kevin Cummins

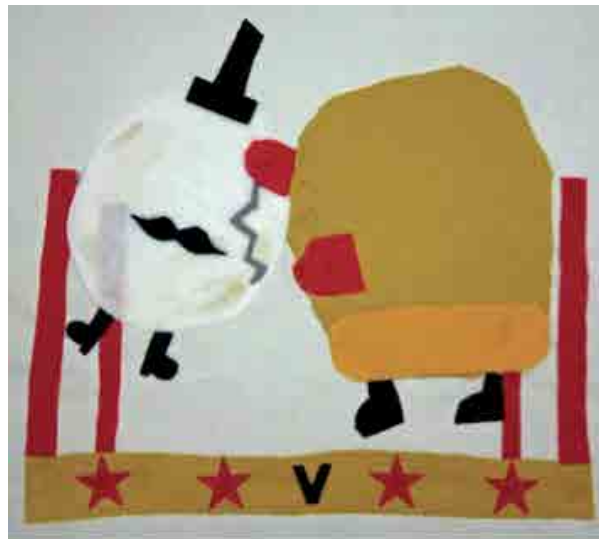


11

Our Young People's Art Work

Art work produced by young people working with Gateshead YOT has been shortlisted to be displayed in the Koestler Trust UK Exhibition 2016 'We are All Human' curated by Benjamin Zephaniah.

The piece of work opposite is 'Egg vs Potato' and will be displayed at Southbank Centre, London.



Another piece of art work 'Roll Up Roll Up', will be displayed at an exhibition at the Supreme Court curated by the Koestler Trust in collaboration with Victim Support. The young person and his family have been invited to the exhibition which is due to take place in October 2016.



12

Contact Us

Children and Families Support Service
Youth Offending Team
Civic Centre, Ground Floor
Regent Street
Gateshead NE8 1HH

Our opening hours are:

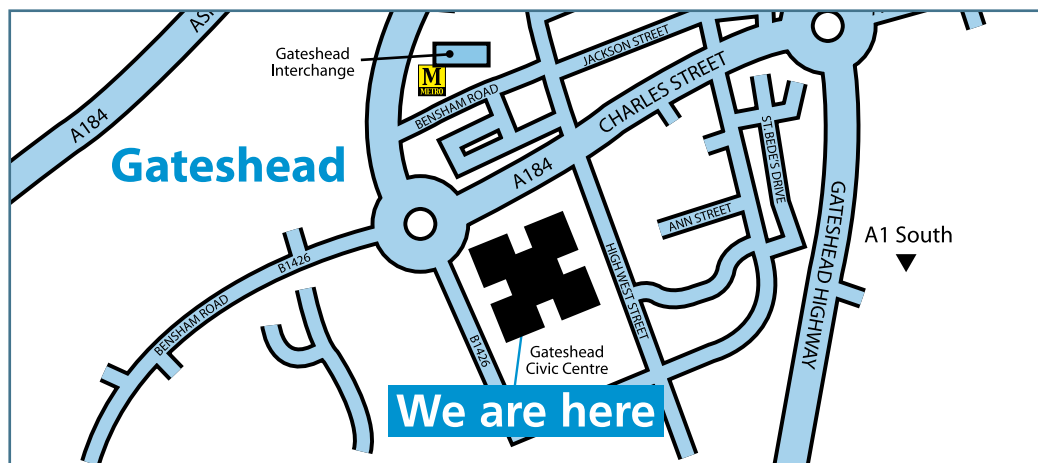
Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 5.30pm
Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm
Saturday Reparation/Constructive Activity and on
call Court 8.30am - 4.30pm
Sunday ISS/Constructive Activity – as required

Tel: 0191 433 3000 • Fax: 0191 433 4548

Service Manager

Susan Butler, Service Manager for Youth Offending Team
Family Intervention Team, IDVA Service and Co-ordinator of the Families Gateshead Programme
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Email: susanbutler@gateshead.gov.uk

How to find Gateshead Youth Offending Team





Gateshead
youth
offending
team



©Produced by Youth Offending Team, August 2016

All images in this publication are taken from artwork created by young people known to Gateshead Youth Offending Team.





COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD COUNCIL

REPORT FROM THE CABINET

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This is the report from the Cabinet. Its purpose is to report on issues for the period July – September 2016.

PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

2. PEOPLE

Children and Young People

Ofsted inspection of Bensham Grove Nursery

Following an inspection by Ofsted in April 2016, Bensham Grove Nursery has been judged as Outstanding, an improvement on the previous inspection rating of Good.

The inspectors observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning. They found that staff have excellent knowledge of the children. Assessments are precise and checked closely to ensure that any gaps in learning are quickly identified and supported. They also commented that the children's emotional wellbeing is exceptionally well fostered.

The inspectors found that the management team and staff implement highly effective methods to evaluate the strengths and any areas of weakness in the nursery. They also noted that the nursery involves parents and children in the process to make sure their views are listened to and used to make changes.

The Gateshead Art Project

In 2015 the art project commemorating the centenary of the First World War won national recognition and Gateshead Youth Offending Team were presented with the Youth Justice Board's Creative Arts for Children and Young People Award 2015.

In 2016 the art project expanded on this theme and its success and 'Being British' was commissioned. This project has enabled young people to develop a greater understanding of culture, diversity and history. Young people who have taken part in the project have developed their understanding of national land marks and their significance. A number of pieces of work have used symbolism to provoke iconic images of 'Being British'. The young people have benefited from understanding how the different parts of the United Kingdom come together to represent Britain. Their work was showcased at the Civic Centre over July and August.

Health and Wellbeing

Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust – Outstanding Judgement

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW), a provider of mental health and disability services, has been rated as 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The independent regulator of health and adult social care in England published its findings in the form of 15 core service reports and an overall report, which rated NTW as 'Outstanding'; the best possible outcome. All of the individual service reports were also either 'Outstanding' or 'Good'.

Nationally, NTW is one of the first NHS providers of such services to receive an Outstanding rating.

NTW provides services from over 60 sites across Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland, as well as providing a number of regional and national specialist services.

The inspectors made the following comments, against each of the five categories:

- Safe (Good) – “There was an openness and transparency in relation to safety across the Trust. Staff were able to tell us about the need for openness and transparency when mistakes were made.”
- Effective (Outstanding) – “Services offered patients a comprehensive, holistic approach to their assessment, planning and delivery of care. Innovation in practice was actively encouraged. The Trust was committed to the continual development of its staff.”
- Caring (Outstanding) – “Staff were motivated, inspired and enthusiastic in offering care that promoted people’s dignity. Staff demonstrated that they cared about the well-being of patients and had pride in their work. Feedback from patients and carers regarding their care and treatment was consistently positive.”
- Responsive (Outstanding) – “Service users, carers and staff were consulted and involved in the design and development of new services and there was evidence of the Trust listening to and learning from patients. Services were continually reviewed and developed to respond to the needs of patients and improve care and treatment offered.”
- Well Led (Outstanding) – “The Trust had a clear vision and values which were incorporated into all aspects of the Trust’s business. External stakeholders felt leadership within the Trust was proactive. Staff across the organisation said that senior managers were visible and supportive.”

3. PLACE AND ECONOMY

Environment and Transport

Landlord Prosecution

The Council has successfully prosecuted a Gateshead Landlord who failed to deal with problem tenants. The landlord was fined over £10, 000 plus costs. The District Judge told the court that the offences were serious and by the landlord’s failure to deal with the anti-social behaviour unnecessary alarm and distress had been imposed on

innocent victims who had been driven from their homes. He said he hoped the sentencing would send out a message to other landlords that they should fulfil their legal responsibilities and licensing obligations.

