

Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Delivery & Performance – Year End 2017/18

25 June 2018

Chair:

Councillor John Eagle

Vice Chairs:

Councillor Stephen Ronchetti
Councillor Jonathan Wallace

OSC Role and Remit

- The management of the Council's financial, human and physical resources
 - Support for the democratic process
 - Social inclusion
 - Equalities and diversity
 - Efficiency, value for money and procurement
 - The involvement of the people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council
 - Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience
-

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of Council performance for the 2017/18 financial year against the role and remit of this Committee, in line with the Council Plan 2015-2020.

Seven of the ten indicators can be measured at this stage and six are showing improvement compared to the same time last year.

Our Achievements

- The implementation of the new digital platform is now well advanced and will be completed by the end of 2018. New websites and services delivered on the platform in the last 12 months include [Invest Gateshead](#), [Regent Funeral Services](#), [GO Gateshead](#) including [Clip and Climb bookings](#), and [Report Fly tipping](#).
- After celebrating its 10th anniversary as a Fairtrade borough last year, Gateshead has renewed its Fairtrade Town Status for the next two years.
- The Council has participated in the North East Better Health at Work Award (NEBHAWA), working through the levels: bronze; silver; gold; continuing excellence to the last award received in January 2018 'Maintaining Excellence'.

Areas of focus over the next 6 months

- Plans are currently being put into place for our sixth Gateshead Volunteers' Month which takes place in June. Over the years this has seen hundreds of people take

up volunteering opportunities, attend events and get involved with scores of local organisations.

- Undertake the employee survey and the 'You and Your Local Area' residents survey this summer.
- Employee briefings are taking place on the implications of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Complete the implementation of a digital platform to support the delivery of the digital strategy, including the following websites and digital services;
 - A new version of www.gateshead.gov.uk on 17th May
 - An appointment booking system for the Registrars Service by July 2018
 - Online forms for social care requests that aim to reduce call level volumes for Adult Social Care Direct
 - Online forms to support Landlord licensing
 - New websites for JSNA, Beacon Living, Proto and Gateshead Goes Local, and Business Gateshead
 - Improvements to the intranet
 - Performance dashboards for Fly tipping, Clip and Climb bookings, online payments, Registrars
- Supporting the review of individual services to transform how services can be delivered digitally to deliver savings and efficiencies, income generation and contribute to an improved customer experience

Areas for improvement

- High levels of sickness absence are a serious issue and therefore significant work is currently being undertaken to address the problem. Sickness absence management training has been delivered to approximately 400 managers in order to provide them with the knowledge, tools and confidence to manage attendance.

Corporate Resources Strategic Indicators

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

Strategic Indicator			Year End			Trend	Target
			2015/16	2016/17	17/18		
<i>Maximising Growth:</i>							
CP1	% of Council Tax collected that was due to be paid	Higher is better	95.6%	95.8%	95.9%		96.6%
CP2	% of Business Rates collected	Higher is better	97.6%	97.3%	98.6%		97%
CP3	% of undisputed invoices paid on time	Higher is better	87.16%	71.44%	77.1		95%
<i>Reducing Costs:</i>							
CP4	Speed of housing benefits claims (processing) - average time to process new claims and changes in circumstances	Lower is better	7.95 days	7.75 days	7.72		7.5 days
CP5	Staff sickness (excluding school staff) per FTE	Lower is better	9.19 days	9.9 days (Recalculated as 11.71 days)	12.75 days		8.0 days
CP6	% increase in digital based transaction/contact from established baseline	Higher is better	N/A	Baseline Year	Not available	N/A	TBC
CP7	Percentage increase in online transactions	Higher is better	N/A	Baseline Year	Not available	N/A	TBC
<i>Increasing collective responsibility:</i>							
CP8	Employee engagement: e.g. good place to work	Higher is better	68% 2015 Survey	64% 2016 Survey	Survey not complete	N/A	70%
CP9	Improve Superfast Broadband connectivity-Increase coverage in Gateshead to 98.9% by June 2019	Higher is better	91.2%	94.3%	96.41%		98.9%
<i>Equality Objective: To increase levels of ambition and aspiration of vulnerable groups across Gateshead</i>							
CP10	Ensure young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship	Higher is better	New	1	4		TBC

YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2017/18

1. Of the seven indicators that can be measured, 6 are showing improvement whilst only one indicator is performing worse than last year.

