

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 31 October 2016 at 1.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Acting Chief Executive, Mike Barker

| Item | Business |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence |
| 2 | Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 3 - 8) |
| 3 | OSC Review - Impact of Gambling on the Borough - Evidence Gathering (Pages 9 - 20) Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment |
| 4 | Case Study - Street Cleanliness (Pages 21 - 36) Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment |

Contact: Karen Robson Email - karenrobson@gateshead.gov.uk, Tel: 0191 4332129,
Date: Thursday, 20 October 2016

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Monday, 12 September 2016

PRESENT: Councillor P Dillon (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, P Craig, D Davidson, S Dickie,
M Hood, H Hughes, K McCartney, J McClurey, J Turnbull
and A Wheeler

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): L Caffrey, K Dodds, D Duggan and J Graham

CPL8 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 20 June 2016 were approved as a correct record.

CPL9 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - CONSULTATION

The Committee considered a report that informed of the draft Flood Risk Management Strategy and the intended consultation for the document.

The Strategy is a statutory document that the Council is required to produce and keep up to date in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority for the area.

The Strategy was prepared in consultation with a number of bodies with an interest in flood risk, including other council services, the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water. An Advisory Group for councillors was also held to consider the Strategy.

The Committee were informed that there will be a consultation period of three months, primarily through the Council website and social media, the Council News and/or local press (where possible). Due to the strategic nature of the document, with only limited information, a more extensive public consultation exercise is not proposed. The Strategy will however be presented to the Gateshead Strategic Partnership, specifically the Economic, Environment and Culture Board.

It is proposed that following the consultation exercise the final Strategy will be put to Cabinet and Council for approval and that progress in implementing the Strategy will be reported to this OSC as part of the annual review of flooding issues.

RESOLVED - That the proposals for the consultation were noted

REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF GAMBLING ON THE BOROUGH - EVIDENCE GATHERING

The Committee undertook its first evidence gathering session for the review, the focus of which was to inform of the legal framework in place for the regulation of gambling and the types and number of premises licensed for gambling in the borough of Gateshead.

The following information was presented:

The Gambling Act 2005 – The Act came into force at the end of 2007 and established the Gambling Commission and local licensing authorities - The Gambling Commission sets the overall direction at a national level while local licensing authorities lead locally.

The Act places a legal duty on both the Commission and licensing authorities to aim to permit gambling and use their powers to moderate its impact on the licensing objectives rather than by starting out to prevent it altogether.

There are three licensing objectives which guide the way that the Gambling Commission and licensing authorities perform their functions and the way that gambling businesses carry on their activities:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

The Role and Responsibilities of Licensing Authorities – Licensing authorities are given wide ranging powers and regulatory functions in relation to gambling

The Statement of Licensing Policy – Licensing authorities are required to develop, consult on, and publish a statement for their licensing policy setting out the principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under the Gambling Act 2005. The Council's currently policy came into effect on 18 January 2016

The Licensing Framework – The Gambling Commission has responsibility for granting operation and personal licenses for commercial gambling operators and personnel working in the industry.

Licensing authorities have responsibility for licensing gambling premises within their area, and for authorising the temporary use of premises for gambling, for issuing permits for a range of gambling activity and machines registering small society lotteries.

Premises Licences – granted by licensing authorities to existing operating licence holders and may authorise the provision of facilities on:

- Casino premises (0 in Gateshead)
- Bingo premises (3 in Gateshead)
- Betting premises (42 in Gateshead)

- Adult gaming centres (11 in Gateshead)
- Family entertainment centres (1 in Gateshead)

Gaming machines in gambling premises and other premises – the legislation defines four categories of gaming machine (A, B, C and D) according to the maximum amount that can be paid for playing the machine and the maximum prize it can deliver and describes number and categories of machine that are permitted in each type of gambling premises.

Small Society Lotteries – society lotteries are promoted for the benefit of a non-commercial society. They do not require a licence but must be registered with the local authority in the area where the principal office of the society is located. Details of registration requirements and procedures should be available from the licensing department of the relevant local authority. There are currently 82 registered small society lotteries in Gateshead.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to explore links to safeguarding with the aim to help vulnerable people who may have an addiction to gambling.

The Committee highlighted the possible links to gambling as a result of increased advertising on television of various gambling premises / websites.

The Committee also raised concerns regarding the potential amount of money which goes out of the borough through the sale of national lottery tickets and scratch cards.

The Committee were informed that there is a well-established self-exclusion scheme within Gateshead that can help a person to overcome a gambling addiction.

The Committee suggested that it would be beneficial for a representative of the Gambling Commission to come along to a future evidence gathering session.

RESOLVED - That the comments of the Committee be noted.

CPL11 REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee were provided with an update report on the initiatives to reduce carbon emissions within the Council and Community and also an update on cost and carbon savings 2015/16.

Updates were provided on current schemes along with the issues and challenges for the future which include:

Issues and challenges for reducing Council emissions

- Energy efficiency works in schools continue to be offered, but take up by schools is challenging and availability of interest free loan financing is reducing particularly for academies
- 2016/17 will see further work on progressing connections of more Council buildings to the Town Centre District Energy scheme, in particular for Park Road, Shearlegs Road, Gateshead Leisure Centre, Central Library and

Prince Consort Road.

- The Council had allocated up to £11m to invest on solar PV on Council buildings, schools and Council homes. From January 2016, Feed in Tariffs were significantly reduced by Government, making the case for installing solar PV less viable. The Council are continuing to explore potential further solar PV installations, but installation costs need to reduce considerably before they become viable again.

Issues and challenges for reducing community emissions

- High-cost home energy efficiency measures, such as solid wall insulation, still remains a challenge to deliver
- The challenge going forward is seek more innovative ways to tackle the hard-to-heat property types – tower blocks, and solid wall housing – which still require gap-funding. Funding bids have been made to ERDF for tower block schemes, but these are yet to be confirmed, and still subject to developments regarding the UK's exit from the EU
- It remains challenging for the Council to require new developments to reach energy standards higher than building regulations

Opportunities

- 2016/17 will see the start of operation of the District Energy Scheme that will further reduce carbon emissions whilst providing cost savings to private, public and domestic customers
- The opportunity to deliver, and potentially expand, other energy schemes at Team Valley, Metrocentre and new battery storage technologies, to continue to reduce carbon emissions, save energy costs whilst generating income for the Council and attracting new businesses and sustainable housing to Gateshead, boosting economic and housing growth

Queries were raised regarding cavity wall insulation and whether any incentives were being offered by the Council. The Committee were informed that grant funding has now dropped to a level which is not viable and therefore the Council are currently unable to offer incentives to local residents. It was however noted that new methods for insulation, via internal works, that could be more viable are coming onto the market and could be explored.

The Committee made reference to the new street lighting and street lighting columns. The Committee were advised that illumination in some areas had been reduced to 50%. Councillors were informed that if they become aware of problems within their ward as a result of the reduced illumination, officers should be made aware of the problems so that lighting in a specific area can be reviewed.

RESOLVED -

- i) That the comments of the Committee be noted
- ii) That a further update report be presented to a future meeting

CPL12 REVIEW OF OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE RURAL GATESHEAD - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report that updated on the actions arising from the review of opportunities to promote rural Gateshead.

