



Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group

Tuesday, 25 February 2014

To be held in the Whickham Room, Civic Centre

2:00pm

1. **Apologies**

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group held on 26 November 2013

3. **Matters Arising**

2:05pm

4. **Partnership Boards – updates
Partner Updates – Current Issues**

Strategic Planning

2:15pm

5. **Gateshead Communities Together**

Joan Moon, Gateshead Community Network and Ian Stevenson, Gateshead Council

Discussion

2:40pm

6. **Welfare Reform**

Next Meeting: Wednesday 21 May 2014 at 2:00pm

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Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group

26 November 2013

Minutes

Present:	Cllr Mick Henry Gev Pringle Clive Davies Tim Smith Helen Matthews Margaret Whellans Cllr Martin Gannon Carole Wood John Gray Keith Allan Mark Gerrard Joy Brindle Tom Brydon	Gateshead Council GVOG DWP/Job Centre Plus Northumbria Police NEXUS Children's Trust Board Gateshead Council Public Health – Gateshead Council Gateshead College Public Health - Gateshead Council Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service Gateshead Involvement Forum
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In Attendance:

Sheila Johnston	Gateshead Council
Charlotte Wainwright	Gateshead Council
Louise Rule	Gateshead Council
Gayle Scurfield	Gateshead Council
Rosalyn White	Gateshead Council

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Renwick, Yvonne Ormston, Jane Mulholland, Ian Atkinson, Neil Adamson, Sandra Brydon, Martyn Strike, Joan Moon, Esther Ward, Suzie Robson and Judith Doyle.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

An update on the Gateshead Compact will be brought back to February's meeting.

4. PARTNER UPDATES

- **GVOG / GCN**

GCN has worked with GVOG to bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Bid. The bid is around how tourism will be increased and sustainable employment

developed at Derwent Valley. If successful, £2.3m would be awarded for four years. The GSP will be kept updated on progress.

- **Gateshead College**

Richard Thorold has retired as Principal of Gateshead College and his successor is Judith Doyle.

- **Northumbria Police**

There has been a recent spike in the number of dwelling burglaries. The police have carried out a lot of targeted work on this issue and levels are now reducing.

- **Council**

The budget consultation is ongoing and in October Cabinet agreed the Economic Growth Acceleration Plan for consultation purposes. Approval has been given for 35 funding applications, totalling £119,930 for Round 2 of the Capacity Building Fund.

5. TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION

The Steering Group received a presentation on the proposals for changes within the Fire and Rescue Service. Currently the service provides a number of elements; response, prevention, resilience and protection. Prevention work focuses on helping people to stay safe within their homes, protection work is around ensuring businesses stick to their obligations in terms of fire safety. The resilience work carried out by the service deals with more widespread threats and in particular carrying out specific roles alongside partners.

It was noted that the duty to respond is driven by statute and provision must be made for;

- Extinguishing fires
- Protecting life and property in the event of fire
- Rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents
- Protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents
- Responding to other emergencies as conferred by the Secretary of State

National research shows that there is a link between deprivation and fire risk and it was noted that there are a number of areas where this is an issue. The service is therefore targeted at places where there is the most risk, for example; home safety checks for vulnerable people, school campaigns, early intervention programmes, Safetyworks and installing domestic sprinklers in vulnerable homes. In terms of domestic sprinklers it was confirmed that Gateshead is leading out of five authorities and is working closely with the Gateshead Housing Company. It was noted that a lot of diversionary work is ongoing with children and young people, however it was also acknowledged that this work may not be sustainable going forward.

In terms of the number of incidents, for Tyne and Wear this number has decreased over the last ten years and has the fifth most reduced risk in the country.

The Group was shown a map of incidents across Tyne and Wear over the last three years. This highlighted why the service needs to be risk based as it shows that some areas have more incidents. As the service works across the county, when changes to the service are considered this is done in the context of the whole of Tyne and Wear.

In relation to deliberate fires, although there has been a significant reduction, Tyne and Wear has the highest level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) fires in the country. 72% of all fires in Tyne and Wear during 2012/13 were deliberate, this is compared to the national average of 45%. Youth Justice Board figures for youth offences in the North East were shown and this highlighted that incidents of arson are relatively low. 76 incidents of arson were committed by young people in 2011/12, this was a male dominated crime with 70 of the incidents being committed by boys and six by girls. It was noted that 51% of the incidents were committed by 10-14 year olds. It was also acknowledged that ASB fires are under recorded as there were 6010 deliberate fires during this period.