The management of the Council's financial, human and physical resources

Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives

2. In March 2018, the Council approved its new strategic approach 'Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives' which is aligned to the timeframe of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and is predicated on the following council pledges:
 - Put people and families at the heart of everything that we do
 - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
 - Support our communities to support themselves and each other
 - Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
 - Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead

Budget

3. On 22 February 2018, Council agreed the [Budget and Council Tax level for 2018/19](#). The budget in 2018/19 includes £13.650 million of savings which closes the funding gap for the year, in response to Government funding reductions and service demand pressures.

Council Tax Collection (CP1)

4. The final collection rate for 2017/18 was 95.9% compared to the 2020 target of 96.6%. This was 0.1% above our 2016-17 performance of 95.8% and was achieved despite the amount of council tax to be collected increasing by £5.3m during 2017-18.
5. This is the 3rd consecutive year that our collection rate has increased and during this 3 year period the amount of council tax to be collected has increased by more than £12.4m.
6. We continually review our working practices and as a priority ensure that residents can contact our team for help and advice. During 2017-18 we received 68,000 telephone enquiries for council tax and achieved an answer rate of more than 97% in relation to these.
7. We are also aware of the very difficult financial challenges that many of our residents are faced with and have guided our staff to making affordable and realistic payment arrangements according to a resident's individual financial circumstances.

Business Rates (CP2)

8. A positive collection rate of 98.6% was achieved during 2017-18 which was 1.4% above our target of 97.2% and 1.3% above our 2016-17 performance of 97.3%.
9. The amount of business rates to be collected during 2017-18 has reduced by £2.9m; this was due to a combination of reductions in the rateable value of some properties within Gateshead and the introduction by Government of various additional rate reliefs.

Undisputed invoices paid on time (CP3)

10. 77.1% of undisputed invoices have been paid within 30 days compared to 71.44% in 2016/17. The introduction of purchasing cards has contributed to this improvement together with an ongoing review of business processes.

Speed of processing housing benefit claims (CP4)

11. Year end performance for 2017/18 is 7.72 days which is an improvement on last year's performance of 7.75 days.

Sickness Absence (CP5)

12. The days lost per FTE due to sickness absence for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was 12.75 days which indicates a rise. Whilst the figure previously reported for 2016/17 was 9.9 days per FTE, unfortunately, a system error which double counted staff numbers where there were moves from one part of the Council to another during re-organisation exercises resulted in under reporting of the 2016/17 figure. The correct figure should have been reported as 11.71 days' absence per FTE. The issue within the IT system has now been resolved.
13. Whilst the figure of 12.75 days is well above the average of 8.5 days across the whole of the public sector, the significant increase in winter flu cases, with PHE reporting that it has been the worst flu season since 2010/11, has taken its toll in the Council. The total number of days' absence due to viral infection has risen from 3053 days in 2016/17 to 4476 days in 2017/18.
14. High levels of sickness absence are a serious issue and therefore significant work is currently being undertaken to address the problem. Sickness absence management training has been delivered to approximately 400 managers in order to provide them with the knowledge, tools and confidence to manage attendance. To support this, HR is providing comprehensive sickness absence data to management teams on a monthly basis to enable effective case management of both short-term and long-term absence.
15. In addition, as part of the Council's achievement of the North East Better Health at Work Award (NEBHAWA) in January 2018, all employees were invited to take part in a Health Needs Assessment survey. The outcomes of the survey are being used to focus on health initiatives around the priorities identified. These include: losing weight; reducing stress levels; increasing physical activity; improving sleep; getting a better work-life balance and reducing back pain. This work is also aligned with other projects and initiatives such as the *Time to Change Pledge* and *Unison Stress Project* and will look at what the council currently provides to support employees with stress or mental health issues, and explore gaps or areas for improvement.