The Committee were reminded that the review examined the promotion of rural Gateshead as both a tourism and business location. The scope of the review was:

- **Business Growth** – to review services that supported economic growth in the rural areas examining the potential for new businesses based around key assets. It also reviewed the partnerships approach to rural economic growth and the potential for new business and visitor accommodation to help improve economic performance
- **Emerging Places** – to review the services that deliver enhanced visitor potential eg tourism activities, environmental sustainability and volunteering opportunities. It also explored better use of key assets for economic purposes such as the Angel of the North.

The Committee were informed on progress to date on each of the agreed recommendations/actions as follows:

Appointment of Cultural Tourism Project Manager – the appointment will deliver cultural tourism based initiatives in rural areas and has been funded through the re-designation of resources.

Land of Oak and Iron Landscape Partnership – now fully established working with Groundwork NE & Cumbria and progress has been made on a number of aspects of the project.

Angel of the North site – initial work has started to gather an information pack regarding the site by working with officers across the Council. Tenders for a feasibility study are to be sent to potential consultants in the new year.

Promoting rural Gateshead – further discussions have taken place with NGI with the aim of developing a marketing campaign to promote the rural area. The marketing campaign will be launched in Spring 2017.

Funding Opportunities – the Council has identified funding opportunities/timelines to support the development of rural assets and attract additional visitors.

Investment – work has continued with the private sector to maximise the investment in the tourism business infrastructure in Gateshead and support the development of affordable business space in rural areas.

It was suggested that promotion/advertisement via display monitors in public areas at the Civic Centre be explored. The Committee were informed that officers recognise the need to look at various methods of advertising including through partnerships such as with Nexus and enterprise hubs.

The Committee highlighted the need to ensure joined up working across services within the Council, in particular when work to support business start up/expansion has been provided.

RESOLVED - That the Committee is satisfied that sufficient progress has been achieved to date in the implementation of the view of opportunities to promote rural Gateshead

**TITLE OF REPORT: OSC Review – The impact of Gambling on the Borough
Evidence Gathering – Fixed Odds Betting Terminals
(FOBTs)**

REPORT OF: Strategic Director, Communities and Environment

SUMMARY

The Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed that it will carry out a review of the impact of gambling in Gateshead as part of the 2016/17 programme.

Background

The Committee agreed that the review will draw upon local and national evidence and will focus on:

- **Gambling in Gateshead** – the distribution, types and number of premises licensed for gambling and how this has changed over time; the types of gambling taking place in the borough
- **The legal framework for regulation of gambling and the role of the regulators** - the Gambling Act 2005 and the respective roles of the Gambling Commission and Gateshead Licensing Authority; the impact of other regulatory regimes on gambling activity
- **Local and national concerns about gambling** - evidence and observations from local and national regulators, operators, trade bodies, treatment providers, charities and public agencies
- **Developing research evidence on gambling related harm** - a review of recent developments and best practice and how it can be used in Gateshead to minimise gambling related harm.

The first evidence gathering session took place on 12 September 2016 and the Committee was provided with information explaining the legal framework which is in place for the regulation of gambling and advised on the extent of licensed gambling in the borough. The following issues were identified by the Committee:

- links to safeguarding with the aim to help vulnerable people who may have an addiction to gambling should be explored.
- promotion and advertising on television of various gambling premises / websites could be attributable to increased levels of gambling.
- the potential amount of money that goes out of the borough through the sale of national lottery tickets and scratch cards continues to be a concern.
- it would be beneficial for a representative of the Gambling Commission to attend a future evidence gathering session.

Purpose of this Session

This second evidence gathering session will focus on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) which have proved controversial since they were first introduced.

Fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) are electronic machines, sited in betting shops, which contain a variety of games, including roulette. Each machine accepts bets for amounts up to a pre-set maximum and pays out according to fixed odds on the simulated outcomes of games.

FOBTs are classed as B2 gaming machines under the Gambling Act 2005 and up to four machines can be sited on betting premises. The maximum stake on a single bet is £100 and the maximum prize is £500.

While concerns have been raised, the gambling industry maintains there is no evidence of a causal link between B2 gaming machines and problem gambling. It also claims that reducing the maximum stake to £2, as some critics are campaigning for, would put betting shops and jobs at risk.

The Responsible Gambling Strategy Board, a body advising the Gambling Commission, have expressed concern that correlations and associations between gaming machines and gambling-related harm are “poorly understood”.

In December 2014, the Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT), a charity working to minimise gambling related harm, published a set of research reports on category B machines which suggested that there were patterns of play that could be used to identify problem gambling, however an independent research oversight panel said that further studies would be needed before policies could be devised that targeted problem gamblers. The RGT has an ongoing research programme looking at gambling behaviour and strategies to minimise gambling-related harm.

In April 2015 the Gaming Machine (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 came into force. The Regulations require those wanting to stake over £50 on a B2 machine to load cash via staff interaction or to use account based play. The aim is to encourage greater player control and more conscious decision making.

The Government are considering an evaluation of the Regulations carried out in January 2016 before deciding on any further action on B2 gaming machines.

In April 2016 it announced that the RGT was commissioning a research project to study the cost of gambling-related harm to Government and subsequently commissioned the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR). The findings of the IPPR study will be presented at RGT’s annual Harm Minimisation conference on 7-8th December 2016.

More recently the Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) All Party Parliamentary Group has been created to provide a forum for discussion and further investigation into the impact of FOBTs in our communities. In a series of hearings, the inquiry will be taking oral evidence from the range of stakeholders in the FOBT debate from gambling addiction experts and FOBT users, to regulators, bookmaker Chief

Executives and their representatives. The Group will publish its findings in early 2017.

1. What are fixed odds betting terminals?

- 1.1 Fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) are electronic machines, sited in betting shops, on which customers can play a variety of games, including roulette. Each machine accepts bets for amounts up to a pre-set maximum and pays out according to fixed odds on the simulated outcomes of games.
- 1.2 FOBTs were introduced into betting shops in 1999, with a small number of high margin games available. Changes to the taxation of gambling (ie the introduction of a gross tax on profits) came into effect in October 2001 and allowed the betting industry to introduce new lower margin products, such as roulette, to FOBTs. This led to the “increasing installation” of FOBTs in betting shops. By April 2005, an estimated 20,000 terminals were in use.
- 1.3 The Gambling Act 2005 classified FOBTs as B2 gaming machines. By the time the 2005 Act came into force in September 2007, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee said there were roughly 30,000 FOBTs in place.
- 1.4 An operating licence (issued by the Gambling Commission), together with a betting premises licence (issued by the licensing authority), allows for up to four B2 machines to be sited on betting premises. The maximum stake on a single bet on a B2 machine is £100; the maximum prize is £500. As there are currently 42 licensed betting premises in Gateshead there are potentially 168 FOBTs in Gateshead.

