

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 14 October 2019 at 10.00 am in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies
2	Minutes (Pages 3 - 8) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2019
3	Gateshead Council Apprenticeships (Pages 9 - 32) Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
4	New Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny (Pages 33 - 40) Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance
5	The Impact of the Gateshead Thrive Fund 2018-2019 (Pages 41 - 102) Report of the Interim Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
6	Helping Out - Volunteer Plan - Annual Update (Pages 103 - 122) Report of the Interim Strategic Director, Communities and Environment
7	Annual Work Programme (Pages 123 - 126) Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 9 September 2019

PRESENT: Councillor John Eagle (Chair)
Councillor(s): J Wallace, R Beadle, D Bradford, D Duggan, P Foy, S Green, M Hall, J Kielty, R Mullen, B Oliphant and C Ord

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): S Ronchetti, L Caffrey, T Graham, N Weatherley and K Wood

CR9 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June be approved as a correct record.

CR10 REVIEW ON HELPING TO INCREASE SUPPORT/CAPACITY OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR: FINAL REPORT

The Committee received the final report of the Review on Helping to Increase Support/Capacity of the Voluntary Sector.

Following its meeting in October 2018, the Committee agreed the scope for a review to help develop the understanding of the type of support required by Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), where it is needed most and why, and in the light of this, where the Council's role, support and resources may be best focussed to maximise impact. The aims of the review were agreed as:

- establish the extent and nature of the types of support the Council currently provides to the VCS across a spectrum of service areas
- how this activity is resourced and coordinated
- assess the effectiveness of this Council support in helping the VCS address the needs of Gateshead residents.

The review comprised of four evidence gathering sessions. Evidence was sought from internal council services, including Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering, Economic Development Service, Care Wellbeing and Learning Service, and externally funded partners, stakeholders and charitable trusts, Comfrey Project, Brighten Ryton Environmental Group, Dunston Family Church, Tyne and Wear Community Foundation, The Ballinger Trust and National Lottery Community Fund and Oasis Community Housing.

All of the sessions included presentations by each of the groups / organisations and

a question and answer session.

Findings, issues and challenges arising from the review

- The review reaffirmed the need for a vibrant community and voluntary sector in Gateshead that is supported and capable of meeting the challenges facing Gateshead's residents in the future.
- There is a need to ensure longer term support is available from the Council which cultivates relationships and reassures community and voluntary sector organisations that they can rely on the Council for advice and help.
- The community asset transfer programme has seen significant success in helping community organisations operate community facilities to deliver services for local residents.
- Need for dedicated points of contact within the Council – including key frontline services, particularly where the interface impacts directly on the Council and is a key purpose to the community organisation. This is required to ensure decisions can be made by the relevant service, relatively quickly – it also helps to build a positive working relationship.
- Where appropriate annual plans or agreements be put in place to be agreed and endorsed by the Council – including assigned responsible officers for specific activities, such as grounds maintenance as an example from the evidence gathering. This should help provide greater clarity on what the groups are doing, help inform the Council on decisions about deployment of resources and assist with timetabling key decisions/permissions – allowing the Group to have more accurate plans.
- Annual plan would facilitate greater synergy and timetabling of partnership approach – would maximize windows of opportunity for works to be undertaken (summer months, avoiding nesting season, etc)
- Always read the guidance thoroughly before applying – if in doubt get in touch.
- Ensure the organisation and the project are eligible.
- Have all information required ready at the time of submission.
- Ensure accounts/bank statements are timely and accurate and unrestricted reserves are beneath any eligibility threshold.
- Use data, local intelligence and consultation to demonstrate community needs (avoid duplication).
- Wherever possible try to get other funding to support your project.
- When Council and community efforts combine the synergy and impact can be fantastic (for example, coinciding cutting and strimming in cemetery)
- Speed/responsiveness of the Council – frustration with the time taken/delay in getting permissions/agreement to undertake works – sometimes legitimate due to legal process, sometimes multiple service involvement and sometimes staff sickness (as well as other things) – but could we be better?
- Perception of overbearing bureaucracy – particularly around Conservation and Licencing issues experienced – legalities, consultation periods, permissions, etc. Can this be mitigated with better information up front re realistic timescales (for both parties)?
- The Council's relationship/interface with (ethos towards) voluntary organisations needs to reflect a partnership arrangement (to maximize joint

- efficiency/shared resources and available skills, knowledge and capacity).
- Volunteers should be seen more as partners not as contractors or a threat to employment.
- Is there need to train/brief Council staff (particularly those in key interface positions) about how a better more productive relationship can be achieved?
- Remove any stigma, perceptions of job insecurity, etc) as above
- Review how the Council's Insurance arrangements work for/with volunteer activities – could this become more inclusive/less risk averse – redesigned to accommodate such work not respond to request for the work (turn it around completely).
- Organisation/rigour of the Group and its monitoring of activity was praised (and may be exclusive to Brighten Ryton currently) – whilst not necessarily required to the level of Brighten Ryton it is food for thought for other community organisations to become more organised and planned in approach
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers was still an issue for a number of community groups across Gateshead, especially where specific skills are required.
- Securing funding is becoming an increasing challenge for many community groups and charities across Gateshead.
- Specialist advice is required for a number of groups across the borough, in particular governance, legal advice, business and financial planning, health and safety to name some areas.
- Co-ordination between NCVS and Gateshead Council needs to continue to be managed to ensure the skills and expertise of the team compliments the work of the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team and other support services
- This service hub approach is a central part of our future sustainability plans for Basis@Gateshead – and we also see this model as being potentially replicable across the NE: we are committed to it.
- This Basis model is helping us build the evidence base needed to show external partners that delivering out of Basis@Gateshead is a more successful and cost effective way of reaching those facing housing crisis either at their crisis point, or in many cases before things get too bad.
- Basis is a great example of how the VCS can collaborate and integrate with public services to reach the most vulnerable in our communities in a more efficient and effective way.
- As staff from partners will be based at Basis@Gateshead we anticipate they will save costs of being based in their own premises, and less money and time will be wasted signposting vulnerable people to different services, locations and experts.

The following recommendations have been produced as a result of the evidence gathering sessions and feedback from the Committee over the course of the review.

Recommendation 1 – Commit to provide clear single points of contacts to community organisations, and explore providing the autonomy to provide advice, support and definitive decisions as required.

Recommendation 2 – Encourage community organisations that the Council is

supporting to provide an annual plan, particularly relevant with Friends of or environmental groups.

Recommendation 3 – Be clear and more transparent regarding Council fees and charges, so community organisations understand the costs and the reasons why the fees exist.

Recommendation 4 – Improve the relationships that exist between the Council and the community and voluntary sector to encourage greater collaboration / joint working, addressing common challenges faced by residents, avoid duplication or competition and enable the Council to consider where best to invest its community development and financial resources.

Recommendation 5 – Seek ways to encourage community groups to work together, support each other and share resources and ideas.

Recommendation 6 – Develop further the Council's Volunteers Plan – Helping Out - to ensure there is clarity about the roles of volunteers, the relationships with volunteers and paid employees.

Recommendation 7 – Assess the support required by volunteers to enable them to help out effectively, safely and with the knowledge, training, advice and relevant permissions – primarily aimed at volunteers that directly support activities delivered with the Council and on Council property.

Recommendation 8 – Review the Council's insurance arrangements to ensure volunteer groups are adequately covered for the activities they are participating in and the system to obtaining cover is as efficient as possible.

Recommendation 9 – Focus the work of the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering team increase capacity across the community and voluntary sector to enable the securing funds from a range of sources rather than be dependent on the various forms of Council funding.

Recommendation 10 – Ensure the Council's resources to support Gateshead's communities are targeted in a way that ensures the activity delivered as a result of the funding will support Thrive.

Recommendation 11 – The Council will work proactively with external funding partners, to secure investment and maximise opportunities to invest in Gateshead.

Recommendation 12 – Monitor the delivery of the contract to support the Community and Voluntary Sector (currently held by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service) to ensure it delivers the advice, support and networking required by the sector in partnership with the Council

Recommendation 13 – Within the current contract to support the Community and Voluntary Sector, continue to support the development of OurGateshead to ensure it provides the service required by Gateshead residents and the community organisations represented on the website.

Recommendation 14 – Review the Gateshead Offer – which provides guidance on where to seek support for community and voluntary organisations in Gateshead and define its commitment to find the most effective way to define its relationship and support to the sector to deliver Thrive.

