



CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 18 January 2016 at 10.00 am at the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Jane Robinson

Item	Business
1.	Apologies
2.	Minutes (Pages 1 - 4) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2015.
3.	Corporate Resources OSC Work Programme Review (Pages 5 - 8) Report of the Strategic Director Corporate Services and Governance
4.	Performance Monitoring: Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council Service Level Agreement (Pages 9 - 34) Report of the Strategic Director Communities and Environment
5.	The Council Plan - Six Month Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2015/2016 (Pages 35 - 48) Report of the Chief Executive and Strategic Director Corporate Services and Governance
6.	Gateshead Communities Together - Annual Update (Pages 49 - 60) Report of the Strategic Director Communities and Environment

Contact: Neil Porteous, Tel: (0191) 433 2149, Date: Friday, 8 January 2016

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CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 November 2015

PRESENT: Councillor J Eagle (Chair)

Councillors P Foy, T Graham, M Hall, J Hamilton,
M Brain, P Dillon, J Green, S Green, M Hood and M Ord.

CR22. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Beadle, Caffrey and Thompson.

CR23. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

CR24. CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT – ANNUAL REPORT ON DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE

The Committee received an update report on the progress made against the Council's Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Management Plan (CASMP) and the year on year performance of the property portfolio.

The CASMP sets the strategic direction for the use of the Council's land and buildings in support of its policy priorities. It provides the focus for efficient use of property assets to support service delivery and the strategic management of, and investment in, the Council's property portfolio.

The CASMP 2015-2020 has been aligned with the Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy, all of which were approved by the Council at its meeting in July.

The establishment of the role of Corporate Property Officer, along with the subsequent creation of the Corporate Asset Strategy Team continues to work well; and the ability to take a more strategic approach to the way the portfolio is managed overall has enabled the Council to deliver budgetary savings through the reduction of its operational portfolio by way of rationalisation and consolidation.

The report contained performance data in relation to asset and property management, including trends showing how Council property has performed between 2011 and 2015.

It was queried to what extent the occupancy of the Civic Centre can be increased. The Committee was informed that there is potential for the occupancy to increase, particularly as the number of employee posts reduces.

This approach can facilitate the closure of other buildings, or provide chargeable spaces for partner organisations to occupy.

In relation to queries concerning the former Marley Hill School site, the Committee was advised that the Council seeks to market and dispose of surplus property and land quickly but (in the case of Schools) the requirement to obtain approval from the Secretary of State delays the process.

It was said that the Dryden Centre occupies a large and valuable site and its usage was queried. It was noted that officers are looking to identify alternative accommodation for the current users, which at present, include the School Improvement Team and course providers.

It was requested that comparative information be provided showing the Council's Property Portfolio before 2010 and as it is now.

It was queried why the Council has funded The Sage Gateshead to operate from Gateshead Old Town Hall (GOTH) rather than declare the building surplus and sell it. The Committee was advised that occupation of GOTH by the North Music Trust was a 'meanwhile' use and that long-term plans for the building and its surroundings are under development.

More detail was sought on the successful awarding of £922,000 to the Friends of Chase Park by the Heritage Lottery Fund, in particular, the commitments made as part of the funding application (in respect of grounds maintenance).

RESOLVED - i) That the information be noted.
 ii) The Committee was satisfied with the level of progress made to date.

CR25. CASE STUDY – IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN GATESHEAD

The Committee received a presentation on the implementation of Universal Credit (UC). The presentation covered the main findings of the pilots in the North West and the progress made towards implementation in Gateshead.

Information was provided on the impact of UC on people and rent arrears along with details of action taken to mitigate the impact. The Committee then considered three separate case studies on individuals who are in receipt of UC.

Concerns were raised about sanctions, in particular the sanctioning of claimants who are on DWP training courses and the 55% success rate of appeals against decisions to sanction claimants, suggesting that sanctions are unfairly imposed.

The Committee also considered it difficult for claimants to improve their situation after having been sanctioned.

It was queried whether free school meals will be included in UC. It was reported that, at the present time, anyone entitled to UC will be entitled to free school meals but that no decision has yet been taken on the eligibility criteria once UC rolls out.

As the amount of UC paid to claimants will be based on whether they have dependents living with them (at the time of application), it was queried whether its rollout will make it more difficult to return children (who are in the care of the Council) to families.

It was agreed that a list of gateway conditions be circulated to the Committee for information.

There were concerns about the demand on Council resources to help those affected by UC, it was subsequently requested that the cost to the Council be measured.

It was noted that the Council's Partnership arrangement with the DWP secures a small amount of funding but this may cease in April 2016.

The cost of the 4 posts created by The Gateshead Housing Company to support the 87 claimants is approximately £100,000 p.a. It was noted that this measure also sought to reduce the impact of UC on the Housing Revenue Account. However, the Committee understood that when UC is fully implemented the projected number of claimants (26,000) will mean the use of the Council's resources to support those affected by UC will be unsustainable.

The Committee raised concerns about the likelihood of further administrative errors when UC is fully implemented.

After considering the information presented, the Committee had serious concerns about the rollout of UC and asked that this be recorded.

- RESOLVED - i) That the Minister for Work and Pensions be invited to attend the February 2016 meeting of the Committee, to consider the Council's experience of UC to date and the very serious issues that must be considered before the full rollout of the benefit.

Chair.....

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TITLE OF REPORT: Review of Annual Work Programme

**REPORT OF: Jane Robinson, Chief Executive
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services
and Governance**

Summary

The report updates and seeks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's views on the current position with regard to the annual work programme.

Background

1. At its meeting on 30 March 2015, the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme based on the Council's policy framework. This work programme was then agreed by the Council as part of the policy planning process.
2. In line with the process agreed by all OSCs this OSC selected its case studies using a process designed to help make linkages between potential topics and the Council's policy framework.

Proposals

OSC Review Topics for 2016/17

3. In advance of the OSC agreeing its review topic for 2016-17, members of the OSC have been invited to identify any issues which may potentially be appropriate for a detailed review by 18 December 2015. It is proposed that those issues put forward by members are added to the list of potential review topics for consideration by the OSC at the start of the municipal year, unless the issue is already being, or would more appropriately be, dealt with through other processes within the Council. Members will be notified if this is the case and advised as to how their issue is being dealt with.

Case Studies

4. Case studies have been included within OSC work programmes to provide an additional means of examining specific issues of concern or carrying out more detailed work on a particular topic.

5. The case study for 2015/16 is:
 - Implementation of Universal Credit in Gateshead (30 November 2015)
6. Each OSC has identified specific issues to be considered through the case study method and it was agreed that in view of the timing of case studies within the 2014-15 work programmes that feedback on their effectiveness be sought during its work programme review in 2015/16.
7. During 2014/15 the OSC considered the following case studies :-

Impact of Welfare Reform

The OSC focused on:-

- detailed case studies setting out the impact of welfare reform on Gateshead residents, businesses and the Council.
- details of the actions taken to mitigate the impact of the reforms.

Having examined the issues the OSC :

- Queried whether free school meals will be included within the Universal Credit payment and noted that it was reported that the rollout of Universal Credit was now forecast to be complete by 2018/19 and the inclusion of school meals had not yet been confirmed.
- Received information that when benefit rules are transgressed, this can result in the loss of benefit to claimants. The Committee was advised that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for imposing these sanctions and that the reasons for the imposition of sanctions is not shared with the Council.
- Requested that details in relation to the overall performance and use of the Social Fund be provided for a future meeting, along with case studies showing where tenancies have failed or where the Council has been unable to support residents.
- Requested and agreed that a special meeting of the Corporate Resources OSC be convened (mid- March 2015) to consider and scrutinise DWP sanctions, equalities issues and performance targets. The Committee agreed to invite a representative from DWP to attend the special meeting.

The OSC was satisfied with the actions taken to mitigate the impact of welfare reform on Gateshead residents. The Committee has since received a further monitoring report and hosted a special meeting on DWP Sanctions, equalities issues and performance targets.

Fit for Future and Chanel Shift

The OSC focused on:-

The progress being made in relation to Channel Shift and Agile working within the Council's Transformation programme including:-

- information detailing the current customer contact analysis and activity in relation to face to face contact, telephony and website development.
- the benefits of agile working and the opportunities being explored as part of a wider programme of Agile and new ways of working
- the opportunities / benefits of channel shift which included:
 - Opportunities to unlock cost savings through self-service,
 - Lower cost of transactions carried out online,
 - Meeting customer demand and expectation and;
 - Reducing avoidable contact.
- the benefits to users of the GOV.UK website.

Having examined the issues the OSC :-

- Acknowledged the potential security issues but raised concerns about the frequency by which passwords need to be changed on mobile devices. The Committee was informed that all Local Authorities are required to comply with the Public Service Network rules concerning passwords.
- Considered that it would be inappropriate to expect a new employee to be able to work remotely without the support of colleagues.
- Highlighted that there are a significant number of disadvantaged residents, some of whom do not have access to computers / bank accounts and therefore the approach to channel shift must take this into account.
- Expressed support for proposals to improve the website.
- Suggested that email newsletters could be used to provide details of public consultations so that more residents are aware and are able to respond.

The OSC was satisfied with the level of progress being made in respect of Channel Shift and agile working and the approach being taken, particularly in relation to proposed improvements to the Council's website.