2. Why are FOBTs controversial?

- 2.1 FOBTs have proved controversial since they were first introduced. Critics point out that it is possible to lose large amounts of money playing on the machines. They also claim the machines have strong “reinforcing features” and a causal role in problem gambling. The Campaign for Fairer Gambling (CFG) is running a “Stop the FOBTs” and wants the maximum stake reduced to £2.
The Association of British Bookmakers (ABB) claims there is no evidence of a causal link between B2s and problem gambling. The evidence on the exact causal role (if any) of B2 machines in problem gambling is inconclusive and so the controversy continues.
- 2.2 The Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB, an independent body advising the Gambling Commission) has said that there is a complex relationship between gaming machines, gambling and problem gambling and that the “correlations and associations” between gaming machines and gambling-related harm are “poorly understood”. However, after looking at data from the British Gambling Prevalence Survey 2010, the RGSB did acknowledge that there was “a growing group of gamblers participating in

machines in bookmakers who might be more at risk of problem gambling given that age, gender and income are all correlated with problem gambling”.

- 2.3 The RGSB also noted the “regulatory dilemma” of balancing the enjoyment of the majority who gamble without experiencing harm with the protection of a minority who are at risk.
- 2.4 In December 2014 the Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT, a national charity working to minimise gambling-related harm) published research into gaming machines in betting shops. The research was commissioned by the RGT to distinguish between harmful and non-harmful machine play and to understand measures that might help those at risk.
- 2.5 The legal status of FOBTs was initially controversial. Under the legislation in place at the time of their introduction, FOBTs were not classed as gaming machines and so there were no limits on where they could be placed and in what numbers. Concern was raised as early as 2003 about the “increasing installation” of FOBTs in licensed betting offices and the risk to problem gambling this presented. A code of practice agreed in November 2003 meant that:
 - licensed betting offices could operate no more than 4 machines in total (whether conventional gaming machines or FOBTs, or a mix of the two)
 - the maximum prize on FOBTs would be £500 and the maximum stake £100
 - no casino games other than roulette would be allowed on FOBTs
 - the speed of play on FOBTs would be restricted
- 2.6 When the Joint Committee was examining the Draft Gambling Bill in 2003/04 concerns were raised about the impact on problem gambling of FOBTs by GamCare (the charity that runs the national helpline for problem gamblers) and Gordon House (a charity providing support and treatment to addicted gamblers).

3. The Gambling Act and B2 machines

- 3.1. Following considerations of the concerns raised during the examination of the Draft Gambling Bill FOBTs were classified as B2 gaming machines under the Gambling Act 2005.
- 3.2 The 2005 Act regulates gambling in Great Britain. The Act introduced, among other things, a new framework for gaming machines, including new categories of machine, and powers to prescribe maximum limits for stakes and prizes, as well as the number of machines permitted in different types of premises. Under the Act, gaming machines are categorised as A, B, C, or D. An operating licence (issued by the Gambling Commission), together with a

betting premises licence (issued by the licensing authority), allows for up to four B2 machines to be sited on betting premises.

- 3.3 The maximum stake on a single bet on a B2 machine is £100, the maximum prize is £500.
- 3.4 In January 2012, Richard Caborn, the Minister at the time of the Gambling Bill said to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee:

“... Whether we got it right on allowing four—whether it should have been three or four—I do not know, but that was the discussion at the time. That arrangement was negotiated between the officials and the betting industry and it held, in my view, right up to the Act, then it was confirmed in the Act itself.

- 3.5 Tessa Jowell told the Committee that she had said during the passage of the 2005 Act that FOBTs were “on probation”. She was concerned about unintended consequences relating to the machines; about the gambling industry becoming “overly dependent” on growth driven by the machines; and about their role in problem gambling. On deciding on the number of machines to be permitted in each betting shop, Ms Jowell said:

...at the time that four was settled on as the number, there was no certainty that these machines would remain, because we were absolutely clear that we could not know at that stage that their effect was likely to be.

- 3.6 In a January 2016 letter to the Times, Baroness Jowell called for the Government and Gambling Commission to take action over B2 machines. She also said that local authorities should be able to restrict planning consent for new betting shops.

4. The concerns

- 4.1 Much of the ongoing controversy concerns the role, if any, of B2 machines in problem gambling. Some of the relevant issues highlighted by participants in the debate are set out below.

4.2 Gambling Commission study (December 2008)

In December 2008, the Gambling Commission published the results of desk research that focused on:

- the causal links (if any) between the availability of high-stake, high prize gaming machines and the development of problem gambling
- the attraction of these machines to existing problem gamblers
- the exacerbation of gambling problems from access to such machines

The report found there was “relatively little relevant evidence from studies carried out in adult gamblers in Great Britain” but also said that much research in other jurisdictions suggests that there are associations between

machines and problem gambling and that evidence suggests that while gaming machines appear to appeal to many gamblers, they seem to be particularly attractive to those at risk of problem gambling and to those with a gambling problem.

4.3 Culture, Media and Sport Committee report (July 2012)

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee looked at gaming machines and problem gambling in its July 2012 report on the Gambling Act 2005. The report said the allocation of gaming machines under the Act was “complex and was not made on the basis of solid evidence about the risk of problem gambling”. It noted the controversy over B2 machines, citing some of the differing evidence it had received on their role in problem gambling.

The Committee recommended that research should be commissioned by the Gambling Commission to assess whether there were any links between speed of play, stake and prize levels, the accessibility and numbers of gaming machines, and problem gambling.

4.4 Association of British Bookmakers' position

The ABB's position is set out in its April 2013 submission to the DCMS triennial review of maximum stake and prize limits. This claims there “is no evidence of a causal link between problem gambling and electronic gaming”: It also claims that the average amount spent by customers on a B2 gaming machine is around £11 per machine per hour and 74% of B2 players play once a month or less which is hardly reflective of an addictive product, there is no evidence of a causal link between gaming machines and higher levels of problem gambling and the percentage of identified problem gamblers playing on B2 machines actually went down by 20-25% from 2007 to 2010.

It pointed out that research commissioned by the Responsible Gambling Fund in 2011 found that there was a distinct lack of clear evidence linking electronic machines to problem gambling.

The ABB paper refers to the economic and social benefits of licensed betting offices. It claims that a reduction to £2 of the maximum stake on B2 machines would put 90% of betting shops and nearly 40,000 jobs at risk and result in the Treasury losing nearly £650 million in tax.

An April 2014 report by Landman Economics challenged the ABB's April 2013 paper claiming that “overall there is reasonably strong evidence of a link between FOBTs and problem gambling based on a wide range of previous research from academic studies”.

4.5 Stop the FOBTs campaign

The Campaign for Fairer Gambling (CFG) have commissioned a number of research reports and is running a ‘Stop the FOBTs’ campaign. The CFG states it is not anti-gambling but wants “strong action” taken against B2 machines, claiming that the average regular B2 gambler loses nearly £2,000 per year while bookmakers win over £0.6 billion per year from “addicts”.