Changes to Flexi time

16. To help employees achieve a better work-life balance, Cabinet and Council have recently agreed to implement changes to the flexi time scheme. The changes to be implemented are:
 - Changing the working day bandwidth to 7am to 7pm (from 1 April 2018).
 - Increasing the maximum flexi credit balance to 14 hours 48 minutes (2 days), pro rata for part time employees (from 7 May 2018).
 - Reducing the maximum flexi debit balance to 7 hours 24 minutes (1 day), pro rata for part time employees (from 7 May 2018).

Employee Engagement (CP8)

17. The employee survey which informs the performance for this indicator will be undertaken during the summer and therefore will not be reported for the 2017/18 financial year.

Corporate Induction

18. A new corporate induction guidance for managers and employees aims to give those who are new to the job the best possible start. An induction is an opportunity to welcome the new employee, help them settle in and ensure they have the knowledge and support they need to perform their role.
19. The guidance has 4 short stages; the period leading up to the new employee starting; Day 1; Week 1 and Month 1 and highlights what should be covered at each of these stages plus includes useful links to information.

Social inclusion

Superfast Broadband connectivity (CP9)

20. The year-end figure of 96.41% shows a further increase since year end (94.3%) and on target to increase coverage in Gateshead to 98.9% by June 2019.

Tackling poverty

21. More than 60 organisations came together in February to discuss ways to tackle poverty and inequality in Gateshead. Gateshead Council is committed to making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. Every day we hear that people in our borough are not coping or are in need. We have too many people out of work, living in poverty and living shorter lives. It's just not right and this unfairness can't continue.
22. The 'Thriving for All' conference was arranged in order to bring together people from organisations, charities and business in Gateshead to find new ways of working to alleviate poverty and find solutions to this long-standing issue.
23. Delegates watched a powerful and moving video of a Gateshead woman who faces daily struggles to provide for her teenage son. It was followed by speakers from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, North East Child Poverty Commission, Gateshead's Director of Public Health, Gateshead Foodbank and Citizens Advice Gateshead.

Fairtrade

24. After celebrating its 10th anniversary as a Fairtrade borough last year, Gateshead has renewed its Fairtrade Town Status for the next two years. Gateshead was first given Fairtrade Town Status in 2007 after Gateshead Council agreed to use Fairtrade products and encourage businesses in the borough to sign up to the scheme.
25. Gateshead has been a supporter of Fairtrade since 1998 and, as part of the renewal of the Fairtrade Town Status, the Gateshead Fairtrade Partnership raised awareness with Gateshead College and Gateshead Youth Assembly, which then led to their involvement in Fairtrade Fortnight and hosting Responsible Business Week.
26. The numbers of retail and catering outlets using and selling Fairtrade products in Gateshead continues to grow and part of the partnership's future plans include working with local schools to raise awareness of Fairtrade and get them actively involved in the Fairtrade movement.

Equalities and diversity

Employee Disability Survey

27. Despite having a reduced workforce, the Council is still a significant employer and as such, it is important that the health and wellbeing of disabled employees is considered in the workplace.
28. During March 2018, Council employees have been asked to complete a short confidential survey to provide a better understanding of whether the Council is meeting employee needs, or whether there are still areas that could be improved on.
29. The responses from this survey are currently being analysed and the findings will be included in a future performance report.

Monitoring the impact of budget proposals

30. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and foster good relations between people from different groups.
31. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on the individual budget proposals identifies any disproportionate impact in relation to the protected characteristics as described within the Equality Act 2010. The assessments also identify mitigation where applicable.
32. Several budget proposals were considered as having a positive or neutral impact. However, the following proposals where disproportionate impact was highlighted along with potential mitigation:

2018-20 agreed proposals

Age

The **Supported Housing Supporting People** proposal was first consulted on as part of the Council's budget for 2017/18. Services are generally for working age adults with limited numbers aged over 65 accessing these services. The main impact of this proposal will be for the age group 16 to 25.

The proposal to **review of the Toy Library** identified potential negative impact for families (primarily female carers) with young children.

The Council, in partnership with Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, has undertaken a **review of Carers Services** in Gateshead to jointly commission a new all age service for Carers.

Disability

The proposal to **review domiciliary care packages** has previously been consulted on. The aim of the review is to look at low level domiciliary care packages to establish if such support can be reduced or provided in a different way, for example by using telecare or befriending support.