Recommendations

8. The Committee is asked to

- (i) Note that any issues identified by members of the OSC as potential review topics by 18 December 2015 will be included in the list of review topics to be considered by the OSC at the start of the municipal year unless such issues are being or would more appropriately be dealt with via other Council processes.
- (ii) Give its views on the review monitoring process carried out so far.
- (iii) Give its views on the effectiveness of the case studies carried out in 2014/15.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Performance Monitoring: Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council Service Level Agreement

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

Summary

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the committee should receive a quarterly performance report from Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (GVOC) following the implementation of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Council in April 2014.

This report provides an overview of the performance as well as information about the impact of GVOC's role in developing and supporting Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) between July and September 2015.

Introduction

1. Following a review of the Council Voluntary Service (CVS) in Gateshead, Council agreed, in March 2014, to formalise its relationship with Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The principle of the SLA is to ensure there is an effective CVS in Gateshead which is supported by the Council and is resourced accordingly.
2. The key outcomes agreed within the SLA are:
 - Strong, creative communities, supported by an excellent Council for Voluntary Service and Gateshead Council
 - An independent organisation representing voluntary and community groups in Gateshead
 - Strong leadership for the development and innovation of the voluntary and community sector
 - Sustainable and growing voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead
 - Increased volunteering
 - Joined up and cohesive package of capacity building support through the Gateshead Offer.
3. It was agreed that GVOC would achieve these outcomes through the following functions:

- Intelligence function: Excellent intelligence about the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead in order to effectively provide services to the sector which meet its needs
 - Capacity Building function for community led organisations: Proactively working with, and targeting voluntary and community organisations and support the development of new organisations. Providing services to small community based organisations through the Gateshead Offer and Our Gateshead website.
 - Volunteers function: Leading and supporting volunteers. Increase the number of volunteers in Gateshead, matching volunteers to volunteer opportunities and supporting volunteers through volunteer co-ordinators.
 - Resources function: Focused on securing funding for the voluntary and community sector and income generation to ensure sustainability
 - Community engagement and development: Delivered through the Gateshead Together Strategy and Delivery Plan and Our Gateshead
 - Representation: Strongly represent the community and voluntary sector in Gateshead, with a focus on smaller community based organisations, and influence through engaging with strategic partnerships and Gateshead based organisations.
4. In April 2015 GVOC notified its members and Councillors that it was facing significant financial challenges.
 5. Following a review and staff restructure, Council agreed, in September 2015, to a reduction to some of the SLA targets.
 6. The report attached (Appendix 1) includes information as to how GVOC has delivered the requirements of the SLA and its wider role.
 7. Appendix 2 contains a response from GVOC to the comments raised by Committee in September 2015.

Recommendations

8. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
 - (i) Comment on the attached report and GVOC's performance between July and September 2015.



Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council.

Report for the second quarter of the financial year.

July to September 2015.

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Attachment 2.	GVOC Staff Structure 2015

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the performance of the organisation for the second quarter of the 2015/16 financial year - July to September 2015 against the revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) targets.

During this period GVOC has continued to offer a quality, professional and independent advice and support service to the Voluntary and community sector of Gateshead. GVOCs dedicated staff team have responded to increase demands for its services exceeding its SLA targets in a number of areas whilst receiving excellent feedback from service users.

GVOC has been actively engaging the sector and community members through a number of events, volunteering services and through its web-presence including the OurGateshead website. These activities offer valuable information and support to the communities of Gateshead.

'In November 2014 Gateshead Indoor Bowling Club were informed by Gateshead Council that all Council funding for the centre would be withdrawn with effect from October 1st. 2015 which threatened the existence of the club and leaving the club's 420 members with nowhere to bowl during the winter months.

In March 2015 a Management Committee was formed with the aim to preserve the club by working with the Council and G.V.O.C to obtain an asset transfer and also to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

In achieving this status the members of Gateshead Indoor Bowling Club are indebted to the staff of G.V.O.C who worked many long hours patiently and tirelessly guiding the committee through a very difficult process and giving us sufficient additional information to enhance the successful future of the club

As a club we would strongly advise any organisation within the Gateshead locality that are placed in a similar situation to ourselves to seek the free help and advice from G.V.O.C to help them resolve their problem.'

George Hackett

Chairman

Gateshead Indoor Bowling Club

Representation of the sector is an important part of GVOCs function and the organisation takes this role very seriously attending a number of boards and committees to ensure the voice of the sector is being heard.

Performance achievement is reported against the five headings of the Service Level Agreement and these are:

1. Intelligence Function
2. Capacity Building, Community Engagement & Development Function
3. Volunteers Function
4. Resources Function
5. Representation Function

Details of the statistical achievements against targets have been recorded in accompanying spreadsheets. (Attachment 1)

Current Staff Structure

Please see attachment 2 (Management Structure)

NEWS FROM GVOC

The GVOC staff team have striven to meet the SLA targets while promoting and enhancing the reputation of GVOC. This is shown in the increase in target figures as indicated in the accompanying spreadsheet (attachment 1).

Following the staff re-structure in June, GVOC staff relocated offices within John Haswell House which caused major disruption to the work of the GVOC staff team. New phone lines, internet connection, computer setup and downsizing all had to be completed before the staff team could continue to function normally. The building has been leased to Gateshead Carers Association (GCA) and GVOC rent rooms within the building however this arrangement still provides a steady income into John Haswell Memorial Trust.

GVOC has successfully recruited a new Volunteer Advisor, who will come into post in October. This post will recruit and support volunteers, advise organisations on good practice in volunteering and deliver volunteer related training.

The Gateshead Supported Volunteer Programme (GSVP) has recruited an experienced staff member to cover the maternity leave of one of the workers and a further worker has returned from maternity leave ensuring the continuity and high level of performance of this Lottery funded project.

In this reporting period GVOC have been successful in the stage one application process for continuation funding of GSVP from The Big Lottery. A further 3 years funding of approximately £327,000 has been applied for. The stage two application will be developed and submitted in November.

Funding secured includes:

- Awards for All; the project will deliver five community roadshows these roadshows will be used to promote GVOC services and other available support in five deprived areas of Gateshead. Workers will be available to give advice and support on a range of organisational development and volunteering issues.

- Christ's Hospital in Sherburn funding to deliver a Friendship Cafe project. This 12 month project will give people with learning difficulties the opportunity to find out how to become involved in in their local communities and become more socially active with the support of staff and volunteers.
- The Bailey Thomas Charitable Fund. This 12 month project will support people with learning difficulties to take part in one off group based volunteering opportunities

These projects are in the process of being planned and delivered.

1. INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION

Areas of achievement

OurGateshead has continued to share news, events and promote over 1000 local groups and organisations to the residents of Gateshead. 91,514 pages were viewed in this period.

The new CharityLog data collection system is being designed and introduced. This will not only improve future GVOG monitoring, but will enable GVOG to analyse and report on the changing needs of the voluntary sector.

Future Developments

A new communication plan has been designed which includes sharing more information via regular newsletters.

Initial talks have been held with the new managers of the Do-it volunteering website to explore how volunteering opportunities can be automatically added to the OurGateshead location and topic pages.

Meetings have been held with Gateshead Public Health to discuss possible funding to improve the functionality of OurGateshead, particularly for health workers and other professionals working in the community. The site was accessed 1,089 times from NHS computers, an increase in 72% on the previous year. The site is being increasingly used to support the social prescribing agenda and especially early interventions and support through referrals to the voluntary and community sector. This work would help to promote the services of the voluntary sector and help support the sustainability of the Gateshead voluntary sector.

New systems are being designed to monitor membership and ensure that service users are members of GVOG.

2. CAPACITY BUILDING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION

Areas of Achievement;

Organisational Development

During this quarter 76 groups have been supported with a range of advice and support. This is a significant improvement on the first quarter and is partly due to improvements in monitoring and the recruitment of an additional part-time organisational development worker.

The type of advice and support are listed below:

- Governance
- Charity Registration
- Funding
- Finance
- Charity Law
- Group start up
- 'OurGateshead' support
- Training
- Asset transfer advice and support

Some of this work has been complex and time consuming with 28 groups receiving more than one advice and support session. Six groups receiving over 10 sessions of advice and support, this level of support is needed in order to develop and sustain these groups. As well as this complex workload GVOG also provided advice and support on a number of one off enquiries.

My name is Enid Easton. I live in a sheltered accommodation scheme and became secretary of the tenants Association.

I had no experience at being on a committee at all. I felt I had been dropped in the deep end. A council employee recommended that we as a committee should contact GVOG which we did. This was the best thing we ever did. I don't think we would still be here if we hadn't. Whenever we have a problem we would contact GVOG as they are always there to help.

Problems like funding applications, chairing meetings, solving conflict in the group, getting advice on legal issues, reviewing the constitution, finding suitable courses etc. All these problems became easy to handle because of the support we got from GVOG.

Today because of the support we have grown as a group. We do more activities, raise funds, have an allotment, sell produce on the allotment, go on outings. Residents are less isolated get involved in activities such as chair based exercises which encourage them to be more healthy.