Recommendation 15 – Increase publicity and communications through all means possible to raise awareness, share and celebrate the fantastic range of activities that take place across Gateshead.

Recommendation 16 – In line with the Council's Public Service Reform work, implement further place based / community hub opportunities for collaborative work between the Council, its partners and the community and voluntary sector.

Recommendation 17 – Retain the current capacity building resource, as outlined in evidence gathering session 1, within the Council to ensure the community and voluntary sector is adequately supported to meet the demands of Gateshead’s communities in the future.

Recommendation 18 – Continue to maintain and utilise the Community Asset Transfer policy to encourage communities to help retain community assets and ensure the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Communities and Volunteers has the role and remit for this area.

RESOLVED - That the final report be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

CR11 THE IMPACT OF THE GATESHEAD THRIVE FUND 2018-19: A CASE STUDY

RESOLVED - That this item be deferred to a future meeting.

CR12 REVISED STRATEGIC RESILIENCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Committee received a report which provided an overview of the revised Strategic Resilience Management Framework.

The purpose of the revised framework is to outline the focus for Gateshead Council to continue to work in collaboration with our partners and communities over the next two years for emergency planning, resilience, response and recovery. This will ensure that the council continues to comply with statutory legislation and has the necessary capacity and capability to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency or major incident situations and use the learning to inform contingency planning.

The emphasis of this framework is to support the sustained development of a network of competent officers who are able to respond to emergencies and carry on embedding resilience into all aspects of service delivery.

The revised framework includes the following revisions:

- Updated national context and Local Resilience Forum arrangements
- Alignment to the Council’s Thrive Agenda
- Revision of the Local Governance Arrangements
- Proposal for a future Local Government Association Peer Review
- Updated service key objectives and priorities for 2019-2021

The Service Key Objectives have been developed to ensure there is compliance with the Civic Contingencies Act (2004) and help achieve the strategic vision with continuous review that will align to the Council’s Service Business Planning Process and individual Appraisal and Development Sessions.

The revised framework will contribute to achieving three of the five pledges of the Council’s Thrive agenda:

- Put people and families and the heart of everything we do
- Support our communities to support themselves and each other

- Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead Council

Since the year-end Assessment of Performance and Delivery Report was presented to Committee members in June, additional highlights include:

- The Council’s Resilience and Emergency Planning Team has developed a Community Emergency Guidance document which aims to:
 - Provide emergency contact details for a range of situations and the type of assistance that can be provided
 - Enable residents and business proprietors to be better prepared to protect themselves and their properties
 - Provide opportunities to volunteer as Community Resilience Warden
 - The document has been added to the Council website.
- A recruitment campaign is underway for additional staff volunteers to join the council’s emergency response team which will ensure continued resilience and maintaining of capacity and capability
- The Council has implemented a new on-line digital logging system for use during incidents and emergency situations. Training and awareness sessions are currently ongoing for members of the emergency response team.

- RESOLVED - (i) that the comments of the Committee be noted
 (ii) that it be noted that the Committee is satisfied with progress achieved
 (iii) That the Committee agreed to receiving a progress report in April 2020

CR13 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the work programme report. It was noted that the item on The Gateshead Thrive Fund had been moved to the October meeting. It was also noted that Brexit is still an issue to slot in. The Committee were advised that a members seminar has been arranged for 8 October, it may be that something needs to be brought to Committee at a future meeting.

It was suggested that the Committee may wish to visit some of the organisations who have been supported by Thrive Fund and organisations who are working in Gateshead.

- RESOLVED - (i) That the provisional programme be noted.
 (ii) That further reports on the work programme may be brought to the Committee to identify any issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.
 (iii) That officers look at the programme to include visits to voluntary organisations working within Gateshead.

Chair.....



TITLE OF REPORT: Gateshead Council Apprenticeships

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director Corporate Services & Governance

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's strategy for the delivery of apprenticeships within the Council

Background

1. In 2017 the Government introduced a number of changes to the apprenticeship system as part of their strategy to deliver three million apprenticeships by 2020.
2. Apprenticeships are government funded work-based training programmes for people aged 16 to 65, combining on and off-the-job training. Some apprenticeships contain additional qualifications and all have a minimum requirement for English and Maths attainment. Employers are responsible for paying the wages of the apprentice and government funding is provided to support the costs of some or all of the training. Although apprenticeships are traditionally associated with craft or engineering sectors, there are more than 250 frameworks and standards on offer covering more than 1,200 job roles.
3. The three key changes introduced by the Government were:
 - the introduction of the apprenticeship levy;
 - the proposed introduction of a public sector apprenticeship target; and,
 - the transfer from Apprenticeship Frameworks to new Apprenticeship Standards (see appendix 1).

Introduction of the apprenticeship levy

4. The introduction of the levy means that organisations with a payroll bill of over £250,000 per month, (£3m per year) are subject to a levy of 0.5% of their gross monthly pay bill. The Council's levy is estimated at around £668,000 per year, including that due for maintained schools. A payment is made each month into the Council's levy account. The Council can draw down from that fund to pay for apprenticeship training. There are strict criteria around the use of the fund, for example it cannot be used to pay wages or non-apprenticeship training costs. There is a maximum of 24 months in which to use each annual levy payment, which

operates on a rolling basis, thereafter unspent funds are inaccessible and returned to the Treasury.

Public sector apprenticeship target

5. The public sector apprenticeship target applies to all public bodies that have 250 or more employees. The annual target requires 2.3% of the workforce to be started on an apprenticeship. Gateshead Council employs approximately 7000 staff including those in maintained schools, therefore this would require approximately 160 apprentices to be enrolled annually to meet the target.
6. In their response to the consultation on the public sector target¹, the Government acknowledged that they have set a stretching target and stated that they '*expect that all organisations will strive to meet the target and will take steps to improve apprenticeship take-up year on year*', indicating that it isn't a 'hard' target; however, organisations will need to demonstrate progress and improvement and be able to thoroughly explain their performance.

Introduction of new Apprenticeship Standards

7. Apprenticeship Frameworks are being phased out, with new Apprenticeship Standards introduced which have been developed in collaboration with employers in order to be more specific to individual business need rather than applying broadly to business sectors.
8. There are over 250 Apprenticeship Standards being phased in over time, covering a wide range of occupations and providing the opportunity to achieve qualifications up to level 7 (post-graduate level), see appendix 1.

Apprenticeships within the Council

9. Following the introduction of the changes in 2017 two scoping exercises have been undertaken with services to identify demand for apprenticeships across the Council. Discussions took place with Service Directors, and in some cases their management teams, to explore where apprenticeships could be utilised to support transformational change and deliver corporate objectives and service delivery. The scoping activity included looking at areas where the Council provides funding for staff to study for professional qualifications, which could, in future, potentially be covered by an apprenticeship. This would result in a direct saving to the Council as funds would be accessed from the levy rather than from the Council's revenue budget.
10. Briefing sessions were also held with senior managers and numerous communications have been sent to employees to promote awareness. References to apprenticeship training is also included in the Council's Maximising Employee Potential (MEP) Guidance and linked with the Appraisal and Development (A&D) process.

¹ Apprenticeship Targets for Public Sector Bodies Government Consultation Response 20 January 2017

11. The Council's LearningSkills service delivers apprenticeship training in a range of subjects including business administration, customer service, leadership and management and Teaching Assistant apprenticeships. To access all other types of apprenticeship training, the Council has been required to establish a procurement process which is compliant with Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulations. Providers who meet the criteria in relation to quality of provision, health and safety and safeguarding are included on the Council's approved list of providers and can bid to deliver apprenticeship training as demand arises.
12. Despite efforts to publicise apprenticeships across the workforce and put arrangements in place for delivery, the take up of apprenticeships has remained low, with consequential impact on levy spend. This is the general picture across many areas in the public sector, as detailed in the January 2019 report: '*CIPFA Panel – The Apprenticeships Levy*'.

The numbers of apprenticeships are shown in the table below:

Year	Number of apprenticeships	Performance against the Public Sector Target
2017/18	110	1.7%
2018/19	126	2.02%

The current total value of the Council's levy is approximately £1.2m. Over the last 12 months, spend against the levy was approximately £330k.

