

## **Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Vision 2030 and Council Plan – Year End 2015/16 - Delivery and Performance**

**27 June 2016**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

Corporate Resources

#### **Chair:**

Councillor John Eagle

#### **Vice Chairs**

Councillor Paul Foy

Councillor Jonathan Wallace

#### **Role and Remit**

As agreed at its meeting of 30 June 2014, the Committee undertakes scrutiny in relation to:

- The management of the Council's financial, human and physical resources
- Support for the democratic process;
- The involvement of local people and communities of Gateshead in the work of the Council
- Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience
- Matters relating to the Council's relationship with Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council including the Gateshead Offer
- Social inclusion, equalities and diversity; and
- The Council's arrangements for securing efficiency and money; and the development and operation of the Council's procurement strategy

## **Overview**

### **Our Achievements**

- The Council was 'highly commended' for Council of the Last 20 Years at the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2016.
- New Council Plan 2015-2020 to achieve positive outcomes for the people of Gateshead
- The revisited and amended corporate performance management framework has been agreed to support decision making and ensure the Council continues to be effective, fit for purpose and sustainable
- Performing better than target for the speed it takes to process benefit claims.
- The Council's new award winning HR & Payroll system (iTrent) is now operational which provides managers with direct access to absence management data and information to assist them in managing attendance.
- The Council's website received a Better Connected Award for Parking: Pay parking fine.

### **Areas of focus over the next 6 months**

- Preparing for the EU Referendum
- Review of support to the VCS in Gateshead to establish how the Council may commission services to support the borough's VCS from 2017 onwards.
- Gateshead Volunteers Month 2016
- Procurement and implementation of a digital platform to help deliver the digital strategy
- Distributing and analysing the employee survey to give employees an opportunity to shape the way the Council works
- Continue the development and implementation of the Change Programme to make sure the Council can deliver a balanced budget in 2020 and beyond.
- iTrent: Phase 2 will be rolled out, incorporating Employee Self-Service for Leave Requests and Expenses, Car Mileage and Overtime / Additional Hours Claims.

### **Areas for improvement**

- There is a positive direction travel against the collection of council tax. The improved collection rate from last year equates to approximately £3m in cash terms, however falls short of the target set.
- Work is ongoing to ensure that managers have the necessary skills and fully understand the requirements of the sickness absence management policy and procedure.
- According to the Doteveryone digital exclusion heatmap on a scale of 1-9 (where higher figure indicates greater likelihood of exclusion) Gateshead scored an 8. The Digital Gateshead Programme includes a workstream that is focused on Digital Inclusion and helping everyone to have the right access, skills and confidence to use and benefit from digital solutions.

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

### **Vision 2030 refreshed**

Vision 2030 sets out the framework and direction of travel for the Gateshead Strategic Partnership to drive forward the economic, social and physical improvements in Gateshead.

The Gateshead Strategic Partnership (GSP) agreed to look at Vision 2030 in light of the changing partnership landscape and in the context of fewer resources. The vision and the 6 big ideas have been retained and 18 long term outcomes outline what success will look like.

The use of info-graphics in the redesigned [Vision 2030](#) has helped to communicate outcomes and achievements of the plan. Old pathways have been removed to achieve a medium to long term focus. New branding will help the Vision to appeal to a wider audience.

There is a focus on delivery over the next 5 years, which will serve as a stepping stone to 2030 and also aligns the ambition and outcomes in Vision 2030 to those of the Council Plan.

The operational detail will be made manifest in the aligned medium term strategies and plans of the partnership boards to be more realistic, flexible and respond to changes quicker.

### **Council Plan 2015-2020**

Following significant changes in the national policy landscape and the challenging financial climate the Council has agreed a new Council Plan which was developed during this financial year as part of the strategic planning framework.

[The Council Plan](#) will enable the Council, along with partners, to be better placed to achieve positive outcomes for the people of Gateshead and deliver the ambition of Vision 2030 over the next 5 years.