The proposal to **integrate Community Links activity into core delivery** within the wider Adult Social Care provider service and council structures.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The proposal relating to the **review of the Toy Library** also identified potential negative impact for breastfeeding mothers. Based on 73 completed evaluations for the hiring of breast pumps from the Toy Library, 84% said that the hiring of the breast pump supported their breastfeeding journey.

33. The monitoring of the impact of these proposals will be reported more fully in the six month report later this year.

CP10: Ensure young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity in the Council for an apprenticeship

34. We currently have four filled apprenticeship posts in the following council services; Office of the Chief Executive, Care, Wellbeing and Learning, Communities and Environment and Corporate Services and Governance.
35. A further thirteen have been agreed to be ring fenced for looked after children and care leavers from across the council, including 6 in Care, Wellbeing and Learning, 1 in Communities and Environment, 2 in Corporate Resources, 1 in Corporate Services and Governance, 2 in Gateshead Housing Company and 1 in Public Health.

Efficiency, value for money and procurement

Corporate Social Responsibility

36. A Corporate Social Responsibility Pledge has been approved, based on the five council pledges to pursue wider social and economic benefits for local people, in a constructive and collaborative way to realise our ambition of a thriving Gateshead whilst not restricting free trade. This pledge sets out how our suppliers, service providers, contractors and sub-contractors (referred to as “supply chain”) can help to deliver the best outcomes for people in Gateshead.
37. Completion of this pledge is voluntary and will not be considered in any tender evaluation. This information will initially be gathered to baseline how able our supply chain is to sign up to our pledges and support them to sign up to pledges that they currently cannot meet.

The involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council

Digital platform

38. There is a continuing increase in demand for digital services. For the second year in a row there has been a 14% increase in the number of pages viewed on the Council website, now totalling 9,251,973. This is despite all Leisure centre pages and activities now being hosted on the separate [Go Gateshead](#) website. This site alone has attracted 610,173 page views since it was launched on 9th March 2018 with 64% of visits coming from a mobile phone demonstrating the importance of the continual focus on providing digital services that can be easily be accessed on these devices.

Digital services and platform

CP6: The percentage increase in the switch to digital based transaction/contact from a more established traditional measure (telephone/face-to-face) baseline &

CP7: The percentage in increase in people using an online/digital method for transactions with the Council

39. The installation of the new digital platform will include the production of performance dashboard for key digital services. This tool will show comprehensive transaction data for specific functions and provide a sustainable and useful metric. Currently, limited data is available, which has to be aggregated and this is only possible for some key transactions, so does not yet provide a sufficiently rounded picture to enable the reporting of progress made so far. However key online payments such as garden waste, parking fines and Clip and Climb bookings represent on average 65-70% of transactions compared to payments made over the phone or face-to-face. The implementation of the new Report Fly tipping service has seen a shift from 39% of reports submitted online to 55%.

Consultation

Chopwell and Blackhall Mill

40. Many residents in Chopwell and Blackhall Mill have been involved in shaping a plan for improving their local neighbourhood. Asked what they liked, what mattered most to them and what they, the council and other organisations could do to make change happen for the better, a number of key themes and proposed areas of action emerged including:

- Improving local housing
- Improving the local economy and supporting local businesses
- Addressing issues around community safety
- Promoting community spirit and pride in where they lived
- Supporting local facilities, community groups and amenities like Chopwell Park, Chopwell and Blackhall Mill Community Centres
- Improving the general appearance of the village and transport links to it.

41. There was also recognition that local residents have a key role to play in helping to make these changes happen and sustain any improvements through volunteering, being good neighbours and joining in with local activities and groups. On the ground, a number of practical actions and activities are already underway that support the objectives set out in the plan.

Budget consultation

42. There were 56 draft budget proposals presented for consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 21 November 2017, with a closing date of 12 January 2018.

43. As in previous years, the use of video and animation films were used to provide context to the financial position the Council continues to face in order to balance its budget. To complement this work, a budget quiz was also devised to help inform residents of these challenges.