13. Low take-up of apprenticeships has been due to a number of issues:
 - Concerns from managers over the requirement to spend 20% of time 'off the job' in training, and the impact that has on service delivery.
 - A lack of available Apprenticeship Standards resulting in the continuation of traditional academic qualifications rather than apprenticeships. This is due to new Apprenticeship Standards being rolled out by the Institute for Apprenticeships as and when they are approved for delivery.
 - The essential requirement for all apprentices to evidence English and Maths at GCSE level or Functional Skills level 2, when they may already have degrees and other professional qualifications.
 - Insufficient providers being able to successfully join the Council's 'Approved List' due to failures (or their inability to provide sufficient information) on health and safety and/or safeguarding matters.
 - Insufficient providers in the region to deliver the types of apprenticeship programmes the Council requires.
 - Providers in the region cancelling, or deciding (sometimes at a very late stage), not to run apprenticeship training due to insufficient numbers of learners to form viable cohorts.

- Providers failing to submit bids leading to re-runs of procurement competitions which can delay the procurement process, with a knock-on effect of delaying the recruitment of apprentices.
 - The disparate way requests for apprenticeship training have been managed with various elements being managed by different services and an overall lack of corporate resource to provide a co-ordinated approach.
14. In an attempt to address these issues, the Council has taken the following actions:
- a. Due to the number of providers failing both the health and safety and safeguarding elements of the procurement process on their first submission, the requirements have been reviewed in conjunction with the Council's Health & Safety Team. It has been agreed that only apprenticeship training which falls within construction/engineering will be subject to a high-risk assessment. All other types of apprenticeship training will be deemed to be low risk and will demonstrate compliance through self-assessment. This should result in fewer providers failing the procurement process and having to reapply, thus allowing more providers to be listed on procurement framework.
 - b. With regard to safeguarding, the majority of failures were in relation to statutory guidance which is a legal requirement which providers should already have in their policy to comply with the law. Therefore, it has been determined that standards in relation to safeguarding should not be lowered, and that the Council will continue to check that the policy submitted by the provider is legally compliant.
 - c. To maximise levy spend and address some of the issues, an Apprenticeship Co-ordinator has been recruited for a fixed term period of two years. The remit of the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator is to:
 - Be responsible for the development and implementation of an apprenticeship strategy and delivery plan.
 - Manage the HR aspects of apprenticeships to maximise take up.
 - Be responsible for the contract management of providers to ensure apprenticeship training can be delivered to a high standard.
 - Manage the technical aspects of the procurement process in terms of the dynamic purchasing system and associated procedures.
 - Engage with training providers to encourage participation and drive up apprenticeship delivery.
 - Work in partnership with other organisations to share resources and promote joint procurement of training providers.
15. An apprenticeship strategy has been developed and is shown at appendix 3.
16. The aims of the strategy are to:
- embed a positive apprenticeship culture;
 - maximise workforce capability;
 - support the continuous professional development of employees;

- develop workforce diversity and inclusivity;
 - engage with schools to maximise benefits from the levy; and
 - engage with training providers and other local authorities and employers to maximise apprenticeship provision within the region.
17. It is also the intention to explore passporting levy funds to other organisations to fund their apprenticeship training. The intention is to work with organisations in the Council's supply chain, partners, and community and voluntary organisations within the borough to identify opportunities to passport levy funds to support apprenticeships. Priority will be given to allocating funds to those organisations who are working closely with the Council to deliver the Thrive Agenda.
18. The Council has been successful in applying to the LGA Apprenticeship Accelerator Programme. This enables the Council to access up to 8 days of free consultancy time, as well as access additional resources to assist with the development of the strategy and delivery plan.
19. The LGA will also assist with mapping apprenticeship standards to Council job roles and look at the development of career pathways within a specific service area. The Council will use this framework to replicate the approach in other services.

What will we do next?

20. The next steps are to seek endorsement of the draft strategy (appendix 3) from the LGA, and within the Council. This will include consulting with LearningSkills, Economic Development and trade unions.
21. A delivery plan will be developed which sets out the actions required to deliver the strategy. This will align to the Council's workforce plan, and once approved, the strategy and delivery plan can be implemented in accordance with agreed timescales.

Conclusion

22. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought on whether the Committee is satisfied with the draft Apprenticeship Strategy and the future direction of apprenticeships within the Council.

Contact: Janice Barclay - Service Director, HR and Workforce Development.
Ext. 2101

Apprenticeship Standards

Apprenticeship Standards cover specific occupations and are developed by employer groups. Standards must be approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and are being released incrementally for delivery by providers. Over time, existing frameworks are being phased out and replaced by new Apprenticeship Standards.

There are three levels of apprenticeship available spanning 2–6 years of progression. It is possible for ambitious apprentices to progress from level 2 (intermediate) to level 7 (master's degree), with employer support and after several years of training and education. Learners start at a level which reflects their current qualifications and the opportunities available in the sector of interest:

Intermediate Apprenticeship (Level 2 - equivalent to five good GCSE passes): this provides learners with the skills and qualifications for their chosen career and allows entry (if desired) to an Advanced Apprenticeship. To be accepted, learners need to be enthusiastic, keen to learn and have a reasonable standard of education; most employers require applicants to have two or more GCSEs (A*-C), including English and Maths.

Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3 - equivalent to two A-level passes): to start this programme, learners should have five GCSEs (grades 5-9 or equivalent) or have completed an Intermediate Apprenticeship. This will provide them with the skills and qualifications needed for their career and allow entry (if desired) to a Higher Apprenticeship or degree level qualification. Advanced apprenticeships can last between two and four years.

Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4/5 - equivalent to a Foundation Degree): to start this programme, learners should have a Level 3 qualification (A-Levels, Advanced Diploma or International Baccalaureate) or have completed an Advanced Apprenticeship. Higher apprenticeships are designed for students who are aged 18 or over.

Degree Apprenticeship (Level 5/6 - achieve bachelor's degree) and (Level 7 Masters): to start this programme, learners should have a level 3/4 qualification (A-Levels, Advanced Diploma or International Baccalaureate) relevant to occupation or have completed an Advanced Apprenticeship also relevant to occupation. It differs from a 'Higher Apprenticeship' due to graduating with a bachelor's degree at an accredited university. Degree apprenticeships can last between two and four years.

CIPFA Panel - The Apprenticeships Levy

January 2019

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1. Executive summary

The CIPFA Public Sector Research Panel is a new venture for the analytics and research department at CIPFA. The following reports presents the results from its first cycle in Autumn 2018, concerned with the apprenticeship levy.

Both positive and negative views towards the levy were received and below is a basic outline of these:

Positives:

- The levy has meant that existing staff are upskilled, which is said to be more cost effective than recruitment.
- Access to training overall has increased.
- There are closer links to training providers.

Negatives:

- In some instances organisations struggle to withdraw the funds that they have paid in, which ends in the levy being regarded as a cost burden/tax.
- The full range of training courses are currently not available for apprentices to access.
- In Scotland and Wales there are particular issues relating with making use of the levy that need to be addressed.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The apprenticeship levy was introduced in 2017 with the aim of funding the training of more apprenticeships. In 2017 CIPFA carried out the piece of research *The Apprenticeship Levy: a Local Authority Perspective*, where the levy was seen as a good thing and a high priority, as it would leave money ring-fenced, especially for training.

When browsing the news for mentions of the apprenticeship levy one year after its implementation, it is interesting to see that evaluations of its success are largely negative. Some have accused the levy of having become another business tax. The Open University found that of £1.39bn paid into the levy, only £108m was withdrawn for training because the money had been written off as another tax. The levy has even been blamed for the collapse in the number of apprenticeships, which government data shows plunged from May to June 2018.

The latest official figures for apprenticeship take-ups show that, at 290,500 in the first three quarters of the 2017/18 academic year, they were 34% lower than in the same period in 2016/17, and 24.5% lower than the year before that (Guardian, 2018). So it was interesting to explore attitudes towards the levy by some of those who were involved with it.

Taking all of this into consideration, we decided to ask the CIPFA Public Sector Research Panel about its experience of the apprenticeship levy.

2.2 Method

In the period between December 2017 and January 2018 we invited individuals to join the CIPFA Public Sector Research Panel. As the apprenticeship levy had been active for a year, we decided that this should be the focus of the piece of research. Usually an online survey is quantitative, but due to a lower than anticipated panel population, and because it was the first round of interviewing for the panel, we opted to gather qualitative thoughts about the apprenticeship levy.