If GVOC hadn't helped us these things would not have happened. GVOC helped us gain confidence so when we visit other schemes we recommend GVOC. As we know from experience we can rely on them when we need help which gives us confidence to carry on progressing.

One session of informal group training has been delivered in this quarter and there are plans to deliver a number of sessions in quarter three and four.

OurGateshead continues to offer community groups free promotion to local residents. During this quarter the site received 33,704 visits.

Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme facilitated a Disability Equality Training session for staff members from organisations across the voluntary & public sector. Six organisations attended the training with more training planned in the New Year.

The Community Development Project (Macmillan) is delivered on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support and although it is not a service required as a part of the SLA it does add value to the role of GVOC in Gateshead. The project has delivered five cancer screening and prevention training and information sessions to a total of 35 people in the period. In addition the project worker has carried out 13 awareness raising activities reaching a total of 37 people. 10 events have been attended to promote the work of the project. Work is ongoing to produce a bespoke training package for carers and people who work with carers to enable people to have a good understanding of cancer screening, signs and symptoms of cancer and preventative measures.

GVOC runs a Disclosure and Barring Service as additional support for the sector. Two new community groups registered to access the DBS service offered by GVOC and seven existing groups have been supported to complete 15 checks for volunteers and paid staff during the reporting period.

Future Developments

A bid has been submitted to the Virgin Money foundation to offer advice and support for organisations and individuals to develop charitable companies.

GVOC are in the process of:

- Re-introducing the X-funder events. These are workshops that bring together community groups and funders enabling them to discuss their plans and projects to secure funding for their organisation. It is planned to run these sessions bi- monthly.
- Identifying funding to introduce new services and projects that will support the VCS in Gateshead.
- Securing funding for the development of the health and wellbeing section of OurGateshead to support the social prescribing, self-help and health innovations agendas.
- Exploring funding opportunities for formal and informal training opportunities.
- Improving monitoring and reporting with the introduction of the Charitylog database which is being developed. Staff will be trained to use the systems as part of their daily working practice.

3. VOLUNTEERS FUNCTION

Areas of achievement;

Between July-September 2015 the Volunteer Centre has completed brokerage work with 462 people interested in volunteering.

The Volunteer Centre has completed brokerage in a number of ways. This has included;

- Processing do-it applications & enquiries
- One to one meetings
- Drop in Services

The Volunteer Centre has supported organisations with Volunteer Recruitment via Do-It. Examples of organisations are

- Family Lives
- Groundwork North East
- Teenage Cancer Trust

In July the Volunteer Centre were awarded the VCQA Certificate which is a Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation. This Quality mark is also recognition of the standard and professionalism of the service we provide with a number of volunteers achieving there volunteer goals

"I first became involved in 1986 when I asked GVOC about volunteering. I was introduced to an Arthritis Care Regional Organiser some weeks later who asked me to help them set up a group in Gateshead. GVOC then helped by giving me some much needed training. Over the years I have had training in many subjects including minute taking, finance, fundraising, employing staff, governance, chairing a Management Committee and taking an organisation through to becoming a charity. Because of the confidence I gained I was able to be part of setting up 3 very successful organisations in Gateshead. I sit on many Strategic Boards in Gateshead, and I am regularly asked to attend meetings at very senior levels.

I also was a member of GVOC's board for 9 years.

This all came from walking into GVOC in 1986 and asking how I could become a Volunteer.

I cannot thank GVOC enough for helping to change my life, gain so much confidence and learn so many new skills."

Esther Ward

**Gateshead Older People's Assembly
The Felling Hub**

VCQA is valid until 2018 and ensures the quality of the service the volunteer centre provides. GVOC continue to have exclusive use of the Volunteer Centre Brand within Gateshead.

The Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme has continued to support people with a learning disability to volunteer in Gateshead. This has been achieved by delivering a qualification and matching people with a Buddy until they are confident to volunteer alone.

The Volunteer Centre has continued to have a presence on the Volunteer Action Group meeting with Kate Marshall to ensure partnership working and that the Gateshead Offer is being achieved.

Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme staff sit on the Meaningful Lives Subgroup, working towards more opportunities for people with learning difficulties in Gateshead. This has included working on the 'Evening & Weekends Strategy.'

Future Developments

The newly appointed Volunteer Advisor will expand and develop the volunteer related training offer. This will include the new bite size Volunteers & the Law, and Supporting Volunteers and writing a volunteer policy training courses.

Gateshead Supported Volunteers Programme (GSVP) are planning five one off volunteering events in different areas of Gateshead. The events will be based around the 'Christmas Box Appeal' completed in previous years and packages will be made up for different groups in the community including young people leaving care, Asylum Seekers & Refugees & older people.

As part of our future development on training we will also be looking into offering our Buddy skills training to organisations and some bespoke training involving volunteers with a learning disability.

Funding is being sought to employ a dedicated volunteer development worker to promote good practice in the sector, through training and group support.

4. RESOURCES FUNCTION

SLA Target Overview

GVOC has offered quality advice and support to a number of groups and organisations. The groups GVOC supports with funding applications are small, usually with no paid workers and require intensive support; they often do not have the skills or confidence within the group to submit funding applications. Therefore this is a time consuming and resource intensive area of work.

In this quarter these groups were seeking amounts of less than £1,500 therefore to meet the SLA target would require 333 applications per year or 27 applications per month to support small groups to achieve this target. Many of the groups who receive advice and support do not then report back to GVOC to inform us they have submitted funding applications or received funding.

To meet the SLA funding target GVOC will need to work with larger organisations to submit substantial monetary applications to funders such as the Lottery, however we feel that the grass root group approach is a priority at present as they are most in need of the limited resources we can provide.

Areas of achievement

GVOC holds and administers GVOCs Grants for Groups, this is a small grant giving fund with a maximum of £500 available per application. There was no decision making panel meeting in this quarter however GVOC continued to administer the grants by:

- Promoting the scheme
- Processing the 11 applications for the October grants panel meeting, these applications totalled £5,047.
- Monitoring the grant expenditure, total £7, 055 from the 15 groups awarded funding at the February panel meeting.

There has been one funding workshop / training delivered this quarter, this session supported an organisation to develop and submit improved funding applications.

Future developments

GVOC will explore the viability of working with groups and organisation that require support with larger funding applications.

Many of the groups who receive advice and support do not then report back to GVOC to inform us they have submitted funding applications or received funding, we will look at putting systems in place to further encourage feedback. By introducing robust monitoring procedures to gain this valuable information we believe that a truer picture of funding brought into Gateshead, from the advice and support that GVOC have given, will emerge

Develop further funding workshops to support the VCS within Gateshead to submit a higher percentage of successful applications to charitable trusts and foundations.

GVOC are also developing the X-funder events as we see this as an excellent opportunity for local groups to gain confidence, ask questions and obtain the ability to apply for funds. GVOC staff will also be available after the events to discuss how they can support those attending to enable them to submit good funding applications.

5. REPRESENTATION FUNCTION

Areas of achievement

GVOG have represented the voluntary and community sector by attending a range of meetings and boards including:

JSNA Steering Group
Gateshead Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group
Safeguarding Adults Board
Gateshead Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group
Gateshead Older People's Assembly Annual General Meeting
Big Local

Partnership working

GVOG has worked closely with the following partners:

- Public Health Gateshead
- Live Well Gateshead
- Big Local
- Neighbourhood Management
- Economic and Housing Growth
- Gateshead Newcastle CCG
- Gateshead Volunteer Network
- Macmillan Cancer Support

Future developments

GVOG will explore ways to improve communication channels to enable effective feed back to the VCS of important information from strategic meetings and representation functions.

GVOG will enter into discussions to explore the future role of Gateshead Community Network.

Discussions are being planned to re-launch of the virtual capacity team in partnership with Gateshead Council.

Re-establish the Chief Officers Group and develop the terms of reference and membership criteria for the group to increase the potential membership.

CONCLUSION

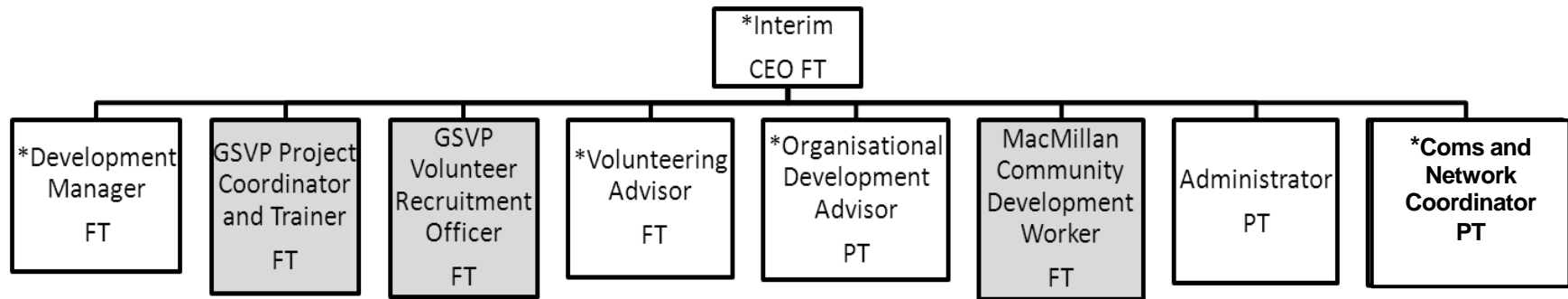
GVOC remains focussed on its core aims which are to support Gateshead's voluntary sector and make sure our services remain relevant to the VCS. GVOC's new staffing structure and office accommodation is now fully operational. There is a renewed determination and drive within the organisation to ensure GVOC continues to deliver its high standard of service.