According to the CFG, when compared to other gambling activities, FOBTs have:

- the joint highest ratio of use by 16 to 24-year old gamblers
- the highest ratio of use by the lowest income quintile gamblers
- the second highest ratio of use by unemployed gamblers
- the third highest ratio of at-risk “high-time and high-spend” gamblers

The CFG recommends:

- reducing the number of machines from four per shop to one
- reducing the current maximum stake from £100 to £2
- removing table game content from FOBTs (because the pace of these games is faster than in real casinos)
- reducing the spin frequency, by increasing the current delay of 20 seconds between wagering to 60 seconds

4.6 The Triennial Review (2013)

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s consultation on proposed changes to gaming machine stakes and prizes (the “triennial review”) found there was “little material based on robust evidence received from those concerned about the social impact of B2 machines.” And stated that the Government’s preferred option was for B2 stake and prize limits to remain the same until “robust” evidence was gathered on their role in problem gambling.

The Gambling Commission set out its formal advice on the triennial review acknowledging that there was a “serious case” to answer in relation to B2s but said a precautionary reduction in stakes was “unsupported by the available evidence”.

The Gambling Commission’s letter drew on advice from the RGSB which noted the “regulatory dilemma” of balancing the enjoyment of the majority who gamble without experiencing harm with the protection of a minority who are at risk.

According to the RGSB, the “right course” was to try and clarify the answers to all of the concerns being raised and that it was “incumbent on the industry to help bring some certainty to them”

In its October 2013 response to the triennial review, the Government recognised the potential for harm from playing B2 machines. It also acknowledged the “very significant public concern” about B2s and that gambling charities had indicated that a significant proportion of people reporting to them had problems with playing the machines.

However there would be no change to the maximum stake of £100. While it was clear that reducing stakes on B2 machines would have an adverse

economic impact on the betting industry, the Government said it was not clear how great an impact a reduction would have on gambling related harm.

The Government acknowledged that there was a “serious case to answer” about the potential harm caused by B2s and that their future was unresolved. It noted that the RGSB had identified “significant knowledge gaps” and that the “current lack of transparency around the impact of B2 gaming machines is something that the industry must address.”

Following the triennial review, the Categories of Gaming Machine (Amendment) Regulations 2014 were approved on 4 December 2013 and made no change to the maximum stake on B2 machines.

5.0 Government action

5.1 Gambling Protections and Controls (DCMS April 2014)

Although the then Government said that it would be waiting for the results of the RGT research programme before making any decision on the future of B2 machines the DCMS published a document in April 2014 looking at planning and advertising issues as well as gaming machines.

The document said that the Government was adopting a precautionary approach to high stake gaming machines on the high street and that customers wanting to access higher stakes (over £50) would be required to use account-based play or load cash over the counter.

5.2 Gaming Machines (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015

The Gaming Machine (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 came into force from 6 April 2015 in order that customers would benefit from “improved interaction and more conscious decision making”

The Regulations mean that a customer cannot pay more than £50 for a single play on a B2 machine unless the customer has verified their ID, that payments to be used to stake in excess of £50 are made as a result of a face to face interaction between the customer and staff, and that customers are permitted to stake in excess of £50 by applying a money prize won on the B2 machine.

This account-based play gives players access to up-to-date and accurate data in the form of activity statements and real time information about their session of play. This can reduce biased or irrational gambling-related decisions, and help people to maintain control.

Making staff interaction a compulsory component of high staking machine play ensures greater opportunities for intervention where patterns of behaviour indicate that someone may be at risk of harm from their gambling.

5.3 Evaluation of the Regulations (January 2016)

In January 2016, the DCMS published an evaluation of the Gaming Machine (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

On player control, the evaluation found that despite marketing campaigns, there had been a relatively low uptake of verified accounts and over the counter authorisation of stakes over £50 appeared to happen in a very low percentage of sessions.

The evidence showed a large number of players opted to stake below £50 and increase the duration of their session in response to the Regulations.

There had been changes in the amount bet in stakes and at what range.

In response to a number of parliamentary questions on B2 machines, the Government has said that the evaluation of the 2015 Regulations “indicates that a large proportion of players of FOBTs may now be making a more conscious choice to control their playing behaviour and their stake level. We will now consider the findings of the evaluation before deciding if there is a need for further action”.

6. Betting industry initiatives

6.1 Association of British Bookmakers (ABB) code of practice

An ABB Code for responsible gambling and player protection in licensing betting offices was published in September 2013. A number of measures relating to gaming machines came into operation from 1 March 2014 including suspensions in play if voluntary time and money limits are reached; mandatory alerts that tell players when they have been playing for 30 minutes or when £250 has been spent; training staff to recognise the opportunity to interact with customers repeatedly loading money; and no longer siting cash machines that can be used from within a betting shop.

Additional measures were introduced in November 2014 requiring gaming machine customers to make a choice as to whether they wish to set a time and/or money limit.

An evaluation of the early impact of the Code was published in December 2015. This used transactional data recorded by machines for registered loyalty card users so that potential differences in previous gambling history could be taken into account.

The evaluation explored the impact of the Code on the length of time spent gambling on machines during a session of play; the amount of money gambled on machines during the session; the proportion of machine gambling sessions which lasted 30 minutes or more; and the proportion of machine gambling sessions in which individuals inserted £250 or more into the machine.

The evaluation did not find any statistical evidence that the Code had an impact on the four outcomes. However it said that it would be “premature” to draw any conclusions about the Code’s effectiveness.

6.2 Senet Group

The Senet Group, founded by William Hill, Ladbrokes, Coral and Paddy Power, was launched in September 2014. Membership is open to any gambling operator. The Group's members have committed to adhere to industry codes of practice, including that of the ABB. They have also pledged not to advertise gaming machines in betting shop windows and to dedicate 20% of shop window advertising to responsible gambling messages.

The Group can "name and shame" operators who breach the above commitments as well as imposing fines. Gambling operators who repeatedly breach the code will not be able to use the Senet Group logo and could be expelled from the Group.

6.3 Self-exclusion schemes

It is a requirement of the Gambling Commission's licence conditions and codes of practice that gambling operators offer customers the opportunity to prevent themselves from gambling by "self-excluding". The minimum period of time is six months. Responsibility for continuing to self-exclude lies with the customer although gambling operators should do all they "reasonably can" to help.

6.4 Player awareness scheme

In December 2015, the ABB announced details of a new Player Awareness Scheme (PAS) which is a response to the RGT's ground-breaking December 2014 research that showed it was possible to distinguish between problem and non-problem gambling behaviour by players using gaming machines in licensed betting offices. All members of the ABB have signed up to the initiative, which is believed to be a world first in retail betting.

Systems analyse the behaviour of those playing on gaming machines when they are logged in to a customer account. Customer behaviour is then assessed against a range of markers of problem gambling and alerts (via text, email, or on-screen) can subsequently be sent to players. These include signposting to responsible gambling tools such as setting limits on machines or self-exclusion, and directing customers towards the National Gambling Helpline / gambleaware.co.uk or to speak to a member of staff

PAS encourages customers to think about how they are gambling. Continued problematic play may result in direct interaction from a member of staff. It will be independently evaluated during 2016 by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

7. **Current situation**

FOBTs remain controversial and continue to generate headlines and there is a lot of discussion going on across the country.

7.1 Newham Council

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (as amended) permits local authorities to make proposals to the Government for policy changes to facilitate the creation of sustainable communities.

In November 2014, Newham Council lodged a proposal with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), demanding that the Government reduce the maximum stake on B2 machines to £2. The proposal was supported by 93 councils - 31 from London and 62 others from around the country.