Respondents were asked questions relating to: positive aspects of the levy; negative aspects of the levy; and topic suggestions for future panel research.

The results were analysed using Nvivo qualitative data analysis software. Themes were developed inductively by considering the answers. Respondents gave broadly similar answers, and the results of the analysis are shown in the subsequent sections of this report.

3. Positive feedback

Please describe your experience of the apprenticeships levy from a positive perspective.

When asked about the positive aspects of the apprenticeship levy, respondents provided information that seemed to confirm the conclusions that had been made in the general news media, as well as what came out of the 2017 research piece '*The Apprenticeship Levy: a Local Authority Perspective*'.

Respondents cited a number of positive aspects of the levy which were similar to the positive hopes held in 2017. Most of the respondents to this survey commented that they felt the apprenticeship levy was positive because it meant that members of staff were being up-skilled. Some felt that up-skilling existing staff is actually more cost effective than going through the process of recruiting new staff.

Those surveyed also acknowledged that the apprenticeship levy had incentivised recruitment. There has been an argued push to use more apprenticeships – as the profile of the scheme had increased, organisations now have a greater understanding of the benefits of recruiting an apprentice, and likewise it has made the process of attracting candidates to roles easier.

As well as the positive impact on recruiting processes discussed above, there has also been an overall increase in access to training. This is partly due to the availability of a level of funding specifically for training, as there is always funding available for training whatever the financial position of the organisation. The increase in training is most notable in higher level apprenticeships, with one organisation reporting that two of its estate project managers were now studying quantity surveying.

New rules and regulations for apprenticeships also mean that organisations need to have closer links with training providers, borne out of a need to work more closely under the new apprenticeship system:

For many levy-paying organisations, like us, the levy has led to a definite refocusing of employee formal skills training and qualifications. For example we now have an apprenticeship strategy for Cambridge City Council approved and in place. For us the levy has generated new opportunities for career progression, this is particularly evident with the creation of opportunities for existing employees to take the CMI/ILM accredited Level 5 Operational Management Apprenticeship Standard. We now have five managers on this apprenticeship and plan further starts within this financial year.

Caroline Ryba, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, Cambridge City Council

4. Negative feedback

Please describe your experience of the apprenticeships levy from a negative perspective:

The most important negative issue for respondents seemed to be financial aspects of the levy. Some of those surveyed described the levy as being a cost burden for their organisation, as it seemed to be like a tax of which they could not fully take advantage, as only a small portion of the money top-sliced can be earned back. There appeared to be a few reasons for respondents referring to the levy as a cost burden. Firstly, funds paid in are lost if they are not withdrawn:

There is no way the council will ever be able to spend the full levy on training for its staff or on staff down the supply chain. It is a tax in all but name. At best around half the amount the council pays will find its way back into training; for schools the percentage is even lower.

Also, in authorities where there has been a reduction of funding, there are strict controls on recruitment which limit the opportunities to create new positions for apprenticeship starters.

Secondly, there are not enough courses available yet for organisations to be able to make full use of the levy. In some instances courses had been withdrawn due to poor planning, meaning some apprentices were deprived of the appropriate courses to complete their programmes. The entire process was said to have taken a while to get up and running because there was an absence of national guidance and support, plus there was a slow start to developing procurement processes for training providers and agreeing on contracts.

Impacts were felt within organisations as converting existing employees resulted in a 20% reduction in staff capacity, since there is a required amount of time needed away from the job for training. The levy cannot be used to fund apprentice salaries, something that respondents felt to be an additional drawback.

In Wales and Scotland they were unable to access funds paid in, and as a result this year there were less apprenticeships than in previous years. This will have resulted in a lost resource for councils in those countries, leading to a requirement to fund from elsewhere –such as job losses/service reductions or a combination of these.

Some have also encountered difficulty in recruiting and retaining apprentices, leading to some posts remaining vacant. The apprentice market has become increasingly competitive due to the introduction of public sector targets, the apprenticeship levy and the change to apprentice standards. The practical application of the levy was said to be poor, as some said that the system was difficult to navigate:

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has placed the responsibility on employers to 'negotiate' with training providers to procure the best price and service. In reality this is difficult for all but the very largest of employers. With 15 funding caps in place there is very little leeway for negotiation on price with prospective providers, especially where an organisation, such as ours for example, wants to procure the services of a training provider to deliver one Degree Surveying Apprenticeship, there is pretty much a non-negotiable set price. The levy has also placed an additional requirement in terms of resources onto many employers; this is particularly felt within the public sector.

Caroline Ryba, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, Cambridge City Council

5. Suggestions

Some respondents suggested ways that the apprenticeship levy scheme could be changed/improved, or asked questions about things that were not currently clear about the levy. Examples include the following:

- Is there a possibility of utilising the levy for salaries, perhaps linked to areas of high deprivation and ring fenced to vulnerable groups so this is not abused? This would enable us to support more people into work which is what we believe the levy was originally intended to do.
- Is there a possibility of the levy paying employers to be able to access providers from the same register non-levy-paying employers can, without the need for additional and time-consuming procurement processes? A single government procurement framework consisting of all new apprenticeship standards for public sector organisations to boost apprenticeship starts.
- The ability for the DAS (Digital Apprenticeship Service) system to have sub employers so that maintained schools can have their own account.
- The ability for the DAS have a built in forecasting tool, clearly showing in real time how much funding is at risk of claw back, and by when, to avoid the need for standalone bespoke spreadsheets for monitoring purposes.
- Relax funding regulations, so that levy paying organisations can utilise the ability to transfer 25% to other non-levy paying organisations this can be used in full to pay for their 10% contribution, as opposed to the 100% cost of the apprenticeship. This would enable more people to be supported.
- Establish a database on apprenticeships available to the public sector specifically would be helpful. For example, revenue and benefits, planning, pest control and waste.
- There are opportunities for employers to have more flexibility regarding the requirements, eg 20% training. For some organisations the appropriate training could be carried out more effectively in house, for example retailers.
- Why does the scheme differ between England and Wales? Could Wales have its own scheme with the contributions from Welsh public bodies being retained by Welsh Government and used to fund apprenticeships in Wales?
- Has the apprenticeship levy in Scotland actually achieved the expected national outcomes?

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Apprenticeship Strategy



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Foreword

Our ambition for Gateshead is to help it be a great place to live, work and visit. We want our communities to flourish, prosper and succeed.

Helping to grow apprenticeships and routes into apprenticeships is an important part of our wider economic development strategy, which also aims to raise skill levels and aspirations.

As one of the largest employers in the borough, Gateshead Council aspires to be an employer of choice, that attracts, develops and retains the most diverse, creative and innovative individuals with the required skills and abilities in the short-term and for the future.

We value apprenticeships within the Council; as well as being high-quality pathways to successful careers, they also provide opportunities for new and existing employees to develop and progress, which assists the Council in meeting our current and future skills needs.

A major theme of the Council's Workforce Strategy is Skills & Behaviours. Apprenticeships have a key role to play in this, as we will support the development of key skills including leadership and development of existing staff and encourage new talent into the workforce.

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Apprenticeship Strategy for Gateshead Council as an employer, and the positive action that the Council will take in its approach to apprenticeships as part of the wider Workforce Strategy. It is aligned with the Council's strategic approach 'Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives' which sets out the ambition for Gateshead to be a place where people flourish, prosper and succeed.

The strategy is intended to be dynamic and will be regularly reviewed, developed and updated in response to local and national changes. The key actions for the delivery of the strategy are set out in detail in the underpinning Delivery Action Plan which will be overseen by SMG Services & Performance.

The strategy will also be used to inform service business plans to help identify the actions that individual service areas will take in support of this strategy and in meeting the specific skills challenges they face. The Apprentice Strategy also supports and works alongside other talent and entry to work initiatives such as work experience and traineeships.

2. Vision

Apprenticeships within the Council are seen and valued as high-quality pathways to successful careers, providing opportunities for new and existing employees to develop and which assist the Council in meeting its current and future skills needs.

The Council faces future challenges which can only be met with the right people with the right skills at the right time to meet changing demands. Apprenticeships will form an integral part of the Workforce Strategy to provide the Council with a talent pipeline that supports current and future skill needs.