In terms of current response in Tyne and Wear, there are 17 stations, 15 of which are full time, one part time station in Chopwell and one day crew station in Birtley. There are 30 engines across all stations, these are placed based on risk. Across the region there are 645 operational Firefighters with 119 on duty at any one time. The average first pump response time in the region is five minutes, 42 seconds which is the fastest in the country, response to house fires is prioritised. It was recognised that response in the region is significantly ahead of the country and this is due to the frontline service being protected.

Since 2010 the service has lost one quarter of its budget, this has led to an overall reduction in staff. The service has taken a review of its responses, looking at level of risk, type, size and location of incidents. A breakdown of incidents by stations was provided which showed a significant difference in incident numbers across the area. Work is ongoing to get rid of the high volume of false alarm calls at risk level three. Incidents were further broken down into risk type and time of day, this showed that stations are not busy overnight and therefore current staffing arrangements may need to be reconsidered.

A number of options for change have been proposed and are currently open to public consultation;

- Option 1 – remove six engines, introduce two small vehicles and two additional Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) for the evening and stand down two pumps at night. This would make a saving of £5.1M.
- Option 2 – implement Option 1 plus close Gosforth and Wallsend stations and replace with one in Benton. This would further reduce costs by £170,000.
- Option 3 – implement Options 1 and 2 plus close Sunderland Central station. This would further reduce costs by at least £340,000.

In terms of the impact for Gateshead, Swalwell station would lose one pump in all options. It was acknowledged that Gateshead would see a 17% reduction whereas other areas are facing a 50% reduction.

It was confirmed that options two and three will mean slower response time to some high risk incidents. However, for the majority of places in the regions response time would be between four and six minutes.

It was noted that diversionary work is undertaken with young people and the service is keen not to lose this, although this is not a statutory requirement. In order to continue diversionary activities, the work needs to be more targeted and more partnership working to be carried out.

Given the loss of a pump in Swalwell, it was asked what the impact would be on incidents at the Metrocentre. It was emphasised that these options are based on risk and that preparatory work has taken place for all major sites such as the MetroCentre.

It was queried whether paid staff deliver the diversionary work or whether this is volunteers. It was confirmed that the work is carried out by both paid staff and volunteers.

It was questioned whether cuts have been made to back office staff and it was noted that one third of back office positions have gone. It was also pointed out that everything possible has been done before impacting on front line services. It was suggested that this should be made clearer to the public.

It was questioned if there was a correlation between response time and lives saved? There is a correlation to if the fire spreads beyond the room of origin and most fires are contained in Tyne and Wear. The correlation is also linked to prevention.

RESOLVED - That a response to the consultation be submitted.

6. COUNCIL BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Steering Group received a presentation on the Council's budget consultation. It was noted that since 2010 the Council has made savings of £75M and now employs 1,275 fewer people.

It is anticipated that a further £45M will need to be saved over the next two years, although uncertainties remain in a number of areas. Confirmation of the funding gap will not be known until the Local Government Settlement which is expected later on in December.

The Council continues to keep its long term vision contained in Vision 2030 and the Council Plan. The medium term financial strategy outlines the aims of the Council; to stimulate economic growth, build capacity in communities and continue to be efficient and effective.

This year the consultation looks at universal and targeted services and these are further split into themed areas; environment, economy, community culture and leisure, adult services, children and young people and health.

In terms of the environment theme, the consultation asks for views on areas such as; reducing street cleansing, charging for garden waste collection, switching of

some street lighting, stopping back lane improvement works and introducing car park charges and bus lane camera enforcement. In relation to the local economy the consultation asks for views on; reducing Gateshead's events calendar, reducing or stopping the Employment Support Grant and reducing or stopping support to local businesses. The consultation asks questions on communities, culture and leisure around closing leisure facilities and reducing funding to sport work and museum and arts organisations. Also adult services are being looked at around reducing the number of people eligible for help by meeting critical need only. In terms of children and young people the consultation poses questions around reducing current entitlements, in particular free transport, reducing the level of play service and school crossing patrols and increasing the targeting of services such as youth services, and trading services to schools. The health theme of the consultation focuses on a remodelling of existing services.

The consultation ends on 17 December and the outcome will be reported to Cabinet on 21 January. A further report will be taken to Cabinet on 25 February asking for the budget to be recommended for agreement by full Council.

The point was made that the voluntary sector has previously worked to support those residents not entitled to adult services care, however with depleting resources this is becoming more difficult.