The Government rejected the proposal on 15 July 2015. In a letter to Newham Council, Marcus Jones, Minister for Local Government, said:

(...) the Government currently does not support calls set out in the submission for a reduction in stake size on B2 gaming machines. We are not convinced that local authorities have yet made the most of the powers that are already available to them under either planning or gambling law.

(...) In terms of gambling...it is perhaps an uncomfortable reality that every one of the betting shops that collectively have given rise to the concern at the heart of the submission relies on a premises licence granted by the local authority itself. While local authorities are bound by law to aim to permit gambling insofar as reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives...the licensing process gives authorities considerable scope to attach additional conditions to licences where that is necessary to achieve the licensing objectives; to review licences once they have been granted; and power to impose licence conditions after review.

7.2 Lords Private Members' Bill

On 3 June 2015 Lord Clement-Jones (Liberal Democrat) introduced a Private Members' Bill, the Gambling (Categorisation and Use of B2 Gaming Machines) Bill [HL] 2015-16.

The Bill would reduce the maximum individual charge for a single play on a B2 machine from £100 to £2. The Bill would allow for the maximum charge to be reviewed every three years and, if required, to be amended in line with inflation. The Second Reading debate took place on 11 March 2016. After debate, the motion was agreed to and the bill was committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

7.3 Ongoing research

The Responsible Gambling Trust has an ongoing research programme looking at gambling-related harm.

On 19 April 2016, the RGT announced that it was commissioning a research project to study the cost of gambling-related harm to Government. The invitation to tender gives further detail on the purpose of the project.

7.4 Fixed odds betting terminals All Party Parliamentary Group

This group has launched an inquiry *Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) – Assessing the Impact* and in a series of hearings, the inquiry will be taking oral evidence from the range of stakeholders in the FOBT debate from gambling addiction experts and FOBT users, to regulators, bookmaker Chief Executives and their representatives. The first session of its inquiry in Parliament took place on Wednesday 6 July 2016.

In the group's first evidence session, Parliamentarians heard from gamblers who have experienced at first hand, the problems which can be caused by Fixed Odds Betting Terminals. They also heard from the Campaign for Fairer Gambling who has been campaigning to get the maximum stake that can be wagered from £100 to £2.

The inquiry is running from now until the end of the year and the group will publish a report setting out its findings early in 2017.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee gives its views on the evidence presented.

TITLE OF REPORT: Case Study – Street Cleanliness

REPORT OF: Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities & Environment

Introduction

1. 'Street Cleanliness – Enforcement, Education and Community Involvement' has been identified as a key emerging issue for the Committee to review. This case study sets out the current services and approaches which enhance the cleanliness of the local environment and how they have had to change in recent years. It focusses on the work and relationships with the local community to tackle issues such as dog fouling and littering and examines the requirements for a step change improvement and development.

How we're doing things differently

2. In responding to budgetary pressures the main choices have been:
 - **To change the way we provide services** - by sharing service provision, improved joint working and also enlisting greater support from the community;
 - **To reduce the level of service we currently provide** - rationalisation of facilities, reductions in service frequencies;
 - **To stop providing services;**
 - **To increase the income our services generate** – introducing new charges and also further developing the trading of our current services.
3. Whilst responding to budgetary pressures by reducing or stopping services, there has been significant change in providing and operating Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance and Fleet Management (WS, GM & FM) and Communities & Environment services, many of which have had a positive outcome.

Community Initiatives & Engagement

4. Community environmental projects, initiatives and campaigns have been successfully progressed in a number of areas. A detailed update of each specific project can be found in Appendix 1.
5. In summarising progress and to help agree a way forward, the following strands have been identified as key to this theme:
 - Interaction with Customers and Communities
 - Emphasis on behaviour shift
 - Community working alongside Council to improve the environment
 - Access to funding from different sources that help the environment

Interaction with Customers and Communities

6. *What we currently do*

- Area Co-ordinators work/engage with local communities, partners and ward councillors within geographic areas across the borough
- Community Engagement Officers working with groups and organisations – some health and wellbeing focus as part of a wider remit
- Commenced a 1 year Waste Behavioural Change programme in April 2016 to improve residents' approach to recycling and waste storage
- Work with Ward Councillors as Champions – identifying ways of mitigating efficiencies
- Council funding administration (Local Community Fund (LCF) and Capacity Building Fund (CBF) some support offered for environmental projects)
- Volunteering – registration, signposting, insurance, risk assessment
- Over 23 groups including Friends of Groups, Crawcrook and Greenside Environment Group, Ryton Litter Action, Countryside Volunteers, adhoc project groups carrying out a range of environmental improvements
- Schools and groups' waste education initiatives
- Land of Oak and Iron consultation and ongoing engagement as part of the 2016 - 2020 programme
- Developing a Friends of Networking group to continue support to the groups and enable them to identify their needs
- Working with other organisations delivering activities within Gateshead

7. *What we could do*

- More strategic proactive approach – identification of key sites/groups to develop
- Consider appetite for/feasibility of community asset transfers
- Clarify and reinforce respective roles in going forward – practical/technical roles within Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance and Development/Volunteer Work, Asset/property responsibilities
- Greater publicity/promotion of volunteering opportunities and environmental initiatives (significant cost implications)
- Managed volunteer litter picking programme (staffing and resource implications)
- Extend the Behavioural Change programme (invest to save)
- Awareness sessions of the importance of keeping the environment clean including benefits and the impacts on the community within a community setting

Emphasis on behaviour shift

8. *What we currently do*

- Waste Behavioural Change programme
- Ad hoc communication campaigns and publicity re. responsible dog owners, fly tipping and environmental projects
- Environmental enforcement activity
- Support and work with volunteers

- Ward Councillors working within the local communities to encourage greater community responsibility
- Schools and groups' waste and environmental education
- Support and work with Friends of Groups and other voluntary and community groups within Gateshead

9. *What we could do*

- Take a more strategic approach to behaviour shift
- Engage all Ward Councillors about social responsibility and less emphasis on Council efficiencies
- Identification of key sites/areas for action/promotion
- Explore the benefit of bringing back neighbourhood charters/agreements in key hotspot areas or more socially mobile/capable neighbourhoods. Revisit the idea of Street Representatives and the community walkabout inspections
- Extend the Behavioural Change programme (invest to save)
- Greater publicity/promotion (significant cost implications)
- Development work with college students

Community working alongside Council to improve the environment

10. *What we currently do*

- Community Engagement Officers working with groups and organisations – health and wellbeing focus as part of a wider remit
- Waste Behavioural Change programme (1 year)
- Work with Ward Councillors as Champions – identifying ways of mitigating efficiencies
- Council funding administration (Local Community Fund (LCF) and Capacity Building Fund (CBF) - some support offered for environmental projects)
- Volunteering – supporting registration, signposting, insurance cover, risk assessment of initiatives
- Over 23 groups engaged including Friends of Groups, Crawcrook and Greenside Environment Group, Ryton Litter Action, Countryside Volunteers, adhoc project groups
- Schools and groups' waste education
- Limited use/exploitation of Community Payback services
- Six volunteers have been recruited and trained for the Community Resilience Warden role
- Former Council Employees previously on the Emergency Response Team have also agreed to continue with their roles as Community Resilience Warden Volunteers
- Land of Oak and Iron initiative encourages community participation/involvement as part of the 2016-2020 programme
- Specific website development work to raise awareness