Key outcomes for the next five years were identified as:

#### *Prosperous Gateshead – a thriving economy for all*

- More and better paid jobs and more people in work
- Fewer people with low level skills and more people with higher level skills through:
  - improved educational attainment
  - increased learning and development
- More private, public and social investment
- An increase in the working age population

#### *Live Love Gateshead – a sense of pride and ownership by all*

- A confident and more aspirational population acting as Gateshead's strongest advocates

- Gateshead people who care about their local area and share responsibility for making and keeping our environment the best it can be
- A community who take pride in Gateshead the place and enjoy and engage in world class culture and heritage that contributes to a sense of belonging and wellbeing

*Live Well Gateshead – a healthy, inclusive and nurturing place for all*

- The destination of choice for families with a range of excellent and affordable housing options
- A place where children have the best start in life
- A place where older people are independent and are able to make a valuable contribution to the community
- A place where people choose to lead healthy lifestyles, with more and more people across Gateshead living longer and without life-limiting illnesses
- A place where those who need help have access to appropriate joined up services that make a difference to the quality of their life
- A tolerant place where people feel safe

### **Local Government Chronicle Awards**

The Council was 'highly commended' for the [Council of the Last 20 Years](#) at the Local Government Chronicle Awards in London in March 2016. By being highly commended the Council, along with partners, were able to demonstrate high quality efficient services that benefit residents; sustained excellence and innovation from which other councils have sought inspiration; and a longstanding culture that promotes excellence.

### **HR and Payroll System**

The Council's new HR & Payroll system (iTrent) went live for 14,500 users, as planned, on Thursday 18 February 2016 incorporating:

- Human Resources Management & Admin;
- Payroll;
- Car Mileage
- Reporting / Interfaces

Employees were asked to submit suggestions to name/brand the self-service module and "My HR & Payroll" proved the most popular. "My HR & Payroll" (Employee Self Service part) also went live offering the following functionality:

- Show payslips
- Change personal details.

Over the following 6 weeks, the system also went live with:

- People Manager
- Absence Management
- Web Recruitment
- Learning Events Administration.

Initial feedback has been very positive with many staff expressing the view that iTrent Self-Service is well designed and simple to use.

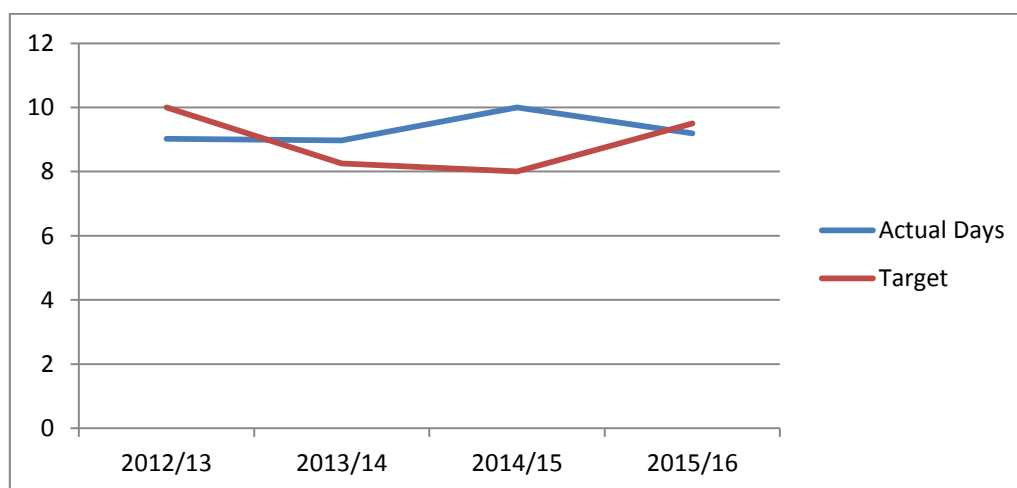
Implementation of Gateshead Council's new system won the *New Customer Project Of the Year 2016* award at MHR's Annual Impact Awards ceremony on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

Entrants had to demonstrate to an independent panel of 5 expert judges from the HR and Payroll industry that their project had continually linked directly to their wider organisational objectives, had clearly contributed towards achieving those objectives and had a clear plan in place for future development.