We are exploring new ways to maximise the impact of our service delivery and align our resources with priorities highlighted by the sector. This information will be gained from consultation with the sector through the community Roadshows and the most recent GVOC VCS community consultation, as well as feedback information from service users.

GVOC will continue to develop and grow in the future and will re-establish its influence as the VCSs representative within Gateshead offering valuable information, support and advice.

The figures accompanying this report show that, with the exception of the funding target the SLA targets are being met and in a number of cases exceeded. This indicates the need for GVOCs local, independent, professional service delivery.

GVOC staff structure 2015



* Indicates responsibilities for delivery of organisational development support to groups as part or whole of their role.

Shaded posts represent project workers, none shaded posts represent core worker posts.

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APPENDIX 2

GVOC Quarterly monitoring Quarter 1

Objective 1: Intelligence function.

Gather excellent intelligence about the community and voluntary sector in Gateshead in order to effectively provide services to the sector which meets its needs.

Yearly Target	Quarter one Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
Quarterly intelligence report	1		-1	-100.00	This will be carried out as a yearly report with a summary provided in each quarterly report.
1000 groups using Our Gateshead	250	1,009	759	303.60	
100,000 visitors to Our Gateshead	25,000	32,978	7,978	31.91	
250,000 Our Gateshead page views	62,500	92,952	30,452	48.72	

Additional

Access to Ourgateshead via Gateshead Council PCs	(no target)	1,452			
OG Pageviews via Gateshead Council PCs	(no target)	6,171			
Access to Ourgateshead via NHS PCs	(no target)	977			
OG Pageviews Our Gateshead via NHS PCs	(no target)	3,742			
page views - Public Health Crisis page	(no target)	445			

Objective 2: Capacity building, Community engagement and development. Note amalgamated CVS function Cap building with Community engagement.

Proactively working with and targeting community & voluntary organisations and support the development of new organisations. Providing services to small community based organisations through the Gateshead Offer and Ourgateshead website.

Deliver through the Gateshead Together strategy and delivery plan for Ourgateshead.

Yearly Target	Quarter one Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
Support 150-200 groups.	37.5	33	-5	-12	These figure will improve over the next quarters.
Deliver five community road shows.	1		-1	-100.00	These are planned for quarters three and four.
Training and workshop	(no target)	1			These will be delivered by quarter three and four once the need has been identified. Re-establishing the X funder events.
events and promotion	(no target)	9			

Objective 3: Volunteering function

Leading and supporting volunteers. Increase the number of volunteers in Gateshead, matching volunteers to volunteering opportunities and supporting volunteers through volunteer co-ordinators.

Yearly Target	Quarter one Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
1000 brokered	250	431	181	72.40	
500 opportunities created	125	20	-105	-84.00	Improved monitoring and recording will see an increase in this figure in quarters 3 and 4
Five volunteer engagement road shows	1	1	0	0.00	Blaydon Roadshow volunteers week
Training delivered	(no target)	2			

Objective 4: Resource function

Focused on securing funding for the community and voluntary sector and income generation to ensure sustainability

Yearly Target	Quarter one Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
Support organisations to submit funding applications to the value of £500,000	£125,000	£27,458	-97,542	-78.03	Small groups have been supported, these groups seeking amounts of less than £1,500 therefore this would require 333 applications per year or 27 applications per month to support small groups. GVOG could explore working with larger groups with bigger bids to help meet the target. This output has proved difficult to monitor because we do not always know what bids are submitted and to what value after we have been involved, GVOG has put new systems in place to assist and promote group feedback and these measures will take effect by quarter three.
Additional					
Number of Groups advised	(no target)	8			
Region wide funding event Hylton Hotel Newcastle	(no target)				During this period a region wide funding event was organised with GVOG as a lead partner however no monitoring of outcomes has been carried out by GVOG, due to re-organisation.

Objective 5: Representation

Strongly represent the community and voluntary sector in Gateshead, with focus on smaller community based organisations, and influence through engaging with strategic partnerships.

Yearly Target	Quarter one Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for Variance
Number of strategic meetings attended	(no target)	3			
Networking meetings and events attended	(no target)	1			
Facilitate feedback and networking opportunities.	(no target)	2			
Partnership Working	(no target)	8			

GVOC Quarterly monitoring Quarter 2

Objective 1: Intelligence function.

Gather excellent intelligence about the community and voluntary sector in Gateshead in order to effectively provide services to the sector which meets its needs.

Yearly Target	Quarter two Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
Quarterly intelligence report	1		-1	-100.00	This will be carried out as a yearly report with a summary each quarter.
1000 groups using Ourgateshead	250	1021	771	308.40	
100,000 visitors to Ourgateshead	25,000	33,704	8,704	34.82	
250,000 Ourgateshead page views	62,500	91,514	29,014	46.42	
Additional					
Access to Ourgateshead via Gateshead Council PCs	(no target)	1,302			
O/G page views via Gateshead Council PCs	(no target)	5,429			
Access to Ourgateshead via NHS PCs	(no target)	1,089			
O/G pageviews via NHS PCs	(no target)	3,855			
page views - Public Health Crisis page	(no target)	431			

Objective 2: Capacity building, Community engagement and development. Note amalgamated CVS function Cap building with Community engagement.

Proactively working with and targeting community & voluntary organisations and support the development of new organisations. Providing services to small community based organisations through the Gateshead Offer and Ourgateshead website.

Deliver through the Gateshead Together strategy and delivery plan for Ourgateshead.

Yearly Target	Quarter two Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
Support 150-200 groups.	37.5 based on 150 groups	76	38.5	103	Improvements in monitoring and recording
Deliver five community road shows.	1		-1	-100.00	The 5 roadshows are planned for quarters three and four.
Training and workshops	(no target)	1			These will be delivered by quarter three and four once the need has been identified.

Objective 3: Volunteering function

Leading and supporting volunteers. Increase the number of volunteers in Gateshead, matching volunteers to volunteering opportunities and supporting volunteers through volunteer co-ordinators.

Yearly Target	Quarter two Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
1000 brokered	250	462	212	84.80	
500 opportunities created	125	96	-29	-23.20	This is the first period of reporting for this target - Measures have now been put in place to record this going forward.
Five volunteer engagement road shows	1		-1	-100.00	The remaining 4 will be carried out in quarters 3 + 4
Training delivered	(no target)	3			Training around volunteering has been delivered - 2 x Gateshead Volunteers Award & 1 x Disability Equality Training

Objective 4: Resource function**Focused on securing funding for the community and voluntary sector and income generation to ensure sustainability**

Yearly Target	Quarter two Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for variance
Support organisations to submit funding applications to the value of £500,00	£125,000	£28,570	-96,430	-77.14	Small groups have been supported, these groups seeking amounts of less than £1,500 therefore this would require 333 applications per year or 27 applications per month to support small groups. GVOC could explore working with larger groups with bigger bids to help meet the target. This output has proved difficult to monitor because we do not always know what bids are submitted and to what value after we have been involved, GVOC has put new systems in place to assist and promote group feedback and these measures will take effect by quarter three.

Additional

Number of Groups advised	(no target)	21			
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Objective 5: Representation**Strongly represent the community and voluntary sector in Gateshead, with focus on smaller community based organisations, and influence through engaging with strategic partnerships.**

Yearly Target	Quarter two Target	Achieved	Variance	% variance	Reason for Variance
Number of strategic meetings attended	(no target)	7			11
Networking meetings and events attended	(no target)	6			8
Facilitate feedback and networking opportunities.	(no target)	8			4
Partnership Working	(no target)	7			8

TITLE OF REPORT: The Council Plan – Six Month Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2015/2016

**REPORT OF: Jane Robinson, Chief Executive
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance**

SUMMARY

This report provides the six month assessment of performance for 2015/2016. It provides an update on the performance and delivery of the Council Plan 2015-2020.

Background

1. The report forms part of the Council's performance management framework and gives an overview of progress for the priorities appropriate to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).
2. The six month performance report monitors progress against the Council Plan 2015-2020.

New Council Plan 2015-2020

3. Following significant changes in the national policy landscape and the challenging financial climate the Council has, and is still facing, a new approach to the Council Plan was developed as part of the strategic planning framework.
4. The new Council Plan 2015-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 14 July 2015 and 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.

Five Year Target Setting 2015/16 – 2019/2020

5. As part of the Council's Performance Management Framework, five year targets were set for the period 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 which will enable performance to be monitored to ensure continuous improvement. These targets were approved by Cabinet on 14 July 2015.