11. *What we could do*

- Take a more strategic proactive approach – identification of key sites/groups to develop
- Consider appetite for/feasibility of community asset transfers
- Clarify and reinforce respective roles going forward – practical/technical roles with Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance and Development/Volunteer Work, Asset/property responsibilities
- Greater publicity/promotion
- More effective/programmed use of Community Payback services – key projects throughout the year and early engagement/agreement of key services
- Further strengthen response arrangements in all communities by seeking additional volunteers to be Volunteer Community Resilience Wardens
- Develop specific area community plans and projects including environmental seasonal themes throughout Gateshead that will enable communities to self-help themselves in emergencies
- Work with Community Organisations and Networks to use their local buildings and facilities in emergency situations as a place of shelter for affected residents and communities

Access to funding from different sources that help the environment

12. *What we currently do*

- Community Engagement Officers working with groups and organisations – health and wellbeing focus as part of a wider remit
- Work with Ward Councillors as Champions – identifying ways of mitigating efficiencies/use of Local Community and capacity building funding to build local capacity
- Council funding administration (Local Community Fund (LCF) and Capacity Building Fund (CBF) - some support offered for environmental projects)
- Volunteers' month fund
- Work closely with Groundwork North East & Cumbria on various projects, including Big Lottery and SITA/BIFFA Landfill Tax funded activities
- Support Big Local Gateshead and their development of their environment projects around parts of Bensham and Teams
- Friends of Groups, Crawcrook and Greenside Environment Group, Ryton Litter Action, etc. have previously accessed funding from the Council and other sources
- Land of Oak and Iron initiative – (£2.2Million Heritage Lottery Funded programme from 2016-2020 and proposed £1Million Heritage Centre to be built at Winlaton Mill.

13. *What we could do*

- Take a more strategic proactive approach to funding across the Council – greater leverage of external funds (consider need for match, land tenure and ongoing

maintenance/responsibilities), including the potential to re-establish External Funding Officers Group (EFOG) and its SharePoint site

- Research best practice examples of public open space management already in operation in England & Wales with a view to agreeing an approach to actively pursue
- Strategic identification of key sites/groups to develop – for example Chase Park, Saltwell Park approach
- Consider appetite for/feasibility of community asset transfers
- Clarify and reinforce respective roles going forward – practical/technical roles with Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance and Development/Volunteer Work, Asset/property responsibilities
- Greater publicity/promotion of volunteering opportunities and environmental initiatives

New Working Structures and Methods

14. Service teams have been re-aligned into a new structure including combined area working and zonal working for front line staff. These improvements have led to more efficient ways of delivering our services with reduced resources.
15. Annualised hours have been introduced to assist in meeting peak service demands during the growing season.
16. Fleet Management has been integrated into Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance to give greater synergy with the service main user and making our services more efficient.
17. The Environmental Enforcement Team has been relocated with Communities & Environment and reconfigured to ensure that the majority of its work is centred around areas and issues which create the greatest demand and impact on the environment. The team currently consists of 4 FTE officers enforcing planning, highways and environmental legislation (i.e. not full time on environmental enforcement) - one other officer is currently on secondment to Development Management assisting with the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
18. Given the reduction in the number of Dog Wardens to 1 FTE, efforts are now concentrated on reducing stray dogs and responding rapidly to ensure their collection and removal from the streets. This has had a positive impact in many respects and especially in terms of reduced fouling and scavenged litter. The Dog Warden also takes a positive and encouraging approach and provides dog waste bags and advice and guidance to dog owners. The Dog Warden continues to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for those failing to clear up after their pet but it should be recognised that there are difficulties and challenges in identifying and witnessing incidents across such a wide area of the borough.
19. An improved more robust herbicide application contract and monitoring regime has seen significant improvements. In house cost effective arrangements for the control

of invasive weeds have been put in place to protect building and infrastructure therefore reducing potential future costs. This improves the appearance of the area.

20. The number of depots has been significantly reduced where operationally effective. This has reduced the cost of maintaining the facilities and improved management of equipment, resources and staff.
21. Training requirements from annual appraisals are collated and prioritised in a combined training plan for the service. This ensures a coordinated approach to training, ensuring resources are allocated where most needed for the service.
22. There has been additional training for staff to ensure the most effective and safe operation of vehicles and machinery, reducing the risk of accidents and associated costs.
23. We are working closely with colleagues who manage leisure facilities to ensure resources are allocated in a way that meets the needs of users, keeps centres clean and further helps generate income for the council.
24. An improved budget management structure and frequent involvement in budget monitoring by staff ensures more effective use of funding and budget management.
25. There is a strengthened staff culture to ensure that we achieve as much as possible and as effectively as possible with the resources we currently have and also to constantly challenge why and how things are done to seek better outcomes.
26. There is improved openness, communication and face to face discussions with front line staff to seek views and ideas on how the services can be improved.
27. Overtime work and standby arrangements have been significantly reduced to further reduce the cost of the services. A new protocol was established with Carecall to filter and control out of hours service requests to ensure they are dealt with appropriately and more cost effectively.
28. Three Behavioural Change Officers have been employed for a year on an 'invest to save' basis to help promote the recycling service and other key recycling services. This will help the Council achieve its recycling target within Vision 2030 as well as helping achieve savings from diverting residual waste from more expensive disposal routes. It also has positive spin off effect in terms of improving our residents' approach to waste storage and reducing littering.

Improved Joint Working Arrangements

29. The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) and Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance & Fleet Management (WS, GM & FM) work towards a Service Agreement which is reviewed and updated annually and reported to TGHC's Customer & Communities Committee. The Service Agreement establishes the level of service provided in neighbourhood estates and provides a framework for TGHC to help influence, specify and monitor the quality of environmental services provided

by WS,GM & FM. Tenants are involved in the monitoring of standards across each neighbourhood

30. Officers of TGHC and WS, GM & FM are working closer together on a number of key work streams to help tackle neighbourhood issues jointly. Work is being prioritised around tree work requests, the garden maintenance scheme and fly-tipping and verminous properties. Work streams have also been identified to improve joint working around special works requests and bordered open space grass cutting. The aim of the work streams is to improve understanding and communication to ensure limited resources are targeted where most needed.
31. We continue to work closely with crime and anti-social behaviour reduction partners through the joint 'Tasking' working group to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour related litter, graffiti etc.

Review of street cleansing routes

32. In response to a budget saving to reduce mechanical sweepers from 9 machines to 6, the sweeping routes were revised to ensure the remaining resource is targeted as effectively as possible.
33. New larger enclosed litter bins have replaced smaller open topped units which were more prone to misuse, overfilling, wind and vermin scavenged litter.
34. A new contract for mechanical sweepers is currently being tendered. As part of the process, different vehicles have been trialled to ensure the most effective vehicle types and configuration are procured.

New Housing Developments

35. Work continues with Development Management to ensure landscape proposals for new housing developments include sustainable and low maintenance planting. A new developer options framework has been implemented to reduce or eliminate the maintenance burden on the council from new developments.