### **Sickness Absence**

*CR01: Working days lost due to sickness*

During 2015/16, 9.19 days have been lost due to sickness. This is a slight improvement compared to the year-end figure last year of 10 days and exceeds the target of 9.5 days. The graph below shows the trend over the last few years of this indicator.



On the 29 February 2016, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a six month Review of Absence in the Council monitoring report. This report reveals that the level of sickness absence remains high, particularly due to stress/depression and mental ill health. It also details the actions taken in the last six months.

Since that report the Council's new HR & Payroll system (iTrent) is now operational which provides managers with direct access to absence management data and information to assist them in managing attendance.

Four 'Managing Stress and Wellbeing' courses have been delivered to 52 managers and work is also ongoing to implement the Workforce Plan to ensure that managers have the necessary skills and fully understand the requirements of the sickness absence management policy and procedure. Training will also be provided on managing capability and performance which are often interlinked with attendance issues.

Also, 'Mindfulness at Work' is a pilot course (4 x 1 hour sessions) to be run by Danny Halpin our lead counsellor. This is being offered to 20 employees on a first come first served basis and is starting on 17 June 2016. The course helps council employees to understand how our mind works and how to use our brains effectively and in a focussed way. It gives employees the tools to help them manage any stress symptoms more effectively in the workplace.

### **Workforce Plan**

The workforce plan is helping to ensure that the Council has the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. There is a focus on improving skills and behaviours through a number of activities including:

- Providing coaching opportunities to support leadership development
- Targeted project work to develop skills
- Developing a talent management and succession planning framework
- Producing a learning and development framework to support the development of Management and other employees across the Council.

Having the right workforce will be dependent on providing the appropriate reward packages that recognise the difficult financial climate and ensure fairness across the workforce and work is ongoing to review our approach to pay, reward and recognition and to ensure that employees understand the totality of their employment package.

Work has already been undertaken to:

- incorporate a grading structure from 1 April 2016 to implement the National Living Wage
- review the Council's terms and conditions with the aim of ensuring that our terms and conditions are modern, fair and appropriate
- expand the employee benefits available including the introduction of a new employee benefits scheme
- revise the achievement and development process and Competency Framework which is currently being consulted on.

### **Employee Engagement**

Promotion of employee wellbeing and engagement is an integral part of the Council's culture and the employee engagement programme has developed well over the course of the last year. The programme has been developed taken on board the learning from the employee survey, which has provided valuable insight into how employees view the Council and what support they need in their roles.

Almost 2,000 employees responded to the survey in May 2015 representing 39% of the workforce. There were some very positive messages that came out of the survey including customers always being a priority (84%), managers being approachable (86%) and the vast majority employees enjoying their job overall (75%).

#### *Areas for improvement*

There were a number of challenges highlighted through the survey particularly around stress affecting performance at work (31%) and the number of people who thought that generally communication wasn't good (42%). A large number of

employees also did not feel that they had opportunities to develop their careers at the Council (47%). As a consequence the engagement programme has been designed to build on some of the positive messages but crucially tackle the issues that have been raised by employees.

### **Team Talk Live**

Following the results of the employee survey and in an effort to improve communication within the Council, a series of Roadshows were held with the Chief Executive and with members of Leadership Team. These were opportunities for employees to discuss issues, look at what was working well and what could be improved.

The feedback was very positive from the sessions that took place across July and August 2015, with over 700 employees in attendance.

### **Monday Message**

The Chief Executive has been communicating with employees each Monday morning following suggestions from employees around improving communication. The feedback from employees has been positive and it has been a way of getting important information directly from the Chief Executive to employees. In addition to this a series of video blogs have also been developed to improve engagement.

### **Online suggestion scheme**

A mailbox has been set up so that employees are able to share their thoughts, ideas and suggestions. This helps to ensure that employees have a voice and supports a more engaged workforce.