3. Context

3.1 Government Reforms

Driven by an ambition to address the shortage in skills and invest in the UK's future workforce, the UK Government has introduced significant changes to the way in which apprenticeships are funded and delivered. Since April 2017 an Apprenticeship Levy is payable by any employer with a wage bill in excess of £3m per annum who employs 250 staff or more. This is paid as a 0.5% tax on the monthly pay bill which can only be used for apprenticeship training. The Council's levy is approximately £670k per annum.

In addition, the Public Sector Target aims to ensure that 2.3% of the workforce are engaged in apprenticeships. The Council's performance against the target is shown in the table below.

Year	Percentage of the workforce enrolled on an apprenticeship
2017 /18	1.7%
2018 /19	2.02%

The levy puts employers at the centre of identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required of the workforce now and into the future. It is, however, important that the increase in apprenticeships within the Council is aligned to our future skills needs and organisational priorities and not just to meet a Government target.

3.2 Supporting our strategic ambitions

Providing apprenticeships and routes into apprenticeships are an important part of Gateshead's strategic ambitions to create opportunities for employment and economic growth. Gateshead currently has a lower proportion of the population with higher level qualifications (21.5%) than the national average (27.4%)¹. Providing opportunities for staff to undertake apprenticeships and developing a pro-apprenticeship culture at all levels within the Council will not only help to raise skills within our workforce in support of our skills needs and assist in meeting the Government's apprentice targets; but also support the Council's wider strategic ambitions.

As a leader of public services and one of the largest employers in the area, it is also important that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve. Within the Council (excluding schools), currently less than 4.3% of our workforce is aged under 25. The challenges of finding work are particularly acute for young people aged 18-24, as well as for care leavers, long term unemployed, returners to the labour market and those with disabilities, as they try to compete against more experienced candidates. Gateshead Council, as an employer and as a strategic leader, has a responsibility in helping to create opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

3.3 Meeting current and future skills needs

Some areas within the Council, particularly Adult Social Care are experiencing skills shortages as competition for skilled workers increases. Adopting a more strategic approach to 'growing our own' future workforce will become increasingly important.

In addition to identifying apprenticeship opportunities for new employees, a 'grow our own' approach will also need to apply to our existing workforce if we are to ensure

¹ Gateshead JSNA

we have the capacity and capabilities we need. Providing opportunities for existing staff to utilise apprenticeships, particularly higher-level apprenticeships, to gain skills and progress their career will further help to develop talent pipelines within the organisation.

4. Aims

Set against this wider context, it is therefore essential that the Council determines its approach to apprenticeships. In particular, how we attract, develop and retain apprentices and develop apprenticeship opportunities that:

- Support our workforce skills needs
- Support Gateshead Council's strategic ambitions relating to Thrive
- Meet the challenges of the Government's apprenticeship reforms.

Our Apprenticeship Strategy aims to:

4.1 Embed a positive apprenticeship culture

We will actively promote apprenticeships within the Council as valuable recruitment and talent pipeline opportunities and develop a positive apprenticeship culture amongst managers and employees. Developing a greater awareness of the types of apprenticeships available and the benefits they offer for both new and existing employees will be essential to increasing the number of employees undertaking an apprenticeship.

4.2 Maximise workforce capability

Maximising the use of apprenticeships is critical in helping to build the capabilities we require. We will work with services to identify apprenticeship opportunities as part of service workforce planning activity to support current and future skills needs. This will include:

- Mapping apprenticeships to critical skills needs
- Developing new entry-level apprenticeship opportunities
- Developing career pathways to support succession planning and talent management
- Considering all vacant posts for re-designation as apprenticeships

4.3 Support the Continuous Professional Development of existing employees

Apprenticeships provide real opportunities for existing staff to gain skills and progress their career and supports talent management within the Council. One of the Council's priorities under the Workforce Strategy and Plan is to develop and strengthen leadership and management capability across the workforce. We will work with services to develop a greater awareness and understanding of the types of apprenticeships available and the benefits they can bring, particularly in relation to leadership and management.

4.4 Develop workforce diversity and inclusivity

The Council will support the social mobility of citizens and support them to take a step onto a professional career path, opening up jobs with realistic requirements for prior educational attainment.

One of the Council's strategic indicators is to ensure that young people leaving care are supported to have an opportunity of an apprenticeship within the Council. Acting in its capacity as corporate parent, the Council will offer apprenticeship opportunities to care leavers and looked after children who find it difficult to navigate the complexities of finding and sustaining work. This approach will help more disadvantaged young people in the borough get a foot on the ladder of employment and begin their journey to independence.

The Council will also identify opportunities for those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) creating effective ways to support people to access apprenticeships and secure sustainable employment.

Additional support will be offered to apprentices and managers as required to ensure that placements succeed with emphasis on the importance of potential and training provided by good quality training providers.

We will consider options to expand opportunities to other vulnerable groups, for example long-term unemployed, women returners and ex-armed forces personnel.

4.5 Engage with maintained schools to maximise benefits from the levy

We will work with our maintained schools to raise awareness of the Apprenticeship Standards for Teachers, Teaching Assistants and School Business Managers, as well as a range of other broader standards that could be used by the wider schools' workforce in helping to create apprentice opportunities.

4.6 Engage with training providers and other local authorities and employers to maximise apprenticeship provision within the region

We will work with training providers and other local authorities and employers to identify gaps in apprenticeship training provision and establish viable cohorts particularly for niche areas.

5. Passporting levy funds to other organisations

Since April 2019, levy-paying employers have been able to transfer a maximum of 25% of their annual funds. This can be transferred from their levy fund to as many employers as they chose to fund apprenticeship training and assessment costs. Transfers can only be used for new starts.

The Council will work with organisations in its supply chain, partners, and community and voluntary organisations within the borough to identify opportunities to passport

levy funds to support apprenticeships. Priority will be given to allocating funds to those organisations who are working closely with the Council to deliver the Thrive Agenda.

6. Performance Monitoring

This Apprenticeship Strategy is underpinned by an Apprenticeship Delivery Action Plan which sets out how the priorities will be delivered and progress against this reviewed each year. The delivery plan will be regularly reviewed and reported on at SMG Services and Performance.

In accordance with the public sector duty requirements the Council will also publish annually, data relating to progress towards the 2.3% apprenticeship target set by the Government.

HR Advice will work closely with colleagues in Economic Development and LearningSkills to ensure that the Council's response to apprenticeships as an employer is closely aligned with the Council's wider strategic priorities relating to supporting local people into sustainable employment.

TITLE OF REPORT: **New Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny**

REPORT OF: **Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance**

Summary

The report sets out proposed areas for improvement arising from the new guidance on Overview and Scrutiny and seeks the Committee's views.

1. Background

New statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government and combined authorities has been published by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. The guidance has been produced following a commitment made by the Government in early 2018 following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into O&S.

The revised guidance is light touch and aims to raise the profile of scrutiny committees and increase the effectiveness and relevance of their work. The updated guidance takes into account changes such as the establishment of combined authorities and the increase in commissioned services. It aims to ensure that the purpose of overview and scrutiny is better understood, and provides advice on what effective scrutiny looks like, how it can be achieved and the value this can bring to policy development and decision making. It reminds authorities of the powers available to scrutiny committees; highlights the benefits of effective scrutiny; and provides practical advice and proposals for improving the function.

A central theme of the statutory guidance is the importance of a strong organisational culture which supports scrutiny to provide effective challenge and a commitment to scrutiny across an authority, not just amongst those members and officers with a scrutiny role. It also focuses on resourcing, selection of committee members, powers to access information, planning of work programmes and evidence sessions.

Compared to the previous guidance, which concentrated on explaining the legislation, the new guidance is practically focused and grounded in the experience of scrutiny in local authorities since the 2000 Act. It leaves scope for local practice and does not intend to be prescriptive.

2. Proposal and / or Issues for Consideration

Having reviewed the areas highlighted within the new guidance it is considered that Gateshead already has in place much of what is set out in the guidance. However, it is considered that the below represent potential areas for improvement:-

2:1 Executive – Scrutiny Protocol

The guidance suggests the development of an Executive - Scrutiny Protocol as a positive means of defining the relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny and providing a framework for managing /mitigating any differences of opinion.