Delivery and Performance

6. The six month 2015/2016 assessment of performance report relates to the remit of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and focuses on achievements, areas identified for improvement and future actions.
7. Progress as to how well the Council is performing in relation to the equalities objectives where information is available at the six month stage is also reported in this report.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) consider whether the activities undertaken during the last six months are achieving the desired outcomes in the Council Plan 2015-2020;
- (ii) agree that the report be referred to Cabinet on 9 February 2016, with the recommendations from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

Contact: Marisa Jobling

Ext: 2099

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18 January 2016

Council Plan – Delivery and Performance – Six Month Update

Summary

Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Corporate Resources

Chair:

Councillor John Eagle

Vice Chairs

Councillor Paul Foy

Councillor Jonathan Wallace

Role and Remit of the Committee:

- 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
-

This report provides a summary of Council performance for the first six month period of the 2015/16 financial year against the role and remit of this Committee, in line with the Council's performance management framework.

Please note a substantial amount of the information included in this report has already been discussed and scrutinised by the committee through a series of specific performance reports throughout the year for example absence management.

Performance at a glance

Ref	Description	Year end performance 2014/15	6 month or latest performance	Year end target
CR01	Reduce sickness absence	10 days	4.47 days	9.50 days
CR 02	Increase turnout at elections	2014 Local 35.6% Euro 35.5%	2015 Local 62.88% Parliamentary 62.50%	1% above the regional average
CR 03	Increase Council Tax collection	95.4%	53.7% against target of 53.1%	96.5%
CR07	Increase satisfaction with Gateshead as a place to live	2012 residents survey baseline 73%	64.5% NB not comparable with 2012 as the survey method changed.	75% target set in 2013
CR08a	Increase formal volunteering	2012 residents survey baseline was:-	23%	Overall one third of our residents (66,000) are involved in formal and informal volunteering.
CR08b	Increase informal volunteering	Formal 18% Informal 34%	38%	
CR10	Increase speed of processing benefit claims	8.54 days	10.45 days	12 days
CR12	Population growth	2011 census 200,200	200,505 (IONS data Sept 15)	200,625
CR13a	Increase the number of under 19 year olds within the workforce through apprenticeships	0.44%	Number = 51 FTEs 0.73% of workforce	0.46%
CR13b	Increase the number of Job Carved posts within the Council (for people with a disability)	2.65 FTEs	Number = 4 FTEs 0.09% of workforce	5 FTEs

The following indicators were collected through the biennial residents survey, therefore there is no update available at this time. Alternative methods of collection of performance information are being explored for these areas.

- Increase number of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood -CR04
- Increase community cohesion CR05
- Increase the percentage of people able to influence decisions CR06
- Increase the number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations who feel supported by the Council CR09
- To what extent residents agree that local people pull together for the local area CR11

Section Two: Context for Current Performance

This part of the report provides performance updates against the remit of the Committee.

Social inclusion, equalities and diversity

1. Equality Objectives

A number of Equality Objectives are monitored as part of the Performance Management Framework (PMF). There are two Equality Objectives that fall within the remit of this committee, these are;

- **CR13a:** Increase the number of under 19 year olds within the workforce through the roll out of an apprenticeship training programme
- **CR13b:** Increase the number of job carved posts within the Council (for people with a disability)

The Council has continued to support the creation of apprenticeships in Gateshead, including apprenticeships within the workforce. There are currently 51 under 19 apprenticeships across the Council. This makes up 0.73% of the overall workforce. Current performance at this stage exceeds the target of 0.46% and shows a positive direction of travel against this indicator, having increased from the 0.44% reported at the end of the last financial year.

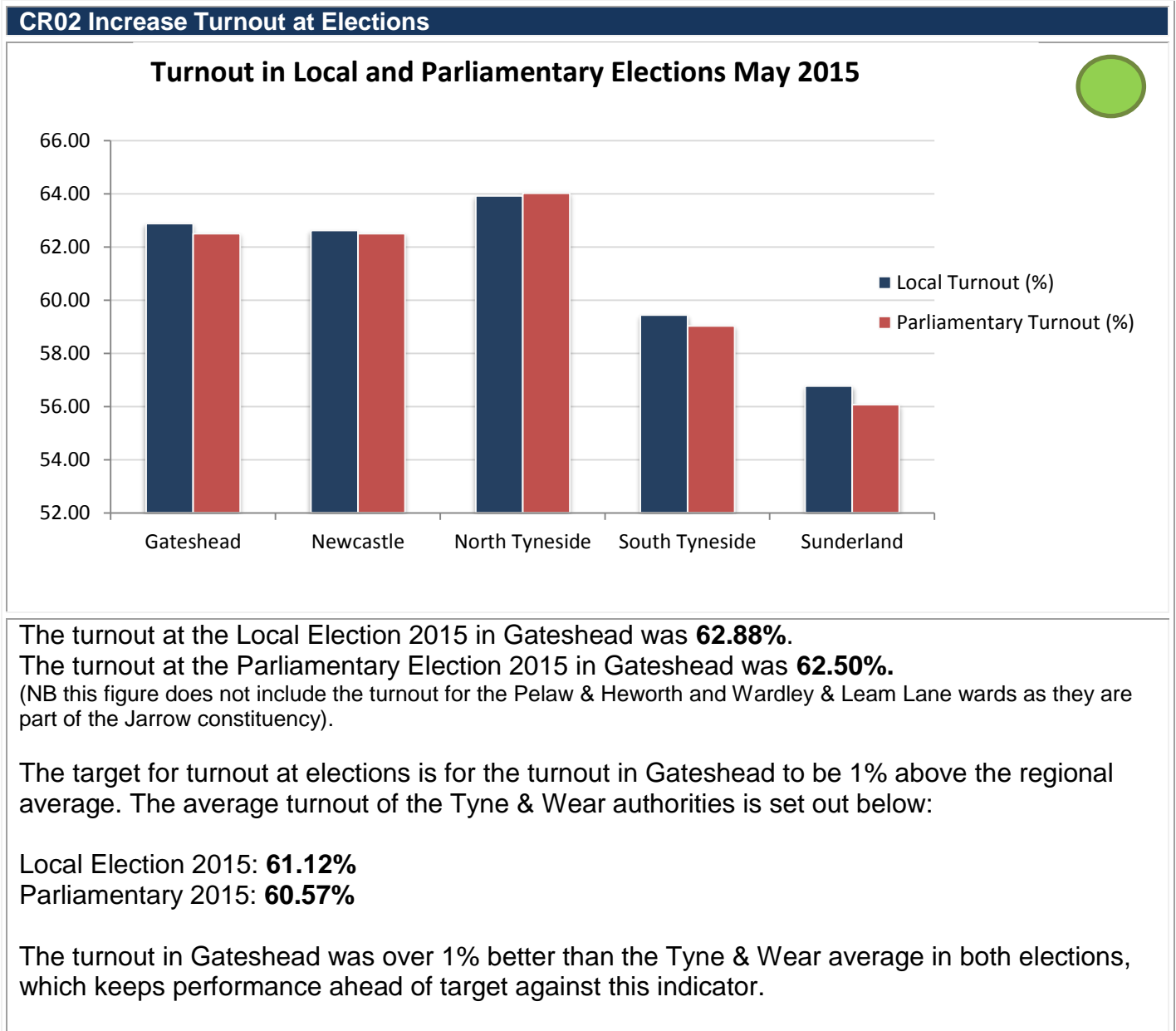
Job carving is a supported employment strategy that takes certain parts of existing job roles and creates new employment opportunities for others. This approach is being used to create roles for people with learning disabilities at Gateshead Council. There are currently 4 job carved posts across the Council which equates to 0.09% of the workforce, falling just short of the 0.10% target.

Future action

As part of the Council's approach to Equality, all of the Equality objectives that are set out in the Performance Management Framework will be reviewed to ensure that the Council continues to monitor the correct indicators of Equality in Gateshead.

Support for the democratic process

2. Elections



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

3. Refresh of Vision 2030

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 in the future.

The Gateshead Strategic Partnership (GSP) agreed to look at Vision 2030 again in light of the changes partners involved and most importantly in the context of less resource to enable the GSP to be better placed to achieve positive outcomes for the people of Gateshead.

The 2015 refresh

The vision and the 6 big ideas have been retained and 18 long term outcomes outline what success will look like.

What's new:

- info-graphics for each of the 6 big ideas have been introduced to help with communicating achievements in these areas.
- The operational detail (the pathways) has been removed so that it has a medium to long term focus.
- new branding and the language has been changed to appeal to a wider audience.
- all of these changes reduced the document from 48 pages to 8 pages.

Another change is that there a focus on delivery over the next 5 years as a stepping stone to 2030 so that we can realistically deliver the ambition and outcomes – the ambition is still there but how we get there is different with shared outcomes (see Council Plan below).

Partners will have to work differently together and 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.

4. New Council Plan 2015-2020

Following significant changes in the national policy landscape and the challenging financial climate the Council has, and is still facing, a new approach to the Council Plan was developed as part of the strategic planning framework.

The new Council Plan 2015-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 14 July 2015 and 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

5. Resident’s Survey 2015

The Council undertook a ‘Residents’ Survey’ in June 2015. The survey was made available to all households in Gateshead using the June edition of ‘Council News’ and via the council’s online consultation portal. A total of 935 survey forms were completed.

Because the methodology has changed for this survey, the results should not be directly compared to those from previous surveys.