It was also pointed out that if there is not as much spend on preventative work this increases risk in a number of areas. It was confirmed that this is a whole budget approach and at this stage are not proposals but rather about understanding what people think.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the comments of the Steering Group on the choices outlined were noted.
 - (ii) That the Steering Group noted that the choices are supported by a Comprehensive Impact Assessment.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY BOARD

A report was presented which provided an update on progress of the Community Safety Board. Annually the Board produces an intelligence-led Strategic Assessment to help set the priorities for Gateshead.

The priorities for 2013/14 are;

- Lowering the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce the harm caused by substance misuse
- Protect and support vulnerable victims and communities
- Reduce re-offending

It was noted that reported crime has increased in Gateshead, however Gateshead remains the best performing Community Safety Partnership within its comparison group. In addition, the proportion of offenders being apprehended has increased.

In terms of the fear of crime, a Task and Finish Group has been set up to look at the implications of the ASB, Crime and Policing Bill. The latest Tyne and Wear Perception Survey showed that the majority of residents in Gateshead felt safe. In

relation to protecting and supporting vulnerable victims, there has been a 9% increase in reported hate-related incidents, however it was acknowledged that this may be due to increased awareness. Partner agencies continue to support high-risk victims, including specialist support for victims of domestic violence through the Independent Domestic Advocacy (IDVA) Team. Work is also ongoing on the Arson Protocol.

Work is underway with A&E at the QE hospital around reducing harm caused by substance misuse. In terms of reducing re-offending, strong links have been made with prisons in the region so there is now better engagement with offenders from an earlier stage. In addition, a local Transition Protocol has been created to strengthen the handover process between the YOT and Probation Trust. The Probation Trust has developed a Recovery Pilot which works with 15 problematic offenders and treatment services, so far this work has had a positive impact and there has been a reduction in the number of offences committed.

The Steering Group members were made aware that the YOT have been notified of a joint inspection on the 20th January 2013 regarding troubled families.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Steering Group agreed that the progress is delivering the aspirations for Gateshead people set out in Vision 2030.
 - (ii) That the Steering Group agreed to the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership Plan to be reflected in the refreshed Vision 2030.

8. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Steering Group received a report on the progress of the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) since April.

It was recognised that prior to its establishment the Board operated in shadow format, now the Board is moving towards integrated planning. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Gateshead has been developed and a Strategic Commissioning Group has been set up to develop commissioning plans and future commissioning arrangements.

In addition the Gateshead Healthwatch has been established which provides local citizens and communities a voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services work in their locality.

Stakeholder events have been developed by the HWB to ensure better engagement. The first event was held in July and focused on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, a further three events are planned and any suggestions regarding themes are welcome.

Mental health and wellbeing will continue to be a focus of the HWB and, in terms of the wider remit, the Urban Core Plan and its impact on health and wellbeing will also be looked at.

Future topics for the HWB include; consideration of commissioning plans for health care, social care, public health and children's services, integration of health and social care and the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.

The Steering Group was asked to feed in any areas of interest that could be picked up by the HWB. It was pointed out the progress is difficult to assess at present because the Clinical Commissioning Group and Healthwatch Gateshead have only been in play since April.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Steering Group noted the initial progress update on Gateshead's Health and Wellbeing Board.
 - (ii) That the Steering Group agreed that the progress is supporting the delivery of the aspirations for Gateshead people set out in Vision 2030.

9. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Steering Group received a presentation on the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health. It was acknowledged that Public Health in NHS has now transferred into the Council. It was noted that local authorities can influence outcomes in different ways because NHS is focused on physical health, whereas local authorities focus on wellness.

In terms of the health of Gateshead it was confirmed that people are continuing to live longer, however life expectancy is below the national average and varies across wards. There are 450 preventable deaths per year, these are to do with preventative factors in relation to early intervention, liver disease is also increasing at an alarming rate.

The annual report focuses on mental health and wellbeing. This is about positive relationships, working, contributing to the community and having a sense of purpose. A number of social factors contribute to mental health and wellbeing, including social connections to each other, social isolation and how people feel about where they live. There is an evidence base that shows what can promote wellbeing; connect, be active, take notice, keep learning and give, work is being built on these areas.

In terms of measuring mental health and wellbeing it was confirmed that one in five adults in Gateshead are diagnosed with depression. Adults are more likely to access NHS secondary mental health services in Gateshead than the national average. Also, in 2010/11 the number of children admitted to hospital for self harm exceeded the England average. It was noted that according to the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, wellbeing differs across all wards.