Controlling Public Fundraising in Gateshead Town Centre

The Council, as a Licensing Authority, is responsible for controlling a number of activities relating to charitable giving including 'door to door collections' and 'street collections'. Both of these collection methods are regulated by legislation.

Over recent years however a new fundraising practice has emerged which falls outside of the scope of current legislation. This involves charitable organisations stationing staff in public streets to collect peoples' personal financial details for the purpose of routine giving by direct debit.

Since the opening of the Trinity Square development, the Council has received an increasing number of complaints about charitable organisations carrying out this kind of fundraising causing a nuisance to visitors to the Town Centre.

The Public Fundraising Association (PFRA) is the standards and membership body for organisations carrying out face-to-face fundraising.

In the absence of legislation applying to direct debit forms of fundraising, the PFRA provides a bridge between councils and charities maintaining professional standards and providing a fair allocation of fundraising on the ground.

They work with local authorities to set up Site Management Agreements which ensure fundraising in local areas is proportionate. They make sure their members stick to the terms of their Site Management Agreement through a programme of spot checks, mystery shopping and co-regulation with Council partners. Breaches of the conditions of the SMA attract penalty points under their penalties and sanctions regime.

Officers and Trinity Square Management representatives have met with the PFRA and are considering entering into an Site Management Agreement for the Town Centre area in order to better control those conducting direct debit fundraising. A draft Site Management Agreement has been drawn up for consideration.

A Site Management Agreement with the PFRA will *not* control the conduct of 'touts' i.e. those businesses operating in the town centre approaching members of the public to sign up for services e.g. telecoms companies and energy companies. Other measures to deal with this issue are currently being explored by Officers including the use of Public Space Control Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Blaydon Footbridge

The footbridge over the A696 Blaydon Viaduct was damaged due to vehicle impact on 8 August causing severe traffic disruption.

The span over the eastbound carriageway was demolished by contractors on 11 August and the carriageway was re-opened to traffic.

The design of a replacement span is currently being progressed; the works to replace the span are estimated to be undertaken in January 2017.

A driver of a low loader carrying an excavator has been questioned under caution by the Police, and the insurance details have been passed to the Council.

Go Ahead Child Fares

In August 2016, Go North East made some significant changes to the fares charged to young people across the NECA area:

- A flat £1 single fare for everyone aged 18 and under across the NECA area (a small number of exceptions apply). Parents are able to purchase tickets on their mobile and gift it to their child's mobile instantly or in advance.
- The price of a day ticket price was frozen at £3.75; with weekly and monthly tickets available for £15.50 and £58.00 respectively. All offer unlimited travel on Go North East services across the NECA area.
- Everyone in full time education (including apprentices and mature students) is eligible for the day, week and monthly tickets.
- While welcome, it should be noted that these new fares may not offer best value for all passengers. For example, under 16s in Tyne & Wear can travel all day on any bus, metro or the Shields ferry for £1.10 if they have an Under 16 Pop Card.

4. COMMUNITIES

Communities and Volunteering

Fill the Holiday Gap

In Gateshead "Fill the Holiday Gap" aims to tackle the problems faced by some families, who normally receive free school meals. Providing those extra meals during school holidays can be a real struggle for many families. There is also evidence both locally and nationally that food banks experience a peak in demand during school holidays.

Live Well Gateshead's Capacity Building programme, supported by the Council, has been working closely with a range of community organisations who have applied to support the "Fill the Holiday Gap" programme in 2016.

In total, 20 community groups planned, developed and delivered over 80 "Fill the Holiday Gap" events during July and August 2016

Culture, Sport and Leisure

Snow Dogs

The Great North Snow Dogs art trail will take place from 17 September until 2 December. The event will feature around 50 designed artworks and each snow dog will be created by local artists and communities. The trail will be across Tyneside and will encourage people to get active and 'be tourists in their own town'. One of the snow dogs will be located outside Gateshead Central Library and is designed to highlight Gateshead's key cultural assets. Gateshead will benefit from an enhanced profile from being part of a national project.