Key findings include

- 64.5% are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 52.1% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things

Residents were asked what they like most about their local area. The open responses were coded and analysed and the top 6 are shown below:

- Access to parks and green spaces for those living in urban areas and access to the countryside for those in rural areas (37%)
- Access to shops and local services (34%)
- Friendly neighbours and good community feel (25%)
- Transport links/road/public transport/cycle paths (20%)
- Quiet/peaceful (13%)
- Like the area/improving area (13%)

Residents were also asked what needs improving in their local area. The open responses were analysed and the results are shown below:

- Street cleaning, litter, fly tipping (40%)
- Parks and green spaces maintenance (39%)
- Road and pavement maintenance (17%)
- Traffic, road and pedestrian safety (15%)
- Shops/businesses, community facilities and amenities (15%)
- Safety, crime and anti-social behaviour (14%)
- Dog fouling (13%)

Almost 300 respondents (36%) provided information about how they could help, what could be done, or what they are already doing to help improve their area as

- Litter picking/clean up days (44%)
- Volunteer in community/be a good neighbour (28%)
- Report issues e.g. fly tipping, dog fouling, ASB (15%)
- Maintain flowers, trees, green spaces, weeds (15%)
- Look after my house/garden (8%)
- Other – including using local shops, public transport/car sharing, involving schools, reparation schemes (10%)

The most common response was litter picking or getting involved in clean up days. Many residents stated that they are already actively involved in this and the Council could provide support in terms of litter pickers, ensuring litter bins are emptied, coordinating events, promoting anti-litter campaigns and ensuring greater enforcement is in place.

Volunteering was also seen as a way to help improve local areas (libraries, community centres etc.), together with reporting issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling etc. Those who would like to, or are already involved in maintaining flowers and green spaces said that the Council could help by providing tools and collections of green waste.

Residents were asked if they had noticed an impact on their daily lives as a result of the Council receiving significantly less funding from the Government and having to find new ways of delivering services with less money. Half of respondents said that it had a noticeable impact and half said that it had little or no impact.

The main impacts are felt to be:

- Lack of maintenance of green spaces (40%)
- Less street cleaning resulting in more litter and dog fouling (40%)
- Charging for green and bulky waste (16%)
- Poor condition of streets and pavements (13%)

- Less frequent bin collections (12%)
- Feels less safe (9%)
- Reductions in specific services were also highlighted by some respondents, including libraries (8%), services for vulnerable people (7%), leisure (6%)

Future action

A new and more sustainable approach to undertaking future residents' surveys is currently being developed. This involves moving away from commissioning costly one-off pieces of research and setting up an online residents' panel to capture views on a more regular basis using the council's existing consultation system. Almost 400 residents have already expressed an interest in joining the online residents' panel 'Viewpoint ONLINE' and it is encouraging that recruits come from across all wards and age ranges. Residents will soon be able to sign up on the council's website to join 'Viewpoint ONLINE'. Once signed up, every few months they will receive an email link to an online survey.

Capacity building in communities, volunteering and resilience

6. Resilience Strategy Update

The Council has developed a Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework for Gateshead. As set out during the latest resilience report to committee there were a number of updates, including;

- A review of business continuity and revised guidance for established businesses and voluntary organisations in Gateshead.
- Councillors have been provided with emergency response guidance setting out the role of councillors before, during and after an incident or emergency.
- The main focus of the Environmental and Public Health had been planning to ensure the necessary preparedness and response arrangements if the Ebola virus were to have an impact in the UK and within Gateshead. This work was undertaken locally, regionally and nationally.
- Six volunteers had been recruited to the Community Resilience Volunteer Project in Gateshead.
- A draft mutual aid resilience agreement has been developed for the North East and Cumbria areas. The agreement will ensure that we have robust arrangements in place to assess risk, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies to support a resilient Gateshead.

7. Volunteering

Gateshead's third annual Volunteers Month took place in June 2015. The month long celebration builds upon the national Volunteers week, an initiative to raise the profile of volunteering.

- 207 volunteers registered with the Council out of a total of 229 who submitted an expression of interest to volunteer during the month
- 62 events took place throughout the month, with over 30 groups and organisations accessing the volunteers month grants scheme, a £10,000 ring fenced strand of the Capacity Building Fund, which provided up to £300 per applicant.
- The month culminated in a celebration event that took place at Trinity Square on 26th June, which included community group stalls and activities, along with information, instant volunteering and entertainment. Footfall during the event was 16,450 people.
- 56,018 hours were recorded on a volunteer totaliser on the Council's website during June. This only provides a snapshot of the level of volunteering in the Borough, but it does represent a 68% increase from last year. Using a calculation from Volunteering England these hours equate to £778,650 economic value to Gateshead.

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

8. Council Tax collection

The percentage of Council Tax collected at year end 2014/2015 was 95.4%. The target for 2015/2016 is 96.5%. At the 6th month point collection currently stands at 53.7% which is slightly ahead of the 6 month target of 53.1%.

Speed of processing benefit claims

The number of days taken to process benefit claims in 2014/2015 was 8.54 days. The target for 2015/16 was set at 12 days to take into account changes introduced with the benefits system. Performance at the 6 month stage was an average of 10.45 days.

9. Employee Engagement

The Council's new workforce strategy has recognised the importance of a strong, positive culture of employee involvement and engagement. A number of new initiatives have taken place in this six month period, to make sure that employees have a voice and are able to influence decisions that will affect their work, and feel engaged by the Council as an employer.

In May 2015, the first Council wide employee survey in over eight years took place. This has proved to be an extremely important and insightful piece of work and has given employees the opportunity to have their say on a number of different issues.

39% of the workforce returned the survey. This equates to 1836 responses, the vast majority of which were returned through the Council's in house consultation portal.

The return rate is positive; however there are areas of the workforce, particular those that are outbased where the response was particularly low.

There were a number of positive messages including high numbers of respondents finding that:

- their manager was approachable,
- that customers were always a priority where they worked,
- that they were comfortable using new technologies in their job
- that people in their teams cooperated to get the work done
- that in they were clear of what was expected of them in their job
- that Gateshead Council respects individual differences
- overall they liked their job

However there were also a number of areas for improvement that have been identified through the survey such as improving

- how everyone works as One Council
- consistency of implementation of human resource policies
- overall communication
- reducing levels of stress
- better career development and levels of training and development

Following the employee survey a series of employee engagement sessions were organised with the workforce to get behind some of the issues raised in the survey and ensure that members of staff were able to shape the workforce plan and the way the Council works. The sessions were called 'Team Talk Live' and 16 took place across the borough in July and August 2015.

The Chief Executive attended every session along with members of the Leadership Team. In total over 700 employees attended Team Talk Live and were involved in lively discussions about what was going well and what could be improved. The feedback from those employees who took part was extremely positive. Some of the common themes that were put forward by employees are set out below;

- People felt that they had good teams and supportive colleagues
- Despite the challenges the Council was still delivering and functioning well
- The Council has shown an ability to change, innovate and find new ways of working
- The Council was thought to still have ambition and vision for Gateshead and generally employees feel proud to work for the Council

Future Action

All of the engagement work with employees over the summer has been captured within the newly agreed workforce plan and regular updates to employees is being

planned through a variety of channels including the intranet, team brief, global emails, video blogs and more.

10. Review of Absence in the Council

In this reporting period the Committee has continued its role in monitoring the levels of absence in the Council's workforce. On 7 September committee received the latest update.

At the end of this six month reporting period the average number of days lost to sickness absence is 4.47 days. Across the Council as a whole, stress/depression and mental ill health now accounts for 23%, remaining the largest cause of sickness absence. Post-op recovery/hospital treatment makes up 18% and back and other musculo-skeletal conditions account for 16%.

The current performance does, however, reflect an improvement on the previous six months and work continues through the implementation of the Workforce Plan, particularly in relation to promoting the health and wellbeing of employees

Future Action

As set out in the September update:-

- Work related stress surveys have been carried out using the health and safety executive tool, in Adult Social Care and Independent Living and Commissioning and Business Development.
- Stress buster sessions have continued to be offered to all employees and the lead counsellor has ran briefing sessions for managers to assist them in supporting employees to prevent sickness absence.
- A toolkit to help manage stress has also been developed and circulated to managers
- The role of the Workplace Contacts has been broadened to support employees
- A detailed report on absence management will be part of the OSCs 2016/17 work programme

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TITLE OF REPORT: Impact of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy

REPORT OF: Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council

SUMMARY

This report provides the fourth annual update on the impact of Gateshead's Community Together Strategy agreed by Cabinet and the Gateshead Strategic Partnership in 2012.

The report includes information on the impact of actions as a result of the strategy by a range of Council Services and partners over the period December 2014 – December 2015.

Committee is asked to note the strategy is the combined Community Cohesion and Community Development Strategies, the impact of which has been reported to this committee annually.

1. Background

- a) The Gateshead Communities Together Strategy and Action Plan were agreed by Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group and Cabinet in May 2012.
- b) The Strategy sets out how partners will work together in a co-ordinated and effective way to achieve the five priority areas identified within the Strategy:
 - Community engagement & participation
 - Community capacity building
 - Information & communication
 - Involving children, young people & schools
 - Supporting positive community relationships.
- c) Implementation of the Strategy continues to be overseen through a co-ordinated approach between the Council and Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council. The multi-agency working group no longer meets regularly however, the group maintains an oversight of activities taking place in communities across Gateshead and encourages closer working relationships to share resources and avoid duplication.