It was recognised that place shaping plays an important role in promoting general wellbeing of a community. Social capital is generally good in Gateshead although there is a high level of depression.

Mental health and wellbeing is looked at over three stages of life; children, young people and families, working age adults and older adults. In relation to children, young people and families, the importance of ensuring children have the best start in life was highlighted. Work must start at pregnancy to target vulnerable families and then carried through into various school based programmes. In terms of working age adults it was noted that employment has a very strong positive association with wellbeing. It was also pointed out that the impact of welfare reform is likely to have a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing. Gateshead has an ageing population and is set to grow in the next 20 years, therefore it is important to tackle social isolation and there are a number of case studies of good practice that can be built on.

A number of recommendations are contained in the annual report;

- Overall health improvement approach
- Integrated wellness approach
- Capacity building in communities for improving health and wellbeing
- Promoting the Five Ways to mental wellbeing
- Building wellbeing and emotional resilience across organisational settings
- Measuring how local services impact on wellbeing
- Developing the JSNA to include indicators of mental wellbeing and strengthening the focus on local communities
- Early intervention and promoting resilience in children and families
- Strengthen the actions to mitigate the impacts of austerity and welfare reform
- Improving signposting and joining up work across agencies
- Linking health to economic developments and improved prosperity
- Raise awareness of social isolation and loneliness and encourage social connections.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Steering Group noted the DPH annual report and its recommendations.
 - (ii) That the Steering Group considered how partners can help to deliver positive mental health and wellbeing especially in relation to the social and economic factors that influence wellbeing.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place at 2.00pm on Tuesday 25 February 2013, in the Whickham Room, Gateshead Civic Centre.



Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group

Tuesday 25 February 2014

Impact of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy

Purpose of the report

1. This report provides the second annual update on the impact of Gateshead's Community Together Strategy agreed by Gateshead Strategic Partnership (GSP) Steering Group and Gateshead Council in 2012. It includes information on the impact of actions as a result of the strategy delivered by a range of GSP partners over the period December 2012 – December 2013.

Vision 2030 context

2. The Gateshead Communities Strategy (GCT) helps to deliver the outcomes identified in the 'Gateshead Volunteers' big idea. This sets out objectives to support a thriving Voluntary & Community Sector and promotes vibrant, sustainable communities through a culture of supporting community and voluntary sector organisations in the delivery of local services. There is also the commitment to volunteering and to engage, involve and develop communities

Background

3. The GCT Strategy and Action Plan were agreed by the GSP Steering Group and Gateshead Council's Cabinet in May 2012.
4. 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:
 - i. Community engagement & participation
 - ii. Community capacity building
 - iii. Information & communication
 - iv. Involving children, young people & schools
 - v. Supporting positive community relationships.
5. Implementation of the Strategy continues to be overseen by a multi agency working group. The group maintains an oversight of activities taking place in communities across Gateshead and encourages closer working relationships to share resources and avoid duplication.

Impact of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy during 2013

6. Examples of the work undertaken by partners under each of the five priority areas include:

Community Engagement & Participation

7. Gateshead Ethnic Communities Together (GECT) – a new group established, facilitated by Gateshead Community Network (GCN) bringing together local people from a range of backgrounds to look at ways to ensure the views of these communities are represented.

8. Area Conferences - the third round of area conferences took place between July 2013 and January 2014. All the conferences discussed progress against agreed priorities set following the previous round of conferences and agreed new issues for the Council, partners and local communities to focus on over the next 12 months. GSP partners (e.g. Police, Health organisations and GCN), voluntary and community sector organisations from each area and residents have been actively involved in the conferences. In the East, young people assisted in event management, participated in the conference discussions regarding alcohol and their participation within a Community Alcohol Partnership.
9. Public Health - Collaborative working across the CCG, Public Health and Gateshead Council's Neighbourhood Management Team (NMT) to improve commissioning and understanding the need and demand for local services. Plans are in place to undertake a Health Needs Assessment within each of the five localities.
10. Use of the consultation portal is being developed so that partners have a better understanding of the functionality of the portal and can access details of all current and past consultations held in one 'searchable' location on the council's website. Communications and drop-in events are being planned to raise awareness about the facilities available through the consultation portal and the benefits of using the portal.

