



# COUNCIL MEETING

18 JULY 2019

## GATESHEAD COUNCIL

### REPORT FROM THE CABINET

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This is the report from the Cabinet. Its purpose is to report on issues for the period May – July 2019.

#### PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

#### 2. PEOPLE

##### *Children and Young People*

Outcome of recent Ofsted inspections:

**Children's Services** - An inspection across Gateshead Council's children's social care services took place in April/May which looked at early help, social work, commissioning of services and education. A small team of Ofsted inspectors were on site for one week and focused on social work practice with children and their families.

The previous full inspection of children's services took place in 2015, where Gateshead Council was judged to be good with one area requiring improvement, that of experiences and progress of care leavers. This was followed up by a focused visit on Care Leavers in 2018.

The inspectors concluded in an Ofsted report published on the 11 June 2019, that children and families in Gateshead are benefiting from a Good service overall and in all three areas of the Ofsted framework.

The report highlighted that:

- Children, who are in need of early help and those who are on the edge of care, are now receiving an excellent service.
- Social workers know children well, are aspirational for them and care deeply about helping and protecting them from harm
- Children benefit from the help and support they receive from highly skilled, committed and knowledgeable staff
- There is good practice within most areas of the service which has a demonstrable positive impact on improving children and family's circumstances

The report also found that there is a shared ambition within the Council for children and young people who are encouraged to influence services provided for them. They are listened to; their concerns are addressed; and the Council is proud of their achievements and the progress they are making.

Staff across the service are described throughout the report as "skilled", "highly experienced", "well-trained", "committed" and "passionate about their work". Inspectors

also noted that there is a “strong and effective” senior leadership team that has “delivered tangible improvements to both the quality and impact of social work practice and the experiences and progress of children is now good”.

The inspectors indicated there were four areas where they felt the Council could make improvements and plans are already in place:

- Managers’ and independent reviewing officers’ challenge to the quality of social work practice, including more effective use of supervision when practice falls short.
- The quality and focus of written plans to ensure that they are specific and targeted to meet the needs of individual children, to include pathways plans that are co-produced with young people to address all risks, and life-story work to help all children in care understand their histories.
- The pace of change in relation to, and the quality of services for, disabled children.
- Access to services for those children in care who live out of the borough, including the timely return of personal education plans from schools outside of the borough.

The findings from Ofsted provides external validation that the Council is achieving on the Thrive Agenda and putting people and families at the heart of everything it does.

**Blaydon Children’s Home-** Ofsted inspected this home on 28 and 29 May 2019 and judged that it provides effective services that meet the requirements for good, and that the effectiveness of leaders and managers was outstanding.

Blaydon Children’s Home provides accommodation for five young people aged between 12 and 17 years at the time of their admission.

In his report, the inspector notes that a strength of the home is the consistent positive messages and outreach work that staff engage in with young people who, in many cases, seek advice and support well into adulthood. It was also noted that staff support and promote contact for children and young people, in many cases re-establishing family ties with positive outcomes.

It was acknowledged that since the last full inspection in September 2018, the home has a more targeted approach to safeguarding children and young people and that risk assessments and behaviour support plans are thorough and staff know the children and young people well. Monthly reviews enable identified risks to be evaluated and progress to be demonstrated.

The inspector noted that security in and out of the home is important and is managed well by staff, however there was inconsistency of visitors signing in and out which needs to be addressed.

The report states the manager is confident and has shown strong leadership, and her dedication and commitment is also shared by two experienced assistant managers. The standard of recording in children’s and young people’s individual files was identified as excellent.

### **3. PLACE AND ECONOMY**

#### ***Environment and Transport***

##### Planning Advisory Service Local Plan Making Advice Pilot

The Gateshead and Newcastle Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan was adopted by Gateshead Council and Newcastle City Council in March 2015, and the Councils are required to publish a review of its policies by March 2020 (five years after its adoption). Feedback from engagement with cabinet members has endorsed a 'light-touch' approach to the review, to be undertaken collaboratively with Newcastle City Council.

Guidance on carrying out a Local Plan review is currently quite limited. Officers from Gateshead and Newcastle City Councils have accepted an invitation from the Planning Advisory Service to take part in a pilot programme that will support the development of an emerging plan-making / review advice note and toolkit. Our feedback will be used to refine the emerging advice note and toolkit but will also assist us in understanding the potential scope and content of our plan review. The Planning Advisory Service aims to complete the pilot by early August 2019, and publish the advice note and toolkit in September: these timescales are compatible with the emerging programme for preparing the review of the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan.

##### Tyne Valley Rail Line – Timetable Changes

Northern (who operate train services on the Tyne Valley Line) revised their timetables on 19 May 2019. Prior to the changes, the general pattern of daytime service Monday to Saturday was three trains per hour between Newcastle and the Metrocentre. One of these services terminated at Metro centre, one at Hexham and one at Carlisle. The revised service retains three trains per hour between Newcastle and Metrocentre but now one of these services continues to terminate at Hexham with two terminating at Carlisle. Monday to Saturday service patterns at Blaydon and Dunston remain largely unchanged, as do Sunday services at all three stations.

##### Major Road Network – Tyne Bridge

A bid for major maintenance work on the Tyne Bridge has been submitted to Transport for the North. This would allow for a full re-painting of the structure together with a range of other maintenance activity including waterproofing and repairs to masonry. Transport for the North is now compiling bids from across the north as part of package to be presented to Government as a proposed programme of improvements for the Major Road Network

#### ***Housing***

##### Community Led Housing Schemes

On 2 July 2018 the Government announced they were making £163 million available across England through the Community Led Housing (CLH) Fund. The Fund aims to increase housing supply in England by increasing the number of additional homes delivered by the CLH sector. The prospectus sets out that CLH will provide housing which is affordable at incomes specific to a local level. The investment is expected to nationally deliver 10,000 new homes by 2021.