2. Impact of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy during 2015

Examples of the work undertaken by the Council and partners under each of the five priority areas are set out below:

3. Priority Area One

Community Engagement & Participation

- a) Through partnership working with a host of volunteers, local churches, businesses, voluntary organisation and many others, in all twelve events over six weeks took place over the school holidays as part of the “Fill the Holiday Gap” scheme in Gateshead. The event was led by Churches Together; ‘Fill the Holiday Gap’ was developed to help the hundreds of local families who, because of their personal circumstances, struggle to meet the costs of feeding their children during the six week break. With financial and service support from the Council, families were not only able to enjoy a hot meal every day, but took part in events and activities including how to eat healthier on a budget, taking home recipes and ingredients to make meals at home.
- b) Working in partnership with GVOC (Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council) Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering organised a Christmas Shoe Box Appeal throughout December 2015 for young Adults leaving care at Christmas. Throughout December donation bins were present at the Civic Centre and the Central Library to enable members of the public to make donations. Using Council Info and Employee information all Council Employees were reminded of the bins and asked to please donate what they could. All donations were coordinated by Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering. The team also organised for a wrapping event to take place in Bewicks at the Civic Centre on Monday 14th December. GVOC provided their Volunteer wrappers and Gateshead Council Employee Volunteers and a number of registered Volunteers were present on the day. They all worked together and wrapped shoe boxes made up presents and prepared all the gifts to hand over to the fostering team. The gifts will be presented to the Young Adults on Wednesday 16th December at a Christmas Event.
 - A total of 7 large crates of donations were collected by Gateshead Council and 60+ shoe boxes prepared on the day. A full crate of donations were also left over to handout to those who need them throughout the year.
 - Gateshead Council agreed to assist The Home Office to meet the Government’s pledge to relocate 20,000 refugees over the term of the current parliament. In addition, the Government is keen to begin the relocation programme before Christmas 2015.
 - Arrangements are being made to receive 53 Syrian refugees (12 households) on 26th November 2015. Final arrangements are not in place as yet and may be subject to change.

- The Council has been provided with details of the families and their recent history, including any health needs that they may have. Housing, Health, Education and other services within the Council are working together to ensure that we are prepared for the arrival of these vulnerable people. Some of the Households are related to one another and so they will have the comfort of family support, others have little support

The Gateshead Year of Walking 2015

This programme is aimed at getting people active through walking using Gateshead's open public space. The Year of Walking has highlighted key messages around the benefits of walking by promoting existing groups as well as developing new groups. The Year of Walking initiative has also encouraged individuals to consider how to incorporate walking into their daily routines. As a celebration of all the hard work and commitment by volunteers and local organisations the Live Well Gateshead Teams, along with Public Health arranged an event at Saltwell Park to showcase their work.

The event was held on Sunday 25th October from 10 am until 2pm it included led walks around the park provided by Friends of Saltwell Park and The Live Well Teams. There was also an opportunity for attendees to try out a variety of walking sports including Nordic Walking and Walking Football which was delivered in partnership with Gateshead Football Club. Over 60 local people attended and were given the opportunity to participate in the led walks, Walking Football and Nordic Walking. The event attracted 20 local organisations who showcased their own work around health, wellbeing and physical activity.

The event was an opportunity to further support the development of a walking culture within Gateshead by offering valuable support and training to new and existing groups and volunteers.

Live Well Gateshead @ Groups

The Teams, High Fell and Bensham and Lobley Hill wards of Gateshead come within the top 10% of deprived neighborhoods in Gateshead. A number of partner organisations were working alone or with minimum support to reduce this deprivation. The Capacity Building element of the Neighborhood Management team invited key members of local organisations together to measure the appetite of developing a multi-agency steering group that could offer support not only to the residents of the teams ward but also offer support to the organisations involved. By the end of 2016 the Live Well Gateshead @ groups are working with a wide range of partners developing an Asset Based Approach to deliver the best possible services to local residents living in the three wards.

4. Priority Area Two

Community Capacity Building

- a) The Gateshead Offer continues to provide a range of free advice, information and support for Gateshead's voluntary and community sector organisations. Most of the support is free to community groups in Gateshead. The Gateshead Offer is provided by Gateshead Council, GVOC (Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council) and Gateshead Community Network (GCN) using the combined knowledge, skills and expertise within the three organisations to create a network of support. Gateshead Council has a number of services that can offer support on topics that include commissioning, procurement, business planning and capacity building. GVOC/GCN can provide advice, information and training on funding, governance, finances and legal charitable structures. The Offer also promotes volunteering and community involvement opportunities in local strategic planning and service delivery, and plays a key part supporting recipients of support through the Gateshead Fund.
- b) Building on the success of the 2014 funding event, held at Gateshead International Stadium, Gateshead Council and GVOC (Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council) repeated the event in 2015 to identify potential funding opportunities. This year the Council worked in partnership with Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE) and Funding Information North East (FINE) as well as GVOC, to pilot the event as a North East Regional Funding Event. The event took place on 27/04/15 between 10:00am- 6:00pm in the Gateshead Suite at the Hilton Hotel, Newcastle Gateshead. The aim of the event was to help improve the success rate for securing funding; improve the skills and knowledge in writing funding applications and provide an opportunity for the sector to share information and ideas for potential funding. A targeted marketing and communications plan ensured maximum publicity about the event both within Gateshead and across the North East.
- c) Funders and funding support organisations were present providing attendees with the opportunity to drop in, at a time convenient to them, to speak to funders and find out more about their funding programmes and discuss any potential funding proposals. In addition to the market stalls, a programme of 11 workshops ran through- out the day.
- d) The workshops provided the opportunity to receive further advice and support about funding programmes, how to make an application, how to improve their chances of securing funding through social media; and alternative funding sources. Up to 50 representatives from VCS organisations attended each workshop.
- e) 195 individuals, representing 164 VCS organisations, from across the North East, attended the event throughout the day. 25% of attendees came from Gateshead. Evaluation forms were completed by 77 organisations. The key headlines from the feedback are:

- 100% of respondents thought the event was very useful
- 73% of respondents found the workshops informative
- Nearly 60% of participants indicated that they felt that meeting funders was the most beneficial part of the event.
- 39% of respondents thought that as a result of attending the event they would be considering making changes to the way the organisation operates
- 95% respondents felt more informed about funding and additional forms of income
- 100% of respondents thought the time of the event was suitable

Community Asset Transfer

Implementation of the community asset transfer of community centres continued during 2015 with 18 community centres in phase 2 and phase 3 of the Community Centres Review now transferred to a community organisation in the form of a long term, full repairing lease. It is expected 3 community centres will sign a lease before 31 March 2016 leaving one community centre (Barley Mow Village Hall) where an option for the future is being discussed with the management committee. A further 2 leisure facilities have also been leased to community organisations as a result of the Council's approach to supporting community organisations (Gateshead Indoor Bowling Centre and Dunston Activity Centre.)

Gateshead Council Volunteers Plan 2013-17

This provides a strategic and structured approach to volunteering in Gateshead. It identifies principles, priorities and the infrastructure through which the Council will significantly accelerate and develop volunteering across Gateshead in the Council Plan period. The plan ensures that volunteers are supported effectively in areas such as training, skills, expenses and health and safety so that the principles of volunteering are not undermined

- a) Since 2013 there has been a single point of access to volunteering with Gateshead Council. The Expression of Interest form can now be completed online or on a hard copy and is used for any individual that is interested in volunteering in any council service. Documents are available on the councils website
- b) There are currently approximately 1200 volunteers who have submitted Expressions of Interests to volunteer with Gateshead Council. These are all at different stages of the volunteer recruitment process. There are currently over 50 volunteer roles available and there is continuing development with services and partners to increase volunteering across Gateshead and to continue to provide added value to Council Services. Partnerships

continue to organisations and groups in the voluntary and community sectors. Volunteers can be signposted to them from Gateshead Council, and their volunteer roles can also be publicised.

- c) Since February 2015 a total of 401 volunteers have completed the initial registration process, 38% of the total EOI's submitted since 2013. The three most popular volunteer areas include; Children & Families, Community Links and Countryside & Environment
- d) Since June 2015 the volunteer hours contributed to Gateshead's Community is currently estimated at a total of 72,172 hours a month (18,043 a week). This equates to a financial contribution of £866,064 a month (£216,516 a week). This is still only a snap shot of the whole sector. It is estimated that there are a total of 6,230 active volunteers across Gateshead.
- e) Gateshead 4th Annual Volunteers Month took place in June 2015. Included below are some of the key outcomes:
- Over 56,000 volunteer's hours were recorded throughout June.
 - This was a 68 % increase from 2014 (38,244) this equates to £778,650 economic value.
 - A total of 229 volunteers were recruited in June.
 - 62 events throughout volunteer's month, with events happening every day.
 - Celebration event at Trinity square on 26th June; 16,450 people through Trinity Square on the day
 - Over 30 groups and organisations have accessed the volunteers month grants scheme, accessing up to £300 scheme and utilising the £10,000 allocated budget from the Capacity Building Fund
 - The Councils own Employee Volunteering Policy is continuing to development about approximately 15 employees now taking part in different types of volunteering activity through the policy.
 - Employees can utilise the policy and be supported to volunteer in a long term role with up to 15 hours paid leave a year. There is also the option for employees to take part in one off volunteer opportunities such as the shoe box appeal discussed at the start of this report.