Community Capacity Building

11. The Gateshead Offer is a range of free advice, information and support available 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, Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (GVOC) and GCN using their collective knowledge, skills and expertise to create a network of support. The offer promotes volunteering and community involvement in local strategic planning.
12. Community Asset Transfer - 6 community centre management committees - Eighton Banks Village Hall, Mary Sanders Hall, Whickham Community Centre, Brandling Community Centre, Allerdene and Teams - have signed leases. Lobley Hill Community Centre has been leased to Groundwork North East. A further 7 transfers are due to proceed before the end of March 2014.
13. GVOC's Gateshead Volunteer Centre is promoting over 200 volunteering opportunities in Gateshead. From July-Dec 2013, 64 new opportunities were created to volunteer - including opportunities with older people, fundraising, environmental improvement as well as many one-off volunteering days. Opportunities have also been promoted through 1-to-1 interviews, drop ins & the national website www.do-it.org.
14. The Libraries Service and the Volunteer Centre have worked together to develop five community libraries supported through volunteers to maintain 5 community run libraries. The support has included recruiting volunteers, constituting each of the five groups and operating the library.

15. The Big Local Partnership in Teams, Derwentwater and Racecourse Estates has been established, with over 50% of the partnership made up of local residents. A community plan has been created that captures the views of local people and describes the issues that face the local community and people that work in the area. The community plan has been approved by the Big Local Trust which will release funding for the Partnership to further develop its programme of community engagement and funding of local activities.

Information & Communication

16. 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 and more recently the community libraries. For 2014, the Network has agreed a programme of meetings for the year, focusing on building management, business planning and funding. The Network is intended to share best practice, provide peer mentoring, develop capacity as well as collaborative working
17. The Gateshead Housing Company has been proactive in delivering “Social Media Made Simple” training to residents during 2013. The training covers the advantages and potential pitfalls of using social media, how to set up accounts and how to use social media to engage with other residents or keep up to date with housing issues.
18. The OurGateshead Website continues to grow. The totals for 2013 were:
 - i. 828 groups listed on the site
 - ii. 60,250 visits were made (up 174% from 21,975 in 2012)
 - iii. 182,809 pages viewed (up 127% from 80,428 in 2012)
19. During 2014, the site is to be upgraded and will be made more accessible. Gateshead Council’s Public Health Service will be using OurGateshead instead of their current Health & Wellbeing site.

Involving Children Young People and Schools

20. Gateshead’s Library Service is making best use of the region’s cultural offer to enhance the learning and recreational experience for Children and Young People by harnessing a network of ambassadors in every youth and learning setting to receive a clear offer from the cultural sector. A web-site and on-line membership service links clear information and support for developing projects and activities both in formal learning settings and in informal youth settings.
21. The Hoops for Health Programme has been delivered by the Newcastle Eagles basketball team in 11 primary schools in Gateshead. It focused on key areas including healthy eating and physical activity.
22. The Healthy Schools Initiative supports schools to address key health and emotional well-being priorities. In Gateshead there is a Healthy Schools Network and website which shares relevant information regarding key issues such as; bullying; obesity; substance misuse; alcohol; accident prevention; and, tobacco. A key role of the network is to identify and share best practice, and to raise awareness of resources available to address these themes.

23. EMTAS (The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service) is working with the Anne Frank Trust to place the Anne Frank: History for Today exhibition in secondary schools and train Y9 pupils as Anne Frank Ambassadors. EMTAS's School Twinning programme has linked 40 Gateshead schools with schools in India.
24. Gateshead Youth Assembly and Gateshead Youth Council have worked with Public Health on smoking, obesity and sexual health agendas. They have also worked with Child Poverty Action Group, North East Child Poverty Commission, Children North East and Criticalinks on Poverty and Financial Inclusion.

Supporting Positive Community Relationships

25. The British Heart Foundation, Healthy Hearts programme is now in its second year of a three year programme. This will include a Hearty Lives Community capacity post. There was widespread consultation with men in the East of Gateshead undertaken by Gateshead Community Network. This work has been valuable to inform the subsequent remodelling of lifestyle services.
26. Groundwork North East will be considering the feasibility of setting up and running a community café in Lobley Hill Community Centre, drawing upon their various regional expertise/experience running Work Programme contracts, employing apprentices and as a charity having access to matched funding opportunities.
27. Birtley Community Hub is currently developing a payment of health checks on a pay by results basis, the partnership is keen to explore how it commissions health services to meet the needs of residents as a result of these health checks. The partnership is also now responsible for 2 community buildings with the possibility of more to follow and these buildings could accommodate the delivery of these health services.
28. Gateshead Together Week annual festival of communities and culture took place week commencing 17th June 2013. The week included Gateshead Goes Global Day featuring an international theme at Gateshead Central and Rowland's Gill Libraries. Community Coffee Morning sessions, a Green fingered Growers Gardening talk and Children's Story-telling events engaged local residents including parents and children and older people in celebrating Gateshead Goes Global Day