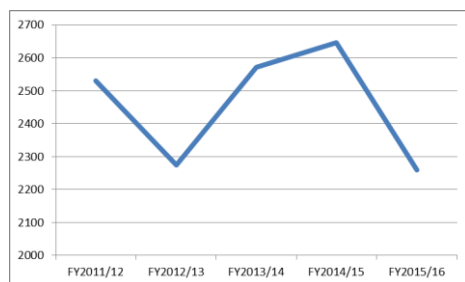
Trading our Services

36. Work continues on promoting our services to the commercial sector or public to generate income and offset the cost of the service e.g. providing cleansing services for events or private car parks, roundabout sponsorship etc. This helps reduce the pressure on our budgets and therefore supports the continuation of frontline services in the neighbourhoods.

Communications and Managing Customer Expectations

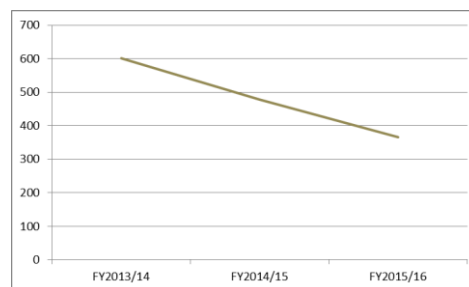
37. Funding for cleansing services has been significantly reduced over the last few years but much work has been undertaken to stabilise, and to some extent, improve services using the resources remaining. Management of customer requests, complaints and expectation has been a key aspect of this work.

Cleansing Requests/Complaints



(Source: Lagan)

Dog Fouling Requests/Complaints



38. We continue to use of a number of standard letters and website and media messages to respond to the more common complaint types which ensures that a consistent formal response which reduces the likelihood for repeat and escalated complaints.
39. We have significantly increased use of social media such as Facebook to help update our residents and explain changes and adverse effects on services. We continue to use Council News, internal publications, Team Briefings and the media to help get messages across to our residents and visitors.
40. Site meetings have been undertaken with residents and groups to explain service changes particularly in response to budget savings. We have made improvements to service requests management systems to help avoid complaints developing. We achieved Customer Service Excellence for our services and continue to maintain ISO 9001 & 14001 quality accreditation.
41. We continue to work with our Customer Services Unit on a routine basis and provide updates as soon as we aware of service problems which can be provided to the public and prevent complaint. We work closely with Ward Members to explain proposed changes in services or issues and also The Gateshead Housing Company which helps deliver messages to our tenants.

Challenges for the Services

42. There is a lot of good work being carried out by volunteers across the borough to enhance the local environment and provision of environmental services. It should be recognised that this support does not come without a cost, and to date the staff resource available across the Council has been used to support the emerging growth of interested groups and initiatives. *However, to really make a step change and expand our volunteering offer further, a more targeted strategic approach is required with new structures and resources assigned accordingly.* This will enable groups and community leads to be actively sought out and supported and developed to ensure we obtain the greatest benefit from our community engagement initiatives.
43. *Greater publicity of opportunities, initiatives and to propagate the belief that volunteering is a mainstream activity will be required.* The cost and implications on the communications team will need to be considered although the use of social media and websites offer great opportunities (and risk) for wider, lower cost engagement.

44. There will be a need to maintain an environmental enforcement presence to effect behavioural change where education and awareness is not enough. *The challenge will be to identify sufficient resource to ensure a credible and effective enforcement deterrent.*
45. It is clear that the significant reduction in budget for street cleansing and grounds maintenance has had a very visible and detrimental impact on these front line services. Whilst there are many examples of how the service has responded to try and bridge the gap, it should be recognised that *services remain vulnerable to increased demands* due to customer expectation, inclement weather or further reductions in resources.
46. There is a need to continue to review and improve our services to ensure we maintain the best visual appearance that we can. *However there is a limit to the benefits that continued changes can bring and any future reduction in resources and budgets will inevitably have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the borough's streets and open spaces.*

Recommendation

47. Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the summary comments in 'Challenges for the Services' above, and to discuss how these challenges may be overcome.

Contact: Colin Huntington

Extension: 7402

Litter picking campaigns

This project is similar to the National Spring Clean event, but with a number of events held all year round:

- Volunteer Countryside Rangers are carrying out at least five litter picks every week, at least two of which are in the Derwent Valley, plus litter picks on each of the two practical task days per week.
- Volunteer Countryside Rangers also work with volunteers from Sustrans on the National Cycle Networks, holding regular volunteer days that include the placement of bags in agreed locations that can be collected later by Waste Services & Grounds Maintenance.
- Working in partnership with Durham Wildlife Trust's 'Wildground' project, two lake clearance sessions have been carried out in Oliver Henderson Park. It is estimated that over three tonnes of material have been removed from the lake, including bicycles, scooters, fencing, tyres, and bottles. More days are planned.
- A litter pick was carried out by Saltwell Park User Groups (SPUG).
- The Crawcrook and Greenside Environment Group have held at least three 'big tidy-ups' and a number of individuals collect and bag rubbish on a weekly basis as part of an agreed collection arrangement.
- The Friends of Greengates Park have held three tidy-up days in the park.
- The 'Friends Of' group have held five large litter picks in Wardley park.
- The Friends of Windy Nook group supported Volunteer Countryside Rangers litter pick of Windy Nook nature reserve. They continue to remove litter on a weekly basis.
- A new group has been set-up to litter pick and carry out other improvements to Dodds Dene, near Chowdene.
- A group of Polish residents in Bensham borrowed tools from the Council to hold a one-off litter pick, with WS&GM collecting the bags after the event.
- The Jewish community carried out a litter pick in Saltwell Park, and further discussions with the Council about other similar exercises have taken place.
- Acting as a good neighbour, SITA UK staff carried out litter picking outside the Campground boundary, even though litter was not related to Campground Waste Transfer Station or Household Waste and Recycling Centre.
- Two new groups have started a weekly litter pick these are in Oliver Henderson Park and Chowdene.
- Working with Gateshead's School's Council an 'All School's' litter pick is planned for the month of June.
- Ryton Litter Action – local litter picking activities.
- Clean for the Queen promotion as part of the borough wide Volunteers' Day in June.

Community composting

This project was developed to run alongside the introduction of charges for household green waste collection. A programme of composting days was introduced which provides residents with an opportunity to dispose of garden waste in skips located at various points throughout Gateshead.

Three sites are available where skips are located and rotated on a three-weekly basis at Saltwell Park, Oliver Henderson Park and Barmoor, Ryton.

A member of staff is on site to supervise the skip but more importantly to provide information and encouragement on composting and other waste related issues.