Some examples of volunteering activity are included below:

- Barbara Millns - Founding Chair for Tyne United Rowing Club.
Barbara has been at the centre of developing rowing in Gateshead, starting with the founding of Tyne United Rowing Club back in 2007. Tyne United

Rowing Club now currently has a membership of around 180 members Barbara is soon to receive her MBE at the palace for services to rowing in Tyne & Wear which was announced back in May in the Queen's Birthday Honours list becoming operational in 2009 (£1.6 million funding raised to date to fund facility development, still ongoing), her work has mainly focused around partnership working with Durham, Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, as well as the Gateshead SSP, Gateshead College

- Jackey – Countryside & Environment Volunteer. Jackey takes part in as many practical tasks as possible and is always a positive key team member. Jackey has loved spending time outside in the natural environment observing birds, plants and the landscape. She now helps with the management and maintenance of more than 20 nature reserves within Gateshead which Jackey finds very rewarding, Jackey often gets stopped by members of the public who are interested in the various tasks she is completing and who then find out further information around volunteering.
- The British Transplant Games
This year the games were held in Gateshead and involved over 300 volunteers who delivered over 3,000 volunteers' hours.
- Gateshead Older People's Assembly.
Supports older people across the borough with a range of activities and groups aimed at improving their wellbeing. Their work could not be achieved without their loyal volunteer network. The value of volunteering with Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly generates in excess of 1500 hours annually, a net value of circa £19,000 per annum. Through capacity building within the organisation this will potentially grow substantially in the coming year as a series of new projects are developed. These will also attract new members and attendees to their activities as well as increase further the number of voluntary hours undertaken by members.
- Gateshead College – Tourism Students
Student volunteers supported the Funding Event in 2015 (discussed above) the event took place at The Hilton Hotel Newcastle-Gateshead, and provided useful funding information to organisations who attended from throughout the North East. Approximately 20 volunteer students attended the day and provided valuable support through the event. Some positive comments about the volunteers were included in the evaluation for the event.
- Community Links. The Volunteers at Community Links support adults with learning disabilities to live a meaningful life. Many of the volunteers use their role, whilst recovering from difficult periods in their own lives, to take a supported step into their own community. The volunteers contribute greatly to the improved health and emotional wellbeing of the service users, offering a supporting friendship and the opportunity to share the enjoyment of events and activities
- Community Volunteer Libraries - An integrated Community and Council library network. Over 90 volunteers established 2013. CBF Advisory Group agreed

to match the Council's grant contributions at each of the 5 volunteer libraries. The emerging financial forecasts indicate each has sufficient funds to cover running costs for 12 months. 2 volunteer libraries will jointly fund a funder officer to advice on a sustainable funding strategy. 3 of the libraries have now agreed to a lease of the building they currently occupy

5. Priority Area Three

Information & Communication

Gateshead Council's volunteering webpages continue to develop and support voluntary and community groups the Council are working with. All volunteer roles & opportunities within Gateshead can be promoted, events and activities link in and there is the potential for a community audit to be undertaken in 2016 around assets and facilities available across Gateshead as a whole.

Capacity Building to develop The Gateshead Community Centre Network which was developed in 2011 has continued. The Network brings together representatives of over 30 community centres, sports clubs, community libraries and other organisations that have an interest in building management. During 2015, the network had an agreed programme of meetings for the year, focusing on building management, business planning, and communications/PR and funding. The Network is intended to share best practice, provide peer mentoring and develop capacity as well as collaborative working.

The OurGateshead website continues to grow. By December 2015, over 1000 groups were listed and sharing information on events and activities across the Borough. In addition to the information held on the website there is ongoing ICT support for local residents, including ICT skills support for jobseekers. An application has submitted to UK Online for funding to support online health information awareness.

6. Priority Area Four

Involving Children, Young People & Schools

A number of joint ventures and projects have been delivered throughout 2015 involving Gateshead Schools, Colleges and Youth Groups. An example of this was the Volunteer activity day held on 19th November 2015.

- The Seven Starts Estate (Springwell) is within the 10% most deprived in terms of income, employment, Health, and education, skills & training. The Capacity Building Team, The Housing Company and a range of other organisations are all continuously working hard to reduce this deprivation. The Neighbourhood Management Team's Capacity Building for Health Team linked up with The Gateshead Housing Company who purchased through their funding approximately 500 trees and 400 bulbs to plant on the estate and the former site of St Edmund Campion School. The Capacity Building officers invited local community groups and schools to help support the initiative by planting the trees & bulbs which not only provided a sense of

community spirit but started a longer term improvement to the area. Gateshead Council also included this as a volunteer activity for their employees.

- The opportunity gave the local school children a chance to get involved in their own immediate area. Not only were they able to see an immediate improvement to the site and feel the benefit from the physical exercise, they will be able to watch the trees and bulbs grow and continue to flourish providing a long lasting environmental improvement. This will have a positive impact on the people involved knowing that they have achieved this themselves. It will act as a long lasting example of what can happen if people get involved locally. The school have also now developed a long lasting partnership with the team.

7. Priority Area Five

Supporting Positive Community Relationships

Gateshead Muslim Society

The Gateshead Muslim Society has been supported to develop a men's and women's walking group. Members of the society have been trained as walk leaders (3 men and 3 women) and are networking with the Friends of Saltwell Park on a range of walks, usually approximately a mile in length, from the Muslim Community Centre to Saltwell Park. The women's group currently walk weekly, it is linked to the regular craft group which has enabled attendees to engage in both activities.

Peace of Mind

Peace of Mind is a group based at Whitehall Road Methodist church the organisation was set up by a group of women in Behnam who are seeking asylum. Supporting asylum seekers, refugees & migrants from the BME community to overcome barriers & difficulties they face integrating into society.

Comfrey Project @ Windmill Hills

The Comfrey Project based at the Windmill Hills Centre provides asylum seekers and refugees across Gateshead with a safe, welcoming environment, which promotes personal wellbeing through a sense of place and belonging. This is achieved by various shared creative crafts including allotment gardening, cooking and crafts. We have a down to earth approach to social integration and community health. Listening, sharing and inclusion are fundamental to everything they do. Through their work they encourage integration, by introducing participants to other activities organised both by the project and by other local voluntary and community projects. They provide emotional and practical support to participants, and where necessary signpost them on to relevant statutory or voluntary agencies for additional support and advice. Support comes not just from staff but from group members as well.

Gateshead Clubhouse

Gateshead Clubhouse is a user ran mental health community hub that provides support to people with mental health problems who live in Gateshead.

The organisation has no paid staff; their service is run entirely by our members who are themselves mental health service users. We have a community cafe, rooms for hire and IT suite.

Their vision sees the Clubhouse being a venue where people are always welcome on their own terms. The belief is that people need a safe harbour where members have the assurance that they are in control about what level of activity and participation they wish to engage in, without the fear they will have to move on before they choose to, or are ready to leave. In this way the Clubhouse could then be in a position to truly support people to build up their own resilience and, in a suitable time-frame, be able to move on with their lives.

Equal Arts

Helix Arts, working with Gateshead Council and other partners, have been successful in securing Capacity Building Funding to enable them to offer two dedicated Make Art Happen programmes in Gateshead with local community groups that will focus on the health and well-being agenda aligned to the Live Well Gateshead model. The programmes will be delivered within Live Well Gateshead's targeted neighbourhoods and each programme will offer 10 places, ideally with up to three representatives from three community groups involved with each programme. The locations identified were

- Wrekenton is a priority neighbourhood with an emerging local partnership (Live Well Gateshead @ High Fell) considering health and wellbeing and includes the Birtley Partnership.
- Teams/Bensham/Dunston area drawing groups from the local area including the Teams Life Centre, Changing Lives, St Chads and link to work of Big Local

8. Outcomes and Impact

In conclusion, the outcomes and impact of the delivery of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy's include:

- A co-ordinated approach to community engagement and development across Gateshead
- Increased levels of community engagement and participation
- A sustainable approach to community asset transfers

9. Current and Future Work

There are a number of activities that the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy will continue to deliver throughout 2016. Some of the key areas of work include:

- Continue to develop the Gateshead Offer to match the capacity needs of community groups
- Building on Community Linking initiatives
- Continuing to develop and deliver ongoing volunteering projects and initiatives
- Developing, coordinating and delivering Gateshead's Volunteers Month 2016
- Coordinating and delivering the Partnership approach to "Fill the Gap Holiday Scheme".
- Continue joint work with organisation and groups within the voluntary and community sector of Gateshead.
- Supporting groups develop community projects
- Inter-generational work

The Gateshead Communities Together Strategy will continue to be overseen by the Council and GVOC and impact will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Gateshead Strategic Partnership on annual basis.

10. Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to: -

- (i) Note the progress achieved in the last twelve months
- (ii) Comment on the level of impact of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy and Action Plan and whether satisfactory progress has been made.
- (iii) Comment on the five priorities outlined in paragraph 2 and advise on the continued relevance of these priorities for the forthcoming year.
- (iv) Agree to a review of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy in 2016.

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