In Gateshead we already have a protocol in place relating to Cabinet attendance at OSC meetings and it is considered that this could be widened further to cover several matters raised by the guidance eg managing disagreements between scrutiny and the executive; reflect the good practice already in place around early engagement with the executive regarding scrutiny's future work programmes and set out the position in relation to scrutiny's powers to access information.

A proposed revised Protocol is attached at Appendix 1 – (Revisions highlighted in red)

2:2 Whistleblowing

As part of establishing a strong organisational challenge culture the guidance, for the first time, references whistleblowing. It suggests that whilst scrutiny has no role in the investigation or oversight of whistleblowing arrangements the findings of independent whistleblowing investigations might be of interest to scrutiny committees as they consider their wider implications. The guidance indicates that this should always be subject to the Council's Monitoring Officer directions on this matter and the authority's constitution.

At this point in time, the Council's Monitoring Officer has advised that there have been insufficient whistleblowing cases in Gateshead to identify any emerging themes / issues to enable scrutiny to have a worthwhile role. Therefore, at this stage, councillors are asked to note their potential future scrutiny role in this area.

2:3 Communicating work of scrutiny to wider Council

The guidance also indicates that Councils should take steps to ensure that all members and officers are made aware of the role scrutiny committees play in the organisation. The guidance indicates that a means of achieving this could be by some reports and recommendations being submitted from scrutiny to full Council rather than solely the executive, taking account of the relevance of the reports to Council's business and its capacity to consider and respond in a timely manner.

However, having regard to Council's capacity to consider additional reports from scrutiny it is considered that it would be sufficient to submit an annual report to full Council on scrutiny's activities in order to raise awareness of ongoing work. Currently OSCs already receive a report at the end of their annual work programme which looks back at the work each OSC has carried out over the year as well as looking forward to the new work programme and this could form the basis of the annual report.

2:4 Following the Council Pound

The guidance suggests that the Council may wish to consider, when agreeing contracts with organisations using public funds to deliver goods and services, whether it would be appropriate to include a requirement for them to supply information to or appear before scrutiny committees.

It is considered that there is significant potential in the role scrutiny could play here: in the context of a number of areas of council policy, existing and emerging in terms of achieving value for money and outcomes with regards to local employment and training; climate change; and other areas of corporate social responsibility and social value generally.

As this is a large area for area for consideration, it is proposed that a workshop is organised for Corporate Resources OSC during November 2019 (which has as part of its remit, efficiency, value for money and procurement) so that they can better understand, explore and prioritise the role that scrutiny could play here.

The workshop will be led by Andrea Tickner, Service Director Corporate Commissioning and will explore scrutiny of the following options:-

- Overall Review of Council third party expenditure (eg key value high spend areas, which suppliers, contracted and off contract/ local and national suppliers
- Process – taking councillors through a particular tender process and what has been achieved on a previous contract
- Social value and what is being achieved

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to

- a) Note the information provided.
- b) Endorse the proposed areas for improvements outlined in paragraphs 2:1 to 2:4

Contact: Angela Frisby

Extension: 2138

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Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Protocol

Relations between Scrutiny and Cabinet

1. Scrutiny will maintain liaison with the Cabinet; in particular the Leader will from time to time meet with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Scrutiny Work Programmes

2. All Cabinet Members will receive information on the proposed work programmes and meeting dates for each OSC prior to the start of each municipal year.
3. Prior to each OSC meeting Cabinet members will be notified when the agenda papers are available to view.
4. Opportunities will be provided for discussing the respective OSC work programme / agendas at relevant Portfolio meetings.

Scrutiny of Performance Issues

5. Cabinet Members whose Portfolio area covers the remit of specific OSCs have a standing invitation to attend those six monthly meetings where the OSC formally considers performance issues relating to Making Gateshead a place where everyone Thrives and partnership work generally, to provide an update on their Portfolio area to the Committee.
6. Where specific concerns relating to a performance matter arise outside of the six monthly meetings, and the OSC would like the relevant Cabinet Member to attend to provide an update on this matter, a specific invitation will be extended via the Cabinet Office for the Cabinet Member to attend the next scheduled meeting of the OSC.
7. Where OSCs have any specific concerns relating to a performance matter the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder will be made aware of these by the relevant OSC Lead / scrutiny support officer prior to the meeting.
8. Where a Cabinet Member is unable to attend an OSC meeting he/she may nominate another Cabinet member who supports the Portfolio area to attend, or the relevant strategic or service director.

Scrutiny and Policy Development

9. Where OSCs are considering matters which support the development of Council Policy, Cabinet Members will be invited to attend OSC meetings as follows:-

OSC Reviews

10. Cabinet Members will be made aware of the Policy Reviews to be carried out by each OSC annually through the OSC's Work Programme, including the dates of the meetings where the OSC will receive evidence on these reviews, and will receive the agenda papers for these meetings for information.
11. As the OSC work programmes are flexible, Cabinet Members will be notified of any changes to the Work Programme as they arise.
12. Where the OSC Review covers a Cabinet member's Portfolio area, the scrutiny support officer will contact the Cabinet Office to invite that Cabinet member on behalf of the OSC to attend one of the evidence sessions to highlight any issues/concerns/challenges that they would like the OSC to have regard to.
13. Where a Cabinet Member is unable to attend he/she may nominate another Cabinet member who supports the Portfolio area to attend, or the relevant strategic or service director.

ad hoc Policy Issues

14. Where an OSC's views are being sought on policy matters during the course of the year on an *ad hoc* basis, the scrutiny support officer will inform the Cabinet Office and invite the relevant Cabinet Member on behalf of the OSC to attend the meeting where this issue is considered to highlight any issues/concerns/challenges that they would like the OSC to have regard to.
15. Where a Cabinet Member wishes to attend any other meeting of an OSC and speak on a particular matter he/she should liaise with the relevant Chair of the OSC or the relevant scrutiny support officer for the OSC in question, seeking an invitation from the Chair. If agreed, the OSC will then be notified of the Cabinet Member's intention to attend.

Managing Disagreements

16. The above processes should ensure that OSC recommendations to Cabinet / Council, in relation to future Council policies and practices, take account of Cabinet members

position on particular matters and help facilitate Cabinet support for proposed recommendations. Never-the-less there may be occasions, in relation to particularly contentious issues, where Cabinet may disagree with a finding or recommendation of a scrutiny committee.

Where such disagreements occur in relation to OSC Reviews these are likely to become apparent at the Interim report stage providing an opportunity for OSC Chairs to discuss with relevant Cabinet members whether there is scope for a midway compromise position to be achieved.

Where it is not possible to find a compromise position and Cabinet, as the decision maker, considers it is not able to support a particular recommendation or finding of a scrutiny committee then Cabinet should provide full and clear reasons as to why this is the case.

Call in

- 17 Where an OSC Chair and Vice Chair agree that a request for Call - In is reasonable and Cabinet is asked to think again on a particular issue a meeting of the relevant OSC should be convened within five working days to consider the Call - In, the relevant Cabinet member will be invited to attend to make any comments they would like the OSC to have regard to. The representations of the Cabinet member will be in addition to any presentation given by the relevant Strategic Director responsible for the service which is the subject of the called in decision.

Scrutiny Powers to Access Information

- 18 The statutory guidance on O&S indicates that Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority, particularly on performance management and risk.

Each request for information should be judged on its individual merits but authorities should adopt a default position of sharing the information they hold, on request from scrutiny members. However, there may be instances where it is legitimate for the Cabinet to withhold information. In such circumstances, Regulation 17(4) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 places a requirement on the Cabinet to provide Scrutiny with a written statement setting out its reasons for that decision. However, the guidance states that before a decision is taken not to share information, serious consideration should be given as to whether such information can be shared with Scrutiny in closed session.

Scrutiny and full Council

- 19 An annual report setting out scrutiny's activities for that year will be submitted to a meeting of full Council to ensure that the wider Council has a good awareness of the role, purpose and ongoing work of scrutiny across the Council.



TITLE OF REPORT: **The Impact of the Gateshead Thrive Fund 2018-19: a case study**

REPORT OF: **Colin Huntington, Interim Strategic Director
Communities and Environment**

Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s views on the impact of the Gateshead Thrive Fund during 2018/19, looking at how it has helped to support, develop and build capacity in the voluntary and community sector and thereby help strengthen Gateshead’s local communities.