Schools' education talks

This project targets education and awareness activities around waste issues, and key achievements include:

- The Campground Visitor and Education Centre was officially opened by Bob Moncur and included participation from local 'relationship school' Fell Dyke Primary School. Third sector environmental charity Groundwork North East and Cumbria are coordinating an extensive programme outreach work in local schools, in the community and at the Centre, which also includes visits to South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership's state-of-the-art Energy from Waste facility on Teesside. Since April 2014, the programme has engaged with over 7,200 local school children across the partnership area with almost 2,500 from Gateshead.
- The Clean Tyne Project is a partnership between North Tyneside, Newcastle, and Gateshead Councils, plus Port of Tyne, which is working with schools to raise awareness of the river and its environment, and includes a free-to-download Key Stage 1&2 education pack. We are in the process of writing a KS3 pack. A copy of which will be delivered to each secondary school in the three partner authorities and will be followed by a number of free sessions in to schools.
- Sessions have been delivered with Lingey House Primary School regarding wildlife-friendly food and litter in Oliver Henderson Park. This subsequently led to the children helping to design some interpretation around the lake about what to feed the birds and other wildlife that can be seen, and also make bird and bat boxes which will then be monitored by the school children as part of their project work.
- The Jewish Boys' School delivered a number of work days in the Saltwell Park that included litter picking.

Environmental Champion

This project designates resident volunteers that report problems and provide support with campaigns:

- Volunteers from the Crawcrook and Greenside Environmental Group are utilising armbands to ensure that they are more visible within the community, particularly around the dog fouling issue.

- In partnership with the RSPB, events are being delivered in Saltwell Park that promote the environment, nature, and wildlife. A new RSPB post is based in the park and have a target to engage with 5000 young people.
- A volunteer will be recruited to work alongside the RSPB in Saltwell Park to develop the wildlife garden and promote the environment with schools and other community groups.

Communications campaign

This project is aimed at ensuring that there regular articles on environmental issues and schemes are featured in Council News and on the Council's website. Successes include:

- A quarterly newsletter for Volunteer Countryside Rangers to brief them on site issues and project work. It also includes a diary of practical task days, training and other meetings.
- The Council utilises its Facebook account to, for example, publicise lost dogs, poor weather conditions, or changes to bin collections. The Friends of Chase Park, the Friends of Wardley Park, and the Friends of Greengates Park also all have active Facebook pages. The Volunteer Countryside Rangers use their Facebook page to show photos from task days, promote events and training days, and advertise their achievements. Crawcrook and Greenside Environment Group's Twitter feed – very effective self-managed comms route.
- In Greenside, every school child received a letter to take home to raise awareness about dog fouling and how the Council are working with the local Environment Group to tackle the issue. Leaflets have also been designed and distributed by group members.
- Working with The Gateshead Schools Council designing a poster / stickers for parks across the borough, to highlight a number of issues including litter, vandalism, dog fouling and graffiti. This forms part of the UNICEF Rights Respect Campaign that school children have been working on.



- The Friends of Chase Park group has undertaken three public consultation events to ask local residents how they think the park should be developed through Heritage

Lottery Funding. A new officer role will promote volunteering, events, and other community-led activities.

- Waste and recycling community engagement officers have been knocking on doors and giving advice on waste issues and the garden waste scheme and this scheme continues for 2016 with 3 Behavioural Change Officers.
- The Friends of Red Kites have received funding and are in the process of installing four new interpretation panels in Saltwell park, the Derwent Walk Country park, plus two others.
- The Friends of Oliver Henderson/Lingley House School have received funding from Tesco and the Council to work with an environmental artist/blacksmith to design and install new seating and sculpture. And working with WildGround new interpretation about wildfowl and feeding will be install around the lake.
- A day is planned to bring all of the environmental volunteers groups together. This will allow the groups to network, we will hold a number of workshops, where we can consult and inform groups and spread good practice. It is also a chance to thank everyone for their efforts and reinforce that even if they volunteer for a small amount of time that it is all import and adds to the wider community effort. The follow up will be a quarterly or bi-annual network meeting for the groups.

Local dog fouling campaign

This project is aimed at supporting locally designed anti-fouling campaigns, such as the pilot scheme led by the Crawcrook and Greenside Environment Group to highlight and combat dog fouling in their area. Utilising armbands to ensure that they are more visible within the community, the volunteers have used spray paint to highlight incidents of dog fouling and distributed promotional leaflets to encourage residents to be responsible pet-owners.

There has been interest in expanding this scheme to other areas of the Borough.

Flower planting/ flowerbed maintenance

This project encourages the maintenance of existing beds by community volunteers, such as:

- The Council is providing support to a range of small and local community groups to plant and maintain bedding. For example, as part of the bid for Heritage Lottery Funding, flower beds will be reinstated in Chase Park, with volunteers taking over their management following an initial officer-led role.
- The Friends of Ferndene Park carryout flower bed maintenance in the park and also grow plants that are used there. WildGround are working with the Friends of Ferndene to improve areas of the park including the dene and the alpine rockery. Other work is also planned and the group will also run a regular workday in the park.
- Local councillors are providing proactive support for bed maintenance for example in Rowlands Gill, Winlaton and Blaydon.
- Discussions have been held with the Jewish Boys' school regarding flowerbed maintenance at Saltwell Park's Rose Garden.

- Supported by Lingey House Primary School, a wildflower meadow has been created through the 'Wildground' project in Oliver Henderson Park. WildGround have expanded the wildflower planting and created a new area which has been sown with a wildflower mix.
- Working with the RSPB, volunteers have planted 300 trees in Saltwell Park.
- Thrive have developed a garden of reflection in Saltwell park. Thrive are looking for sponsorship to replant some of the floral bedding in Saltwell park.
- Voluntary groups planted World War I commemorative poppies. In Birtley, Partnership working with Wildground created a swathe of World War I poppies, mixed with a wildflower scheme to extend the flowering time and reduce the cutting regime.
- The new SuDS scheme that has been installed at Norwood nature reserve will allow new wildflower planting and plant more trees. This work will be carried by the Volunteer Countryside Rangers.
- Blaydon West Primary School – planted up WW1 commemorative garden beds adjacent to Blaydon Library
- Friends of Winlaton – Winlaton Garth planted shrub/flower beds

There are currently an estimated 480 Environmental volunteers active in Gateshead with approximately 60 Friends of groups operating within Gateshead. There is an average of over 6,000 volunteers active in general within Gateshead which equates to 8% of volunteers being designated to Environmental Activities.

Resilience wardens

The aim is that the Wardens will support the council to clear paths for elderly/vulnerable people in their community. 6 volunteers have been trained and the Safer Communities team plan to continue developing the programme, encouraging more volunteers to join the scheme.

Volunteers assist communities to harness local resources and expertise to help themselves and those less able to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the local authority and emergency services. This includes working with Site Incident Officers from the Emergency Response Team collecting evidence e.g. anecdotal and photographic including environment information to relay back to the Major Incident Room and provide on-site knowledge of their local area

Gateshead Capacity Building Fund

The Gateshead (Capacity Building) Fund supported 23 organisations during the periods 2014/15 and 2015/16, to help them deliver projects carrying out a variety of environmental work and improvements within Gateshead. This included:

- Provision of local gardening services
- Creation of community gardens
- Development of horticulture skills with young people at central nursery
- Creation of allotments
- Management of nature reserves

- Protection and upkeep of playing fields
- Maintenance and development of two community farms
- Support of local parks and gardens through Friends of groups
- Litter picks, garden tidies
- Greenkeeping, tree felling and crop spraying

The value of CBF support for this period was £118,255

This page is intentionally left blank