### **Employee Wellbeing**

A number of activities have been implemented or are planned to improve wellbeing and engagement with the workforce including:

- Rolling out a Corporate Health and Safety training programme annually
- Developing and implementing a Stress Toolkit and delivering stress training
- Development of a network of employee health advocates

### **Health and Safety**

The Council's recent figures show that the total number of incidents have increased from 499 to 518

- Specified injuries down from 9 to 4 and were as a result of slips, trips and falls
- Non employees sent direct to hospital remained the same at 5
- Decrease in near miss reporting from 155 to 136 which includes 44 reports of verbal threatening behaviour abuse.

The top 2 causes of over 3 day incidents are handling, lifting and carrying and slips, trips and falls.

The specified injuries occurred in various locations at different times of the year so could not be linked to any trends. Detailed quarterly reports are given to groups on the recorded incidents to enable them to take relevant action to help reverse any trends, identify training needs etc. The action may include detailed site inspections to

ensure the correct mechanical aids are available and used correctly or a change in working is required.

### **Council Tax collection**

*CR03: Percentage of council tax collected which was due to be paid in that year*

The year-end performance as at 31 March 2016 was 95.6% which is an improvement compared to last year (95.4%) but misses the target set for this year of 96.5%. Although the target was not met in percentage terms, in cash terms the amount collected increased by £3.0m.

Payment by direct debit, which is the cheapest and most secure payment method for the council, continues to increase and 2015-16 saw record numbers of residents paying in this way (an increase of 2,500 now pay in this way).

### **Business Rates Collection (NNDR)**

The Council has a duty to collect and recover Business Rates (National Non-domestic Rates) from occupiers and owners of business premises. The year-end performance as at 31 March 2016 was 97.6%. This performance is 1% higher than the target of 96.6%.

This is an improvement on the performance at year end 31 March 2015 which was 96.2% which was just short of the 96.5% target set.

### **BACS Bureau Inspection**

The Council has operated a BACS Bureau since 2012. The BACS Bureau is used for transmitting direct credit payments on behalf of the academies and other organisations (including Northern Education Trust). The Council along with all organisations operating a BACS Bureau must undergo inspections on a triennial basis.

The Council has just undergone inspection and the results were as follows;

Bureau Organisation and Financial Information	Adequate
Physical Security	Excellent
Computer Operations	Adequate
Applications and System Support	Excellent
Bureau Processing and Operations	Excellent

The conclusion of the inspection was that the bureau currently meets the standard required to maintain its BAB accreditation.

### **Payment Card Industry Data Security Compliance**

The Council continues to see an increasing number of customers make credit and debit card payments either by the internet or telephone. In 2015/16, the value of these payments to the Council was in excess of £20m.

To ensure the security of customers' personal bank details the banking industry requires all organisations who take card payments to comply with the Payment Card Industry / Data Security Standard (PCI/DSS). A failure to comply with all aspects of



PCI/DSS can result in substantial fines and the removal of an organisation's banking approval to take card payments.

Gateshead Council first became fully compliant in March 2011. Our continued compliance is verified in two main ways:

- A self-assessment questionnaire and attestation of compliance is submitted annually and is validated by RBS Worldpay
- Gateshead Council is also required to supply a quarterly scan to GlobalPay to confirm there are no vulnerabilities in our PCI compliance.

The privacy of card payments is increasingly important to our customers. By annually complying with the PCI/DSS banking standard, the council demonstrates that when customers make card payments their personal details remain secure.

In February 2016 Gateshead Council successfully renewed compliance in accordance with the standard. The main areas that PCI/DSS covers are:

- Security of card payment taking facilities, for example chip and pin machines
- Security of all customer card details, with any payment receipts stored securely
- Security of internet access to ensure card data is not accessible to third parties
- Employee access to the card data is not accessible to third parties
- Employee access to card payment software is restricted to individual users by password encryption
- Ensuring employee access to take card payments is reviewed annually

## **Support for the democratic process**

### **Consultation**

Residents, partners and other stakeholders have been consulted on a range of issues throughout the year. The Council's Consultation portal has been used to deliver around 45 surveys over the last 12 months, which in total attracted over 3,882 responses.

This included 935 responses to the Residents survey in summer 2015 and 571 responses to the Council's Budget consultation in winter 2015, when the Council asked for local people's views on draft savings proposals for 2016-18.