Dine by the Tyne

In May 2016, Performance Square hosted the 'Dine by the Tyne' event. The Sky table was suspended 30 metres in the air where 22 people could enjoy lunch, dinner or cocktails in the sky.

The event was a great success and discussions are under way regarding another event in August 2017. The event brought in £3000 for the Council and £3000 income to Sage Gateshead.

Saltwell Museum at the Shipley

A gallery within the Shipley Art Gallery has been fitted out to provide a space with flexible display casing and structures to house collections from the old Saltwell Park Museum, originally conceived as Gateshead's 'Local and Industrial Museum', that closed in 1969. The new gallery at the Shipley Art Gallery was opened by the Mayor of Gateshead at a well-attended public event on 11 June 2016.

The Saltwell Park Museum collections are wide-ranging and include local history, natural history and decorative art. They are complemented in the new gallery by film footage of Gateshead in the 1960s. A jukebox in the gallery contains music from around 1933 when the Saltwell Park Museum opened and from around 1969 when it closed. Initial feedback on the gallery has been extremely positive.

I AM TEAM GB

On Saturday 27 August, hundreds of thousands of people across the UK kicked off the bank holiday weekend by looking for ways to get out and get active in their community.

Sponsored by ITV and The National Lottery, and supported by 'Join In' and the British Olympic Association, I AM TEAM GB was the nation's biggest ever sports day.

There were thousands of events across the country, with one televised event held in an iconic venue in each of ITV's broadcasting regions. Gateshead International Stadium was chosen as the venue for the Tyne Tees area and was broadcast live on ITV.

The celebration event at the stadium saw over 1,000 local people taking part in a whole range of exciting Olympic sports including track, throwing and jumping events, rowing, tennis and trampolining.

Participants were also given the chance to meet Olympic athletes including silver medallist gymnast on the trampoline, Bryony Page; bronze medallist in gymnastics, Amy Tinkler; as well as swimmer Amy Willmott and silver medallist rowers Katie Greves, Jessica Eddie (pictured above) and Zoe Lee. They all took time out of their busy schedules to promote the fun, excitement and health benefits of regular participation in sport and to hopefully inspire the next generation of budding Olympians.

The event at Gateshead International Stadium received great media coverage with both local and national news reports.

Chase Park Archaeology Project

Following the successful allocation of a Heritage Lottery Grant for the improvement of Chase Park in Whickham, the first of many engagement events identified in the community engagement plan took place on 24 June.

The Chase Park Archaeology Event gave 140 Year 5 pupils from the local Primary Schools in Whickham an opportunity to learn about what the park was like back in the 1700's.

The second part of the archaeology project will involve a smaller cohort of secondary school students working with the archaeologists from Durham University. This is planned to be delivered in late September.

Great North 10K

The Great North 10K took place on 3 July.

The event was sold out two weeks prior to the day – with over 6,000 participants taking part. The atmosphere was great and the weather was kind, offering wall to wall sunshine for the duration of the event.

Reading Partners Roadshow

On 22 – 23 June, the Reading Agency held their annual Reading Partners Roadshow at Gateshead Central Library – the first day was for children’s publishers and the second day for adult publishers. Librarians from throughout the North East region were invited to attend the roadshows.

English Schools Athletics Association

The Council successfully supported the hosting and delivery of the National Track & Field Championships in July.

There were over 1000 elite junior athletes involved in the Championships and these were cheered on by more than 9,000 spectators over what proved to be two sunny days in Gateshead.

Digital Update

The Council has been successful in securing £40k funding from the Arts Council Grants for the Arts Libraries Fund. The fund supports public library-led projects that stimulate partnerships between libraries, artists and arts organisations, encouraging communities to participate actively in artistic and cultural activities.

