

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING

Monday, 14 September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor(s): T Graham (Chair), V Anderson, B Clelland, S Dickie, K Dodds, A Geddes, F Geddes, S Hawkins, M Hood, P Maughan, J Reay, J Turnbull and A Wheeler

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): D Burnett, H Kelly, R Waugh and K McClurey

CPL72 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on 9 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

CPL73 MAKING GATESHEAD A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES - YEAR END ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY 2019/2020

The Committee received a report providing the year end assessment of performance and delivery for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 in relation to the Council's Thrive Agenda.

The Committee were also advised that the report focusses on the achievements and actions undertaken during the reporting period, it was also noted that areas for improvement were also detailed within the report.

From the report, the Committee were provided with an overview of the six strategic indicators linked to the Thrive Agenda, these were:

- Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do.
- Tackling inequality so people have a fair chance
- Investment into our local economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
- Working together and fighting for a better future for Gateshead

The Committee were then provided with an update regarding Covid-19. It was noted that the Council had established eight shielding hubs to provide emergency support to help local residents. It was also highlighted from the report that the hubs had been managed by the Council's Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team with support from other Council services such as Libraries, Sports and Leisure and Parking/Environmental Enforcement.

It was reported that [at the time of writing the report] that 4,700 requests for help from individual households had been received, 52% of which were for emergency food parcels. It was also noted that the wards with the highest demand included

High Fell, Felling, Lamesley, Deckham and Bridges.

From the report, the Committee were also provided with an overview of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme which supported in the delivery of 1,400 activity packs distributed to children and families via schools, community groups and the Council's Early Help team.

A question was asked as to whether statistics relating to residents with caring responsibilities were kept ensuring that those people are supported. It was advised that information relating to social care and support for carers would be presented at the Families OSC. It was also highlighted that the Families OSC also oversee similar indicators relating to vulnerability and disabilities.

It was queried why Gateshead Council's Community Safety Board appear to be underperforming in comparison to neighbouring authorities' Boards. The Committee also requested more narrative in relation to the Community Safety Board's performance. The Committee were advised that the Community Safety Board are working hard to tackle the public's perceptions of ASB and rolling out bespoke services for wards such as Dunston/Teams. The Committee were further advised that there has been a large increase in the reporting of ASB during the pandemic and these reports will be analysed.

The Committee requested additional information relating to affordable properties as detailed within performance indicator EI09 in the report. The Committee were advised that a more substantive explanation on this matter would be provided in writing following the meeting.

It was queried whether the Committee would be able to receive a broader update on the Council's response to the pandemic. It was noted that this could be in the form of a regular update or an annual one. It was highlighted that Council services are under increased pressure for reasons such as staff being redeployed or working from home. The Committee requested the opportunity to scrutinise how the Council has responded to changes in legislation over the course of the pandemic.

Additional officer updates from queries raised during this meeting:

1. On the query regarding Pest Control services:

Pest control is a paid service which we offer it to residents and TGHC. We are looking to be operational again all being well by mid-November. We will have new risk assessments in place and treat inside properties if it is safe to enter and no one has Covid, showing symptoms or self-isolating.

We are technically still stood down but we were still providing a service to offer advice and some levels of treatment if it was safe for the officers to provide from outside a property.

2. On the query for more information and clarification on why E109 only achieved 20% of its target and what are we doing to improve it:

The target figure of 294 for new affordable homes was set for a 5 year period (2016/17-2020/21).

Since 2016/17, we have identified a total of 304 new affordable homes delivered in Gateshead:

2016/17 - 61

2017/18 - 64

2018/19 - 60

2019/20 – 119 (Subject to validation when Government data is released in October 2020)

2020/21 –

On this basis we are on track to exceed the target figure despite overall housing market conditions that we have experienced in Gateshead in recent years, and our affordable homes market's reliance on decreasing Government funding,

The steps that the Council is taking to sustain levels of delivery are set out in the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, recently reported to Cabinet.

3. On the query regarding the wider response across the Council to the pandemic and the implications of the changing government guidance:

This is part of the purpose of Decembers update.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee considered that the activities undertaken during April 2019-March 2020 were supporting delivery of the Thrive Agenda.
- (ii) The Committee requested additional updates in relation to the performance of the Community Safety Board, Affordable Housing and the Council's response as a whole to the pandemic.
- (iii) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Chair.....