

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

Monday, 5 March 2018

PRESENT: Councillor N Weatherley (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, B Clelland, J Graham, M Hood,
J Simpson and J Turnbull

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s): J Adams and M Brain

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): K Dodds, D Duggan, J McClurey, A Wheeler,
D Bradford and M Graham

CPL57 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED -

(i)The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 be agreed as a correct record subject to the following additions and amendments;

Minute CPL53 'OSC Review – The Council and Partner's Approach to Roads and Highways – Evidence Gathering' – paragraph 13 to include the wording:

"A presentation was delivered by Sergeant Matt Sykes in the absence of Supt George Marratty..."

Final sentence in paragraph 18 to be amended to read:

"It was further noted that on Shibdon Road where an issue was highlighted it is not possible to park a police van due to the road layout"

The following wording to be added to the final paragraph:

"Committee expressed concerns that Sergeant Sykes was not provided with sufficient information to answer the Committee's questions".

CPL58 OSC REVIEW - THE COUNCIL AND PARTNER'S APPROACH TO ROADS AND HIGHWAYS - INTERIM REPORT

The Committee received the interim report from the review into the Council and Northumbria Police's approach to roads and highways.

The previous evidence gathering sessions looked at a number of issues including; the overall approach to funding, traffic congestion, safety and parking enforcement

and speed strategy. It was noted that Supt Marratty had been unable to attend the last evidence gathering session; however he will be invited to attend a future meeting to answer Committee's questions.

A number of actions came out of the review, including a Seminar which will be arranged to look at funding and the issues of potholes and repairs across the Borough. In addition, a schedule for Councillors on parking enforcement is also being considered and would be piloted in the Chopwell ward. Consideration is also being given to whether casualty information held by insurance companies could be useful as a road safety tool. It was noted however that insurance companies are reluctant to release information although the information received from police data seems to be consistent and shows where issues are.

During the review Committee queried Council employees driving fleet vehicles and whether there is anything preventing phone related activities whilst driving. It was confirmed that every driver is issued with a handbook detailing their responsibilities in this regard. The Committee's comments with regards to 20 mph zones will be referenced within a revised speed strategy. Similarly the introduction of vehicle activated speed management signs will be addressed in the revised Speed Management Strategy document. In terms of the success of the camera enforcement strategy, information will be reported in the near future.

Following a request from Committee a freedom of information request has been made to the Magistrates Court to establish the number of convictions for speeding offences in Gateshead. It was also confirmed that, as a result of Committee's concerns, bus lane layouts would be reviewed prior to the introduction of an enforcement regime. It was noted that work is ongoing to publicise offences and convictions of those people found to physically or verbally abuse Civil Enforcement Officers.

The point was made that the presentation by Northumbria Police at the last meeting did not go far enough to answer the questions raised by the Committee as a more strategic overview of policies was required. Officers will liaise with Supt Marratty about attending a future meeting. It was also confirmed that officers are looking at the possibility of police attending annual ward transport meetings as well as attending to meet Councillors before council meetings.

It was agreed that the recommendations be amended slightly for the final report, in order to reflect the Committee's views. It was also agreed that the final paragraph in the report be amended to read;

"OSC expressed serious concerns that management of speeding traffic, particularly during the hours of darkness, was inadequate and needed to be improved and Committee felt that this remained an outstanding issue that needed to be explored further. It is suggested that this should await Cabinet approval of the aforementioned revision of the Council's Speed Management Strategy."

It was questioned whether air pollution from traffic congestion should be looked at further. It was confirmed that air quality will be part of a bigger discussion in next year's work programme.

Committee agreed that the final report could not be referred to Cabinet until Supt Marratty has been to speak to the Committee as answers are required before a proper response can be provided.

RESOLVED -

(i) That Committee noted the content of the report and agreed that the Council's approach to Roads and Highways is generally approved subject to the concerns outlined above.

(ii) That Committee ensure attendance of a Senior Police Officer at a future meeting of this Committee.

(iii) That Committee requested regular joint meetings between Councillors and Senior Police Officers be arranged to explore identified issues of mutual interest.

CPL59 PROGRESS UPDATE ON FUTURE DIRECTION OF LEISURE SERVICES

Committee received a progress report on the future direction of the management of Go Gateshead Sport and Leisure service.

