

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 6 March 2023

PRESENT: Councillor J Eagle (Chair)

Councillor(s): S Green, R Beadle, J Wallace, W Dick,
T Graham, M Hall, I Patterson, J Simpson, J Turner and
K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): D Bradford, C Buckley, D Burnett, L Caffrey,
B Clelland and J Green

CR95 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

The Chair advised that Councillor L Caffrey was standing down from this Committee, he asked that thanks be placed on the record for her commitment and contribution to the Committee.

CR96 CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT - ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

RESOLVED - That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

CR97 RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR DROUGHTS

The Committee received a report to provide them with information about resilience and emergency planning for droughts.

The Council has no statutory duty to plan for droughts and managing water supply. This is the responsibility of the Water Authorities and in Gateshead this falls to Water Resources North (WReN), made up of Northumbrian Water, Yorkshire Water and Hartlepool Water as core companies but they involve others who have an interest in water resources within the region. WReN is a group designed to oversee water resources planning for Yorkshire and the North East of England.

Regional groups are preparing Water Resource Management Plans looking at current and forecasted water use, weighing up the balance between water demand and supply availability up until 2045.

The Draft North Water Resources Management Plan for 2024 will be finalised in 2023. The North is the most drought-resilient public water supply in England today and water resources are in a good position with Kielder Reservoir.

To reduce demand for water, on 1 July 2021, the Government announced plans to:

- Make regulations to introduce a mandatory water efficiency label to inform consumers and encourage the purchase of more water efficient products for both domestic and business use
- Encourage local authorities to adopt the optional minimum building standard of 110 litres per person per day in all new builds where there is a clear local need, such as in water stressed areas
- Develop a roadmap towards greater water efficiency in new developments and retrofits, including the exploration of revised building regulations and how the development of new technologies can contribute to meeting these standards. We will ensure that the underlying legislation can, where appropriate, accommodate any potential future expansion of rainwater harvesting, water re-use and storage options

The Council has no formal role should Gateshead suffer from a drought, however, the Council could be called upon as part of a multi-agency coordination arrangements in relation to getting pallets of water or water bowsers out where required, but this task could just as easily fall to another agency including the Fire and Rescue Service.

As the Council has no formal role in responding to a drought, and it is considered that a drought in Gateshead is unlikely, the Council has not developed plans to respond to a drought. A drought situation usually has a reasonable lead in period of dry weather and therefore there would be time to develop plans with partner organisations such as WReN, should they be required.

Members suggested that they were not solely concerned about the water supply, but also the overall impact if we have long term dry weather, how will it impact on the landscape and such, what are we going to do if water courses start to dry up, we need to look at the direct impact if we have a series of years of repeated dry weather and how the agricultural sector would be hit. Last year they were saying the potato crops could be hit, this could potentially happen in the next 2 or 3 years. What advice are we giving to residents, examples such as not cleaning your car so often.

It was also noted that last year we only had 60% of annual rainfall, in Kent a field was on fire that ignited properties, are we looking to identify places that if they go on fire are a risk to properties.

It was suggested that we need to have questions asked about extreme weather events and a strategic plan.

It was suggested that weather (extreme weather) be included within the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan.

It was also noted that as a society we need to have a change in mindset, we have been brought up to think there is an infinite resource in water.

RESOLVED - That the information presented be noted.

The Committee were presented with the Interim Report on the Review of Community Wealth Building.

At its meeting on 13 June 2022, the Committee agreed the scope for the review focussing on:

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

The review comprised of two evidence gathering sessions. Evidence was sought from internal council services, including Corporate Commissioning and Procurement, Economic Development and Human Resources. Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) prepared a presentation for the Committee.

The following Issues and Challenges were discussed during the review process:

- The landing pages for doing business with the Council do not mention social value
- Members were keen to see the Social Value Toolkit and a demonstration was incorporated within the second evidence gathering session
- Members were keen to explore how we enable smaller organisations to bid for work and that was incorporated within the second evidence gathering session
- It was suggested that there is a lot of expertise in the form of Ward councillors who have had previous roles in non-profit and other voluntary and social enterprises that is not currently tapped into
- There is a whole new health structure which cover the whole of the North East whose Chief Executive is really conscious of their role as community wealth builder and officers should engage with the Director of Place for Gateshead
- We need to get better at understanding why companies are not submitting bids to us, although it was acknowledged that a huge amount of effort goes into trying to attract local companies where appropriate
- It was queried whether there is a role for the council in connecting informal networks where no money changes hands and good are exchanged in lieu of

money (example one person pays for apples to feed their livestock with jars of jam, or one person has a garden but it no longer able to tend it allowing other people to use this resource)

- We need a much better understanding of what businesses exist in Gateshead and what they can supply as there is an issue around market intelligence and the creation of a database was not considered to be the answer because it would be difficult to maintain
- One ward councillor brought together all of the voluntary organisations within their ward and were surprised at how many of the organisations did not know each other
- The business networking programme that was led by the Council has not been re-established since COVID, however, it will commence in March 2023
- Members believed that we are a bit late in supporting co-operatives in the Borough in the same way that other authorities currently are despite us having social enterprise status since 2014
- Too much emphasis is given to the legal status of organisations and it is important that the most appropriate legal status is used
- There was concern that not for profit companies are not always the best types of organisation to deal with as some pay themselves huge amounts of money
- It was suggested that we undertake a piece of research through Northumbria University to look at all of our contracts and see what the directors of not for profit organisations are being paid
- In order to work better with small and micro business we need to increase our engagement with them as we have better intelligence for local businesses due to the Pandemic as we supported them with funding

Recommendations from the Review are as follows:

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

Recommendation 2 – procurement documentation and communications should be reviewed to ensure that there are no barriers for local SME's.

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

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

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

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

- Commissioning and procurement activity
- Recruitment drives and skills development

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

Recommendation 6 – further develop the social value work through the newly appointed Social Value co-ordinator role and by working with the VCSE sector, schools and internal colleagues to maximise social value benefits through future procurement opportunities.

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

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

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

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

It was suggested that we need to think of ways to not put barriers into the way of people, sometimes as a local authority there are so many processes in place it can cause a barrier.

In 2012 a piece of work was undertaken with small organisations to see if they were contract ready, it might be that we need to undertake a piece of work like this again.

It was also noted that the Council have been put in touch with several individuals at Northumbria University for to consider opportunities for research projects.

It was also suggested that gender be built into this somehow to see where we are with Community Wealth Building and women's empowerment.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.
 - (ii) That the Committee agreed that the final report be

presented to this Committee and Cabinet for consideration.

CR99 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME REPORT - 2023-2024

The Committee received the work programme for the current municipal year 2022/23. A copy of the proposed work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year will be brought to the next meeting and the deferred item on the Corporate Asset Management Strategy will also now come to the next meeting.

- RESOLVED (i) That the provisional work programme be noted.
 (ii) That it be noted that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Chair.....