Introduction

1. The Gateshead Fund was established in 2011 to support, develop and build capacity in the Borough’s voluntary and community sector in the sector and to help strengthen communities. The outcomes of the Gateshead Fund are:
 - Increased capacity building and sustainability within the voluntary and community sector
 - Increased provision of services by the voluntary and community sector
 - Improved clarity and equity in commissioning processes
 - Simplified and proportionate application and assessment processes
 - Developing and mobilising volunteers
 - Supporting building relationships within communities
 - Supporting residents to build their communities and improve what is already there
 - Retention and expansion of councillor community champion role.

The Gateshead Fund 2018/2019 allocation and administration

2. Council agreed a £300,000 budget allocation for the Fund for 2018/19 which, together with agreed carryover of underspend and returned funds, equated to an overall available Fund of £443,460 which was assigned as follows:

Thrive Fund Main Grant	£255,360
Thrive Community Grant	£60,000
Tyneside Crowd	£30,000
Local Community Fund	£66,000
Talented Athlete / Sporting Individuals grants	£10,000
Gateshead Volunteers Month Grant	£20,000

3. The Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland continued to administer the Fund in accordance with its agreement with the Council, which runs until July 2020.

Impact of the Gateshead Thrive Fund in 2018/2019

4. Thrive Fund

The annual impact review of the Gateshead Fund has been written and produced by the Community Foundation, and accompanies this report in Appendix 1. It has been produced in the same format prepared by the Foundation for other funds it administers on behalf of trusts and endowments. It features a breakdown of how the Fund has been allocated during the year, including examples of some of the applications; a breakdown of the Volunteers' Month small grants and Sporting Grants for Individuals.

5. Tyneside Crowd

Newcastle City Futures, the multi-sector partnership of which Gateshead Council is a member, contracted with SpaceHive to set up a new crowdfunding platform, which has been called Tyneside Crowd. It provides an opportunity for people and organisations in the Tyneside area to collaborate on creative and innovative projects to improve and celebrate the places where they live, work and study. Tyneside Crowd also provides an opportunity for grant makers to place funding programmes on the platform; The Thrive Fund ring fenced up to £30,000 to support eligible projects from Gateshead with up to £2000 of project matched funding. No projects were supported during the financial year.

6. Local Community Fund

The Local Community Fund allocation of £3,000 per ward was agreed as part of the Gateshead Fund budget proposal. The £66,000 budget is part of the overall Thrive Fund but is administered by the Council's Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team separate to the main Fund arrangements. The amount available was augmented with £40,600 underspend carried forward from 2017/2018. As in previous years, the majority of activities supported were varied, small in scale and impactful, delivered by local groups within communities. Over the year £98,500 helped support 164 projects and activities, ranging from events across the Christmas festive season, school holiday activities for children and families, equipment for communal lounges and community festivals.

Summary

7. The Gateshead Thrive Fund continues to provide a significant financial resource supporting the viability and sustainability of a number of Gateshead's key community groups and organisations, helping them to maintain their positive impact in the community and contribution to the delivery of the Council's Thrive Agenda.

Recommendations

8. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

Consider the impact of the Gateshead Fund in 2018/2019 on:

- a. The voluntary and community sector in Gateshead
- b. Neighbourhoods and strengthening communities
- c. The extent to which the Gateshead Fund supports delivery of the Council's Thrive Agenda.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Impact of the Gateshead Capacity Building Fund 2018/2019: report by the Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

Contact: David Andrew ext. 3824

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Gateshead Thrive Fund

Impact Report 2018 - 2019



Your year 2018 - 2019

Welcome to the Gateshead Thrive Fund Impact Report for financial year 2018-2019.

This year, the Fund became fully aligned to Gateshead Council's strategic approach to help communities not just survive, but to flourish, prosper and succeed. In total, 24 grants were awarded to a broad range of organisations working across the Borough, from sports clubs and small community groups, to community centres and ambitious partnership projects; all have one thing in common: the aim to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. Later in the report, monitoring and thank you letters from funded groups are presented in their own words, further illustrating the value and impact of the Fund.

The tables later in this report present information on all grants made during the year: Round 1 awarded 11 grants totalling £112,792, and Round 2 awarded 13 grants totalling £109,157. One Round 1 grant of £10,000 was subsequently cancelled, as the organisation did not wish to proceed, therefore total main grant funding in 2018-19 was £211,949. Compared with 2018's total grant making of £301,696 across 39 grants, there has been a reduction in overall grantmaking commensurate with the reduction, by approximately one-third, in funds available for main grants this year.

Grant summary

Grants awarded fell broadly into four themes: strategy and planning, capital grants, core/salary costs and activity costs. Of the 24 grants awarded, only one was from a Jewish Community group and one from an organisation supporting the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community; this represents a significant downturn from the previous year for grants to these communities. Examples of funded work this year include:

Bensham and Saltwell Alive was awarded an exceptional grant of £30,000 for the 'Best of Bensham Partnership', in collaboration St Chad's Community Project and the Parish of Bensham and Teams. This new network will develop a neighbourhood offer based on the expressed needs and aspirations of local people, developing new ways of working and capacity building, and strengthening delivery of activities alongside longer-term planning.

Teamwork Development Trust CIC received funding to support development of a five-year group business plan which will focus on governance, marketing, income generation and development of services. Funding will also support the implementation of a Social Return On Investment (SROI) framework, training key staff so that they can capture and report on impact and value in-house and offer an SROI reporting service to external third sector organisations as a new income stream in the future.

Zayis Raanon deliver services and activities for elderly and vulnerable people within the Jewish community in Gateshead. The grant will support development of their three-year strategic and funding plan; the organisation will work with consultants from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to identify methods of securing more sustainable

income to avoid any break or temporary closure of the service once current National Lottery funding ends.

Saltwell Park Model Boat Club's grant covered the costs of a new natural Welsh slate roof for their Clubhouse and provision of a training programme for Club members, as part of an upskilling process ahead of the organisation becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. They will also purchase ICT equipment and publicity materials, including a refresh of their website, which will help improve communications and visibility across the Borough.

The grant to **Warriors Community Project** will contribute to the purchase of a new heating system at the Whitehills Centre. The lack of adequate heating has been a barrier to attendance in winter months and has been very costly. Savings on bills will help the group to become more self-sufficient, create new activities and strengthen their role within the wider community.

The Comfrey Project has been re-establishing itself and plans to become financially stable, having undertaken major changes to be in a position to survive. The grant will enable implementation of a new Business Plan and add to staff capacity, with the intention of recruiting people with the necessary skills to deliver activities and support to the most vulnerable communities in Gateshead.

Birtley Community Partnership has seen an increase in those needing help, particularly around food poverty and Universal Credit. The grant will contribute to salary costs of a Development Worker and Administrator; these roles will support a change in focus to respond to these issues and strengthen their capacity, helping individuals to gain a sense of belonging and responsibility for the area.

Gateshead and Whickham Amateur Swimming Club have seen their membership fall over the last two years and, on a monthly basis, costs outweigh income. Consequently, they are looking at measures to help grow the membership; the grant will allow them work with Gateshead Council on an academy scheme and will put in place systems to help manage registrations and ongoing membership, which will better support tracking of swimmers and their subscriptions. As the main customer of Gateshead Council pools, an investment now may help ensure the Club's future and that of the facilities.

High Spen Community Group received a grant to deliver 'The High Spen Heroes', a celebration event of Thomas Young and William Dobson of High Spen who were both awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War. The project honoured these men and used their stories as a positive focus for community activities, intergenerational commemoration and celebration.

Chopwell Community Association received a grant to develop a new way of working by taking on the responsibility for the continuation of youth services. A new approach to delivery will be introduced and the grant will enable capacity building through the

recruitment and training of volunteers which, in turn, should make the service sustainable and less grant reliant.

Northern Pride Events Ltd's grant will support expansion of their work into Gateshead as they relocate to the Pride World Media Centre in Pelaw. The move will allow more access to local communities and enable more LGBT events to be held in the Gateshead City and East areas. Offering outreach work in deprived or challenging areas helps to engage with those who may have little access to support; being visible in areas away from large city centres is important to break down barriers and increase awareness.

Small Grants programme

The Community Grants Programme was a new addition to the Fund's delivery portfolio this year. There were two rounds of this rolling fast-track programme, with Round 1 opening May 2018 and Round 2 opening in September 2018. The programme awarded grants totalling £25,603 to 20 smaller organisations with the aim to support them to grow through improved governance and management skills, as well as supporting the Council's Thrive agenda.