- Budget video viewed on Youtube 353 times and 5,800 times on Facebook.
- Leader's video viewed on Youtube 238 times.
- 269 people accessed the budget quiz with over 77% indicating they were better informed of the financial challenges facing the Council.

Residents survey

44. The Council plans to undertake a 'You and Your Local Area' residents survey this summer to update the 2016 indicators.

Volunteers

45. The current picture of volunteering in Gateshead as at March 2018 is:
- Registered Council volunteers have increased from 50 (2013) to 1,853 (2018).
 - Currently an estimate of over 8,000 volunteers (2018) active within Gateshead as a whole across all types of services and projects. There was as estimated 4,000 in 2013.
 - Corporate Volunteer Days continue to grow in demand, an estimated 2,000 (2018) individual volunteers have taken part in corporate and group volunteering activity since 2013. The estimated economic value to the Gateshead community of corporate and group volunteering activity is estimated at £125,943. Each individual volunteer has an economic value £104 per day.
 - Formal volunteering target of an increase to 25% achieved 51.9% this is a 188% increase on the target. Informal volunteering target of an increase to 40% achieved 67% this is a 97% increase on the target
 - The Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering Team currently support over 100 groups and organisations from Gateshead's VCS around the development of volunteer roles and matching of suitable volunteers.
 - Gateshead's fifth Volunteers' Month, took place in June 2017. Throughout June, 106,189 hours were recorded on the volunteer totaliser which equates to £1,380,457 economic value. This is a 5% rise from 2016. Volunteer's month will return in 2018 with both the totaliser and the volunteer's month grant.
 - There are currently an estimated 25 Friends of groups at various locations throughout Gateshead. With an average of 15 members per group this is an estimated 375 volunteers. These groups all have their own individual aims and objectives as well as support needs.
46. A new Volunteers Plan for Gateshead 2018-2021, '[Helping Out in Gateshead](#)' has been developed to provide support more effectively and efficiently. The plan offers a new set of commitments to support residents and community organisations in Gateshead to help each other out.

Gateshead Volunteers' Month

47. This June will be the sixth year celebrating the fantastic contribution made by all the volunteers of Gateshead. As usual throughout June, there will be lots going on to whet your appetite and encourage you to take that first step to becoming a volunteer for Gateshead.
48. Details of volunteering events and activities across the borough for this year's event are currently being co-ordinated and details will be available on the [Gateshead Volunteers' Month webpage](#) nearer the time.

Voluntary and Community Sector

49. The Corporate Resources OSC received a [progress update](#) from Newcastle CVS at its meeting on Monday 16th April 2018.
50. The Council commissioned the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland to explore the potential to grow and develop the Gateshead Fund through partnerships across the public and private sector, as well as through

philanthropy. The Council will be using the findings to help explore different opportunities to support and develop the VCS in the Borough

51. During 2018, the Council will deliver a one-off £500,000 investment programme for the sector, looking to support organisations exploring and developing innovation and growth, helping to create new ways of working in communities. This will help the Council's aim to champion a stronger marketplace for services and explore new ways to see early help delivered within vulnerable communities. Liaison with the sector will commence soon.
52. In 2018, the Council will be procuring a new VCS infrastructure support service to ensure that voluntary organisations continue to have access to a representation and independent advocacy function.

Resilience and Emergency Planning

53. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive six monthly updates. Updates were provided on [4 September 2017](#) and [16 April 2018](#). Highlights from 2017/2018 include:
 - The Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework has been reviewed and updated
 - The council's new Pandemic Influenza Plan was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2018.
 - The development of a concept of operations for the council to respond to modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation issues
 - A sustained volume of work has taken place to review as to how the Council would respond to a terrorist attack situation
 - The redevelopment and validation of the intu Metrocentre Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan.
54. The following emerging issues have increased the demand on the Resilience and Emergency Planning function.
 - Greater coordination of emergency responses to incidents and issues
 - Coordination of pre-planned operations led by the emergency services on a broad range of subjects
 - Coordination of responses to modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation issues
 - Increased scrutiny of event plans to ensure compliance with both resilience and Crowded Places Guidance
 - Increased tension and apprehension around the terrorism agenda and recent national events
 - Ongoing work to understand the implications of an increase in the terrorism threat level