Digital Makings is a year-long programme of participatory Digital Arts activities encompassing a broad range of specialisms for people to discover and explore and will run until July 2017.

Make Art Happen & Chalk

Officers are working with Helix Arts to recruit eight artists who are interested in learning how to design, manage and deliver effective participatory arts projects. The programme is aimed at artists beginning to deliver participatory workshops, both emerging artists or established studio based artists who are expanding their practice into the participatory arts field.

The Council worked in partnership with Chalk to present a Cineplay Festival in Gateshead. The Festival, which ran across Newcastle and Gateshead from 19 - 21 August, involved three days of playful, immersive cinema, workshops and activities for young children and their families.

The Festival also featured scooter adventures, secret screenings, live scores, coding, dancing, baby power ballads and more.

Family Challenge Trail

A Family Challenge Trail was launched this summer to encourage families to be more active and healthy in a safe and fun environment.

The initiative, delivered as part of the Council's Get Active programme, consists of orienteering style challenges at a number of venues across Gateshead.

The programme will enable the service to engage more families from across Gateshead in health and wellbeing activity.

5. CONCLUSION

The Council is asked to note this report.

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor M Brain will move the following motion:

“This Council confirms its commitment to genuine and democratically accountable regional devolution. Gateshead Council calls upon Government to continue discussions to implement fairly funded devolution across the North East region, and commits to working jointly with all North East Local Authorities to achieve this”.

Proposed by: Councillor M Brain

Seconded by: Councillor A Douglas

Supported by: Councillor S Green

Councillor L Green

Councillor M Hood

Councillor P Mole

Councillor L Kirton

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Agenda Item 14(a)(i)

COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION – ALTERATION (in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2)

Councillor M Brain will move the following altered motion:

“This Council confirms its commitment to genuine and democratically accountable regional devolution. Gateshead Council calls upon Government to continue discussions to implement fairly funded devolution across the North East region and commits to working jointly with all North East Local Authorities to achieve this.

Council further calls upon NECA to facilitate a constitutional convention to prepare proposals for regional devolution as a basis for negotiation with Government”.

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor J Wallace will move the following motion:

“This Council calls on the North East Combined Authority to facilitate a constitutional convention to prepare proposals for devolution to the region to send to the Government.

Proposed by: Councillor J Wallace

Seconded by: Councillor R Beadle

Supported by: Councillor I Patterson
Councillor J McClurey
Councillor D Duggan
Councillor S Hawkins
Councillor P Maughan

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor M Brain will move the following motion:

“Council notes the recent tragic loss of life attributable to dangerous driving, and asks the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to review the work of all relevant agencies holding road safety responsibilities”.

Proposed by: Councillor M Brain

Seconded by: Councillor L Green

Supported by: Councillor S Green
Councillor M Hood
Councillor P Mole
Councillor A Douglas
Councillor B Oliphant

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Agenda Item 14(c)(i)

COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION – ALTERATION (in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2)

Councillor M Brain will move the following altered motion:

“Council notes the recent tragic loss of life in road traffic accidents in Gateshead and asks the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the work of all relevant agencies holding road safety responsibilities”.

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COUNCIL MEETING

22 September 2016

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor A Douglas will move the following motion:

“Council notes the continuing improvement in GCSE and ‘A’ Level results in the Borough.

This has not been achieved by selection by ability but by a commitment to helping every child reach their potential regardless of starting point.

Gateshead Council takes pride in the achievements of all its children and young people through the provision of good quality education available to all students, not just a select few. Council notes with regret the Government’s decision to introduce elitist and socially divisive new Grammar Schools in England and calls upon Government and all Secondary Schools in the Borough to reject this proposal”.

Proposed by: Councillor A Douglas

Seconded by: Councillor M Brain
Supported by: Councillor M Hood
Councillor P Mole
Councillor L Kirton
Councillor B Oliphant

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