Next Steps

29. There are a number of activities that the GCT Working Group will continue to oversee throughout 2014. Some of the key areas of work include:
 - Review and refresh the GCT strategy to ensure it remains fit for purpose with a view to a revised Strategy being agreed in 2015
 - Ensure the Gateshead Offer continues to match the capacity needs of community groups
 - Gateshead Together Week 2014
 - Gateshead Together Challenging Stereotypes Campaign
 - Building on Community Linking initiatives

- Supporting groups to develop community projects
 - Inter-generational work
30. The GCT Strategy will continue to be overseen by the GCT Working Group. Progress against the action plan will be reported to Gateshead Strategic Partnership, GMBC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee & Cabinet on an annual basis.

Recommendations

31. The Steering Group is asked 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. Discuss ways in which individual partner organisations can be involved in delivering the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy
 - iv. Agree to a review of the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy in 2015

Contact:	Joan Moon (GCN)	Tel: 0191 478 4103
	Ian Stevenson (GMBC - NMT)	Tel: 0191 433 2812

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Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group

Tuesday 25 February 2014

Welfare Reform

Discussion Outline

2:40pm **Welfare Reform**

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the progress of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, its likely impact on the population of Gateshead and on Gateshead services, and to stimulate debate about the actions that could be taken to mitigate the impact of this reform.

- *Context and Background*
- *Gateshead Position*

Addressing Current impact

Partners will present their experiences and initiatives they are using to mitigate the impact:

- *Use of case studies to illustrate*

Current Initiatives to mitigate the impact

The complex nature of Welfare Reform, especially when set against a backdrop of prolonged economic recession and reductions to public services, means that it is not possible to isolate and estimate the magnitude of these impacts. Also, evidence from previous episodes of economic adversity suggests that the impacts themselves will have a latency period before they become evident. This may be a matter of years.

- *Look at what trends are suggesting*
- *What is being put in place already to mitigate*

Discussion

- Is there currently any duplication in activity where a joined up approach would utilise resources better
- What could your organisation do or assist with?
- Does anyone know of any best practice not already mentioned that can be shared?

3:50pm Close

CONTACT: Charlotte Wainwright, Senior Corporate Officer. **Tel:** 0191 433 2061

Welfare Reform Act 2012

Some General Information

1. The Welfare Reform Act came into force in March 2012 with the main aims being to
 - to 'make work pay' - by moving more people off benefits and into employment
 - to simplify the benefits system
 - to make savings of around £18 billion to the welfare budget by 2014/15.

2. Key elements of the Act include:
 - Introducing **Universal Credit (UC)** - a single payment of benefit made directly to recipients;
 - The abolition of the **Social Fund** and replacing it with non ring fenced resources which local authorities will be responsible for allocating;
 - Replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with **Personal Independent Payments**;
 - **Benefit Cap** – Capping total benefits to which an individual or couple is entitled to £26,000 per year (a maximum of £500 per week) for lone parents and couples with or without children and £18,000 per year (a maximum of £350 per week) for single people without children;
 - Reducing **Housing Benefit** for working age social tenants deemed to be under-occupying their home;
 - Annual increases to **Local Housing Allowance** based on the lower of the Consumer Price Index or the 30th percentile of rents in the area - impacting on all private rented claimants;
 - Replacing the current **Council Tax Benefit scheme** with a localised scheme determined by individual local authorities. The new approach will include a 10% reduction in central government funding for Council Tax support, and protections for certain groups such as pensioners;
 - Changes to the statutory **child maintenance** scheme;

Gateshead Picture

3. Welfare Reform will impact upon over half of Gateshead's households. 14% of Council tenants of working age under-occupy their homes and will be affected by the under-occupancy charge or bedroom tax. The reassessment of Incapacity Benefit claimants is expected to find approximately 50% of claimants as fit for work.

4. The introduction of Universal Credit will impact on over 21,000 people in Gateshead. There are over 20,000 families in Gateshead in receipt of Working Tax Credit (WTC), with the assumption that families will receive, on average, a £1,000 reduction per year.

5. The anticipated costs of these reforms in Gateshead are estimated at between £30.9-£70 million pounds lost to the local economy in 2014/15 (*The Impact of Welfare Reform in the North East*, Association of North East Councils 2013).