It was noted that the vision for the service was agreed by Cabinet in 2015 and it was agreed that the Council continue to provide Leisure Services in order to deliver additional income. It was reported that the benefits of an in-house model would enable the Council to focus leisure on the achievement of broader priorities such as health, wellbeing and inequality.

It was noted that since 2015, facilities have been transferred in order to generate income. A number of key income areas have been developed to ensure self-sufficiency, for example; aquatics, ensuring increased income generation through swimming lessons, increasing memberships through family and junior memberships. A big key income area is 'Clip n Climb', this is unique to the area and generates £300,000 per year income, in addition investment has been made into a soft play centre in the same hall as the clip n climb facility.

It was acknowledged that workforce is the key to success, as well as ensuring the retention of customers they speak to customers on a daily basis, therefore ideas from the workforce are taken on board. There has been a focus on bringing in skills, for example through a marketing manager, a dedicated operations team, improved development and training and engagement. A pay and reward scheme has been implemented to incentivise staff through an employee of the month award. A market supplement of 15% has been provided for swimming teachers because this will further improve income generation.

The Market Development Manager has worked on the branding of 'Go Gateshead' to make it recognisable and more prominent on digital platforms. The website has seen the biggest change, this is scheduled to go live on Wednesday at 10am. The new website will not look like the Council's website and has been developed in line

with how people access information. The key function of the website will allow an online booking facility for Clip n Climb which will increase bookings, this will in time expand across the whole service.

It was reported that each Centre has a business plan so that employees can understand the targets. This engages employees and shows how they fit in and what can be expected from staff. Staff are also spoken to on a monthly basis so that they understand how their centre has performed.

It was confirmed that through developing the workforce will help increase the number of people through the doors, building blocks for this are in place.

It was reported that FMG have been commissioned to review the management options for Gateshead Stadium, the initial report will be fed back to Councillors in the near future. It was confirmed that 26 organisations were consulted during the review as well as user groups of the facility.

Committee felt it was beneficial to have a standalone website in terms of trading opportunities. It was questioned whether there are any staff incentives around the number of memberships per week. It was confirmed there is no incentives for memberships, although staff are continually engaged and incentives could be considered in the future.

It was questioned whether there is a breakdown of where visitors are from to establish whether there are any areas where people are not accessing the facilities. It was confirmed that to a degree this information is known, a health equity audit has started and it seems visitors to the facilities are from a widespread of the Borough. However, visits to Clip n Climb are not recorded and this is probably a more regional interest, also casual swimmers are not recorded either.

It was suggested that as Clip n Climb is a regional offer, more should be done to improve the look of the building on the outside, for example through branding, to make it more welcoming. It was confirmed that each centre now has branding on totems outside the buildings, there is scope for further external work to be done subject to planning.

The point was made that feedback as to why people do not attend the facilities is important. It was suggested that people possibly choose alternative facilities due to opening hours and cost. It was acknowledged that there are cheaper facilities, however they would not be able to offer the engagement with customers and support that is offered in the Council's facilities.

Committee felt that it would be a selling point to get the message to the public that profits are ploughed back into the facilities, whereas this would not happen with the private sector. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to show the ambition of the service so customers know they are adding to the future of the facility.

It was questioned whether investment would be made in better equipment and longer opening hours in order to be self-sufficient by 2022/23. It was confirmed that the facilities are continuously reviewed and work is ongoing towards what customers

want and being reactive to that. Investment into equipment continues with high-tech equipment in place in all Centres currently.

Committee requested that an update reported by brought back in six months.

RESOLVED -

(i) That Committee was satisfied with progress of the Go Gateshead Sport and Leisure service as outlined within the report and agreed to receive a progress report in six months.

CPL60 THE FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

An annual report was presented on the implementation of the duties and responsibilities of Gateshead Council as lead local flood authority.

It was noted that so far there have been no problems in terms of flooding due to the bad weather, although there are risks due to the ground being saturated.

RESOLVED -

(i) That Committee noted the statutory responsibilities of Gateshead Council for local FRM and the measures taken to comply with those duties.

(ii) That the Committee agreed to receive an annual progress report in March 2019.

CPL61 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report on the provisional annual work programme and agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes / additions to the programme.

It was noted that an annual update on the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Service and Beamish Museum has been added to the work programme for April 2018.

RESOLVED -

(i) Committee noted the provisional programme.

(ii) Committee 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.....