Since October 2015, we have published notifications of local traffic schemes on the consultation portal. 20 schemes were published during the last 6 months of 2015/16. In addition to the consultations above, the consultation portal has been used to conduct research with employees. In 2015/16 there were 10 surveys that received 3,113 responses from employees.

### **Councillor Engagement and Development Framework**

A review has been completed that looked at the procedures, processes and protocols, which, taken together, are intended to guide councillors on how they undertake their duties, in particular relating to consultation, engagement, training and development.

Following completion of the review, an overarching Councillor Engagement and Development Framework has been produced which is intended to be used by councillors and officers as guidance and reference to ensure effective engagement, understanding of arrangements, roles and responsibilities.

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

### **Achieving More Together**

The Achieving More Together Programme has been under development since November 2015. It is a key underpinning programme within the Change Programme to deliver the council plan, and builds on a strong history and delivery platform of working with an asset based approach deployed in Gateshead over a number of years. It has a long term development focus, aimed at developing a shared responsibility with partners and local people to improve outcomes and lived experience.

On Monday and Tuesday 14/15 March development sessions were held with Cormac Russell, Managing Director of Nurture Development and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) facilitator. The sessions were designed to explain the ethos, approach and practice of ABCD and were aimed at different audiences and provided the opportunity to:

- Have a shared conversation about the principles and intentions of asset based approaches
- Develop an understanding of what we need to do differently to put the approach into practice
- Hear about what is happening in other areas
- Share experiences, concerns and dilemmas as we move into a greater shift of focus on community led approaches.

All sessions were well attended and the discussions are being used to inform the development of practical actions to take the work forward.

### **Resident consultation**

Viewpoint is the Council's citizen panel used to consult on proposed changes to Council services. This year, it has moved online which means that rather than sending out letters and paper questionnaires, members will be contacted by email and online surveys. Every few months the Council will email out a link to a short, thematic online survey on the Council's consultation portal. Discussion groups will still be held at the Civic Centre or other locations when appropriate.

Moving online has seen the panel grow and an added benefit of setting up Viewpoint Online is the ability to interact with panel members e.g. feedback from surveys can be emailed directly to those who participated.

## **Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience**

### **Volunteer Month**

June 2016 will be the fourth annual 'Volunteers Month' and there are four themes to provide some focus to the month:

Week 1 - Wednesday 1 June - Young People

Week 2 - Wednesday 8 June - Environmental – Tidy up activities – also focus on the Queen's birthday

Week 3 - Wednesday 15 June – Charities, Voluntary & Community Groups within Gateshead

Week 4 - Wednesday 22 June - focus on older people

Local voluntary organisations will be showcasing what they have on offer during the month which will be detailed on the [volunteer pages](#) of the council's website.

### **Capacity Building Fund**

A detailed update of the support provided to the Community and Voluntary Sector during 2015/16 is part of this OSC agenda.

During 2016/17, The Capacity Building Fund will support organisations to build their capability, capacity and sustainability as well as small grassroots community groups to help the Council achieve the following outcomes:

- Achievement of Council Plan
- Developing and mobilising volunteers
- Supporting building relationships within communities
- Supporting residents to build their communities and improve what is already there
- Increased capability, capacity and sustainability in the voluntary and community sector
- Maximising the opportunities of funding - including exploration of different funding models, leverage of other funding, and collaborations.
- Support health and wellbeing activities which improve healthy lifestyles and environments

Round 1 of funding for 2016/17 has just closed and applications are being assessed.

### **Resilience**

On 11 April 2016, the Corporate Resources OSC received an update on the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework 2015-2016. This provided detailed information on the actions taken for each of the four themed areas. It also provided the lessons learnt from the severe weather issues earlier this year.

## **Matters relating to the Council's relationship with Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council including the Gateshead Offer**

### **Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council**

Following a challenging year, Gateshead Voluntary Organisation Council (GVOC) took the difficult decision in March 2016 to close as a charity after many years as the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) for Gateshead.

Gateshead Council has enjoyed a long term partnership with GVOC since the charity's launch in 1981. The Council was one of its first funders and has greatly valued the range of infrastructure services provided over the years by GVOC to Gateshead's community groups and voluntary sector. The Council has worked closely with GVOC's Board to try to determine a sustainable funding model.