The Council acknowledge that CLH should be added to the strategic mix and it is noted in the Housing Strategy that it can diversify the housing offer in Gateshead. CLH also

directly relates to the Council's emerging Thrive agenda as it is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing.

This funding has enabled us to appoint a Community Led Housing Enabler. This Officer will act as a dedicated resource to help accelerate this form of housing delivery. As a region, the South of Tyne (Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside, and Durham) are also seeking external funding to develop a Community Led Housing Hub, this will offer further support to groups throughout the development of their schemes.

Gateshead Council is currently assisting four active community led housing groups in Gateshead who are all at quite different stages of mobilisation. One of the groups already have a partnership with a Registered Provider and also has experience of this form of housing delivery. This group have successfully gained Homes England grant support to cover the revenue costs associated with the scheme. This group is now beginning to think about site investigations and other pre-development feasibility studies. The other community groups that we are supporting are currently working towards preparing an initial business plan which will show the sustainability of the group and demonstrate how they will achieve the key milestones set out by Homes England. All three groups are in the process of a revenue bid to Homes England having employed specialist CLH consultants to assist them with their bid preparation.

There are a number of other organisations within Gateshead who have the potential to deliver CLH who previously may not have had housing delivery ambitions. Officers are currently in discussions with these groups to find out if their appetite could become a deliverable scheme. One of the key tasks for the Council's CLH Enabler will be to promote and stimulate these groups who may not see themselves as having the ability or finance to deliver this form of housing.

## **4. COMMUNITIES**

### ***Communities and Volunteering***

#### Volunteers' Week

Nationally Volunteers' Week takes place in the first week of June. Gateshead extended this to Volunteers Month in 2013 which covers activities throughout all of June.

Throughout the month increased publicity not only highlighted available volunteer roles but also identified the type of activities that people already deliver in Gateshead. One of the key areas this year has been Nationally Volunteer's Week takes place in the first week of June. Gateshead extended this to Volunteers Month in 2013 which covers activities throughout all of June.

Throughout the month increased publicity not only highlighted available volunteer roles but also identified the type of activities that people already deliver in Gateshead. One of the key areas this year has been Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) highlighting how private sector organisations send their employees over to volunteer in Gateshead within different projects through Helping Out Days. These organisations include the likes of; Newcastle Building Society, Sage, Arup, and DWP amongst others. The Helping out days involve any activities such as gardening, painting and even website

development that can help a voluntary group. The activities are delivered within the space of one day.

In 2019 the funding available in Volunteers Month has been incorporated into the main Thrive Fund. Grants from between £250 - £3,000 are available to support groups in different areas including volunteering. Projects can be delivered at any time and unlike previous years, are not confined to June.

For the first time the Gateshead Awards were held in June this year on the evening of Wednesday 12 June. The Gateshead Awards highlight the huge investment into the community from volunteers and voluntary groups. There are several categories including, volunteer and voluntary organisation of the year. A winner in each category was announced on the night.

The Totaliser returned in 2019 to provide a snap shot of the estimated volunteer hours in Gateshead. This provides an idea of the amount of activity and investment into the borough. What is captured is just the tip of the iceberg however it provides a figure to compare previous Volunteers Month totals. Groups and individuals are welcome to record their volunteer hours throughout June using the online Totaliser. This year, so far, an estimate of 128,199 volunteer hours have been recorded with a calculation of £1,666,587 economic value. This compares to 113,151 hours with an economic value of £1,470,963 calculated in 2018.

### ***Culture, Sport and Leisure***

#### Heritage Open Days 2019

This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event which will take place between 13 – 22 September 2019.

The five districts of Tyne and Wear take turns to host the launch event, and this year it falls to Gateshead. The event will take place on Thursday 10 September at the Land of Oak and Iron Heritage Centre, Winlaton.

The regional festival of Heritage Open Days in Tyne & Wear continues to be one of the biggest and best in the country and the support, enthusiasm and feedback from the volunteers and the visitors remains very positive.

#### Great North 10k

The annual Great North 10k took place on Sunday 7 July with 4,000 participants running the North East's biggest 10k road race. The race, which starts and finishes at Gateshead International Stadium included runners from local clubs, charity/fun runners and this year included 200 Gurkha soldiers. There was also a run dedicated to families which included a one mile run around the Gateshead International Stadium with over 3000 spectators welcoming runners at the finish line in the Stadium arena.

#### Go Gateshead Sport & Leisure – Memberships

The service has been developing the leisure offer to help to get more people participating in physical activity and increasing income to support the sustainability of the service. In 2013 the service witnessed a peak of 12,000 memberships following the Council's £38m Building an Active Future programme investment, which has been declining annually to 10,000 in 2015 and down to 8500 in 2017. The service has since seen a significant positive net gain in memberships over the last 12 months as a result

of a targeted marketing and sales approach and the service has achieved its target of 10,000 memberships.

The service is also now offering two new membership packages Go Kids 0-7 years and Go Kids Plus 8-13 years to encourage young people to be more active. The membership packages offer access to a range of activities for one monthly price which includes; access to Gateshead international Stadium running track, swimming, Go Bears Den, selected access to Clip n Climb and Flow Rider sessions and also includes some gym and fitness class access for the 11-13 years.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The Council is asked to note this report.