### **Council for Voluntary Services in Gateshead**

To ensure continuity of support for community organisations during 2016/2017, the Council invited Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to stabilise the sector's support, while the Council takes views and considers the options for support for future years and to help ensure the availability of independent representation of the sector is maintained.

Newcastle CVS will offer groups based in, or delivering services in Gateshead a range of support and development, a dedicated online presence for Gateshead's VCS is being established at [www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/gateshead](http://www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/gateshead) to promote information on the advice and support available plus the [OurGateshead](#) website will be administered on behalf of the Council. For the duration of the Agreement, Gateshead's community groups and organisations will also be able to access the free services available to NCVS members.

NCVS will have an office base in Gateshead town centre and the recruitment process has begun for two additional employees to provide advice and support for Gateshead organisations.

This service will run until the end of March 2017. Gateshead Council will be consulting with the voluntary and community sector, its partners and others about the support needed for the future.

## **Social inclusion, equalities and diversity**

### *CR 12: Population Growth*

The population of Gateshead was measured at 200,200 following the 2011 census. The population figure at mid year 2014 was 200,500 against a target of 200,625. This is an increase on the 2013 full year figure of 200,000.

*CR13: Aspire to have a workforce more reflective of the population of the borough is an equality objective consisting of two parts:*

### *CR13a: Increase the number of under 19s in the workforce*

At year end 2015/16, 0.82% of the total Council workforce were under 19 which exceeds the target of 0.35% and higher than last year's figure of 0.44%.

This is the last year that the data for this indicator is being collected and will be replaced next year with an indicator on apprenticeships in line with Central Government guidance.

*CR13b: Increase the number of job carved posts within the Council (for people with a disability)*

Year-end performance for 15/16 is 0.1% which exceeds the target and is an improvement on last year's performance of 0.07% (2014/15). This is the last year that data for this indicator will be collected.

### **Council's Equality Objectives**

To demonstrate the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, a review of the equality objectives has been conducted. The approach has been to review the analysis undertaken as part of the development of the Council Plan 2015-2020, including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Council's Workforce Strategy 2015-2020.

In March 2016, Cabinet and Council agreed that the new equalities objectives shown below are adopted for the next four years:

- To support vulnerable groups most at risk of poverty and deprivation
- Gateshead the place – to improve the range of housing across Gateshead for vulnerable groups
- To promote healthy and inclusive communities
- To increase levels of ambition and aspiration of vulnerable groups across Gateshead
- To develop the Council's workforce which recognises the diversity of the community it serves

These will be monitored via six monthly performance updates to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet, as part of the corporate performance management framework.

### **The Diversity Forum**

The Diversity Forum continued to meet throughout 2015/16 and has considered a number of different topics such as community cohesion, education and Gateshead volunteers month. In addition, partner organisations have engaged with the Forum to inform them of initiatives that would be of benefit to local communities e.g. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's Vulnerable Person's Strategy, Citizens Advice Gateshead's approach to tackling gender violence and abuse and Gateshead Older People's Assembly social prescribing initiatives.

### **Processing benefit claims**

Performance for the 2015/16 year end is 7.95 days which is an improvement on last year (8.54 days) and well within the target set of 12 days. Despite this improved performance, during 2015/16 the Benefits Section saw an increase in fraud and error work required by the government, which has increased workload generally, the introduction of Universal Credit in Gateshead, which is proving time consuming, and other legislative changes result in additional work and enquiries. These pressures are likely to continue for 2016/17.

## **The Council's arrangements for securing efficiency and money; and the development and operation of the Council's procurement strategy**

### **Change Programme**

Cabinet agreed to a major programme of Change at the meeting on 9th February 2016, to help the Authority ensure it continues to secure a balanced budget in the period up to 2021 whilst securing the right range of activities that residents need.

Given the unprecedented scale and pace of change required, a coordinated programme was determined to provide the best opportunity to review the right things at the right time and to minimise the effect on what residents need and expect as well as employment.

An update was provided to Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016 giving an update on the each of the four workstreams - People, Place, Ways of Working and Trade and Commercialisation - which are clearly focused on delivering the shared outcomes in the Council Plan.

An important facilitator for the Change Programme is Digital Gateshead, the purpose of which is to make it easy for people to access, benefit from and deliver Gateshead Council services via digital solutions. This will include making more information and services easily accessible online, and ensuring that all our services, residents, businesses and visitors can benefit from this, but also making sure councillors and employees have the right technology and skills, including mobile solutions.

Detailed project plans are being developed so that activity can be prioritised, understand what additional capacity we may need, and how we measure the benefits of the programme.

### **Gateshead Now**

The Council has introduced [Gateshead Now](#), a new initiative using email to encourage local people to get involved and to use more on-line services. It is having a positive impact on engaging local people, for example, an additional 450 people joined our Viewpoint online consultation panel and 350 people paid for garden waste collections as a direct result of the email - helping us deliver a good service and generate more income.

### **Gateshead Council Website**

The better connected report which was published in this financial year reported Gateshead's website as a 3 star website (out of a scale of 1-4 stars, 4 being best) and received above average ratings for all areas of the SOCITM assessment:

	<b>Council result</b>	<b>Councils of same type (avg score or % pass)</b>	<b>All councils (avg score or % pass)</b>
<b><i>Better connected overall</i></b> (stars 1-4)	<b>3 star</b>	2.7	2.4
Parking Pay parking fine	4 star	2.9	2.9
Libraries	3 star	2.3	2.1

Renew library book			
Rubbish and recycling Report missed bin	4 star	2.6	2.2
Leisure facilities Find out about keeping fit	4 star	2.4	2.6
Tools for accessing content Navigation, Search, A-Z	4 star	2.9	2.9
Mobile test Usability from mobile device	4 star	3.1	2.6
Accessibility test Access for people with disabilities	1	1.6	1.6

As can be seen by the table above, the website passed the criteria to be recognised as a mobile friendly website and was considered to be a responsive website.

In the year leading up to the publishing of the better connected report the Council’s website was visited 2,337,844 times. This equates to 26.22 web visits per household.

The 3 star rating for 2016 confirms the positive direction of travel over the past 4 better connected reports as highlighted in the chart below.

*Better connected recent performance*



The Council’s website received a Better Connected Award for Parking: Pay parking fine. The Socitm reviewer said the following about the parking fine process, “Really concise yet it seemed to have all the information I would need. Really easy to navigate to from all directions! This is a great example of how to keep it simple and faultless navigation”.

An area to continue to focus on will be digital exclusion. According to the Doteveryone digital exclusion heatmap on a scale of 1-9 (where higher figure indicates greater likelihood of exclusion) Gateshead scored an 8.

The Digital Gateshead Programme includes a workstream that is focused on Digital Inclusion and helping everyone to have the right access, skills and confidence to use and benefit from digital solutions. Opportunities to work with partners across all sectors to achieve digital inclusion will also be progressed.

Also, procurement is taking place on a digital platform that will then be implemented to enable more transactions to be carried out online via a digital service offer that is consistent with user expectations.

## NEXT STEPS

### Target Setting 2020

A revised list of strategic indicators has been identified to support the monitoring of progress in delivering the outcomes of the Council Plan and Vision 2030. This has involved both the identification of new indicators and the removal of others.

To ensure strategic indicators match the outcomes, reports to both overview and scrutiny committees and Cabinet will continue every 6 months on progress (with appropriate additional performance data included).

It has also been agreed to replace the gathering and reporting of five year rolling targets with strategic indicators categorised as either a "Tracker" or a "Target" indicator:

- *Target indicators* - targets are realistically able to be set for these indicators where improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the Council and its partners. An example would be the percentage of business rates collected. A fixed 2020 target will be set and progress towards this target will be reported;
- *Tracker indicators* – where performance will be tracked, benchmarked and reported but where a 2020 target will not necessarily be set but rather the longer term trend will be monitored, as the Council and partners are able only to partially influence the outcome - an example of the would be the *child poverty rate*.