A summary of small grants awarded during Gateshead Volunteers' Month is presented later in the report, together with an overview of the Sporting Grants for Individuals and Talented Athlete Scheme.

Nils Stronach
Senior Programme Advisor

ns@communityfoundation.org.uk



The Gateshead Fund - Budget for 2018/19

The table below sets out the funds available during the year and is followed by information on grants awarded.

Financial Summary	
Gateshead Thrive Fund 2018/19	£300,000
Capacity Fund 2017/18 carry over	£117,000
Funding returned - three cancelled grants	£26,360
Total Gateshead Thrive Fund budget 2018/19	£443,360
Gateshead Thrive Fund component breakdown	
Main Grants funding available to organisations	£255,360
Talented Athlete / Sporting Individuals small grants	£12,000
Local Community Fund	£66,000
Newcastle City Futures Crowdfunding+ pilot platform	£30,000
Community Grants Programme	£60,000
Gateshead Volunteers Month 2018 small grants	£20,000
Total	£443,360

Grants awarded 2018/19

Main Fund Round 1	
Bensham and Saltwell Alive Best of Bensham Partnership - Connecting Assets	30,000
Comfrey Project CIO Core salary costs for two new posts	10,000
Birtley Community Partnership The Hub core funding	10,000
Rutherford AFC Contribution to cost of a new tractor	9,840
Blaydon Youth and Community Centre Increasing capacity and sustainability	9,598
Society Matters CIC Improving and expanding welfare training programmes	9,250
Saltwell Park Model Boat Club Saltwell Park Model Boat Clubhouse	6,650
Teamwork Development Trust CIC Planning Teamwork's future during its 30th year of service delivery	6,280
Earth Doctors Ltd.* "One loaf at a time" - establishment of a bakery training hub in Deckham	10,000
Low Fell Running Club Taking Low Fell Running Club to the 'next level.'	2,674
High Spen Community Group The High Spen Heroes	8,500
11 Grants	£112,792
* - grant not accepted	
Community Grants Programme: Round 1	
Skills 4 work Gateshead Summer Fun, Fitness & Freebies	1,280
Birtley Community Association Holiday meal and activity project	1,500
Soundroom Community Music Project Help towards utilities costs for The Soundroom	1,000
Cragside Court Residents Group Start Up of Cragside Court Residents Group	1,000
Friends of Watergate Forest Park Noticeboard for Watergate Forest Park & Funding for family activities	1,500
Family Church Gateshead Kitchen refurbishment	1,500
1st Winlaton Scout Group Autism Training / Awareness	650
7 Grants	£8,430

Main Fund Round 2	
Chopwell Community Association Chopwell community-led youth work	9,554
Northern Pride Events Ltd Growing Pride in Gateshead	10,000
Gateshead and Whickham Amateur Swimming Club Building for the future	10,000
Friends of Chopwell Park Chopwell BMX/Pump Track	2,383
Skills for Work (Gateshead) Limited Preparing for growth	9,705
Elgin Community Kitchen CIC ElGain - allowing volunteers to meet their full potential	4,081
New Vision Training Making Every Contact Count (MECC) supported Peer Led Partnership Training	9,980
St Chad's Community Project Steps to future success	10,000
The Kittiwake Trust Improving Literacy levels in East Gateshead	10,000
Warriors Community Project Community centre heating project	10,000
Zayis Raanon Moving Forward: development of strategic and funding plan	6,000
Swalwell Juniors Under 7's Football Club Training newly recruited trustees and volunteers and equipment	7,470
Gateshead Harriers and Athletics Club Equipment to improve standards and community engagement	9,984
13 Grants	£109,157

Community Grants Programme: Round 2	
1st Birtley Rangers Setting up a Ranger Unit in Birtley	1,352
Friends of Shadon House Stitching the Community Back Together Again	1,500
Friends of St Mark's Please, Make Yourself at Home	1,500
Eighton Banks Village Hall Youth Club Skills for independence activities	522
Birtley Community Association Christmas Lunch	570

Carers Cultural Adventures Connecting Carers Through Creativity	1,500
Angel Court and the Bungalows Residence Social Fund Angels Wanted: seeking new creative group members!	1,500
Wood Green Residents Association Hen Roadshows helping us to help others	1,500
Bluebells of Philips Court Open Door Music Sessions	1,500
Wonderful Wardleygaters Gateshead Together: Making More Memories	1,500
Gateshead People Supper Club - cooking and eating together for fun	1,466
Highfield Village Community Action Group Make Highfield Look Great	1,263
Friends of Felling Park and Town Centre Community Planting Project	1,500
13 Grants	£17,173

Sports grants: Round 1	
Individual Sporting Grants Scheme – 30 grants	6,600
Talented Athlete Scheme – 1 grant	1,000
Sports grants: Round 2	
Individual Sporting Grants Scheme – 18 grants	3,400
Talented Athlete Scheme – 1 grant	1,000

Gateshead Volunteers Month – June 2018

26 Grants

£10,975

Taking place in June 2018, Gateshead's Volunteers' Month enabled VCS organisations to organise events to encourage and support residents to help out in their communities through volunteering. The Fund supports events which:

- raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering
- support and enable volunteering for both new and existing volunteers
- create capacity through volunteering
- improve the health and wellbeing of volunteers
- deliver the aims of the Gateshead Volunteer Plan
- confirm Gateshead's reputation as a national leader in volunteering
- improve health and wellbeing

This year, Volunteers' Month also aimed to support groups to deliver projects to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War and those to complement and/or enhance the Great Exhibition of the North.

Of the 28 grants awarded, 25 went ahead with a total of £10,975 allocated to groups and organisations across Gateshead. During the month, many events were held, including local environment clean ups, family fund days, workshops and training days. There were a number of volunteer recruitment days and volunteer celebration events, all of which recognised the valuable commitment made by Gateshead residents to various worthy causes across the Borough. A selection of feedback from these events is included later in the report.

Throughout the month, 113,151 hours were recorded on a volunteer totaliser, which equates to a £1.47m contribution to the Borough's economy. The table below illustrates the volunteer contribution in Gateshead since 2013.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Volunteer hours	35,000	38,224	56,000	101,170	106,189
£ equivalent	£455,000	£497,000	£728,000	£1.31m	£1.38m

The table below shows the pattern of grant spend across Gateshead (2016 – 2019)

Ward (IMD key: red = top 10%, Green = 10-20%)	% of population in deprivation band IMD (2015)	2016 - 17			2017 - 18			2018 - 19		
		Ward spend per head	Indicative total spend	Indicative total spend per capita*	Ward spend per head	Indicative total spend	Indicative total spend per capita*	Ward spend per head	Indicative total spend	Indicative total spend per capita*
Felling	64.2	£1.49	£22,041	£2.39	£0.05	£7,039	£0.76	£1.09	£15,777	1.66
High Fell	50.7	£1.79	£26,078	£2.69	£0.00	£6,884	£0.71	£0.00	£6,082	0.58
Deckham	41	£1.57	£24,644	£2.47	£0.00	£7,078	£0.71	£0.41	£10,335	0.99
Lobley Hill and Bensham	29.1	£1.87	£28,426	£2.77	£4.35	£51,914	£5.06	£5.45	£62,272	6.02
Bridges	26.3	£1.94	£27,742	£2.84	£1.53	£21,877	£2.24	£0.00	£6,134	0.58
Dunston and Teams	21.9	£1.81	£24,616	£2.71	£1.57	£20,759	£2.28	£0.00	£5,705	0.58
Lamesley	20	£0.00	£8,614	£0.90	£0.00	£6,794	£0.71	£0.00	£6,003	0.58
Windy Nook and Whitehills	53.8	£0.17	£10,277	£1.07	£0.00	£6,837	£0.71	£1.04	£16,041	1.62
Sealtwell	51.5	£0.38	£13,499	£1.28	£0.00	£7,508	£0.71	£0.00	£6,633	0.58
Chowdene	33.3	£0.00	£8,083	£0.90	£0.00	£6,375	£0.71	£0.00	£5,633	0.58
Daydon	26	£0.84	£17,483	£1.74	£0.99	£17,148	£1.70	£0.95	£15,914	1.53
Birtley	19.1	1.20	£17,508	£2.10	£2.27	£24,821	£2.98	£1.20	£15,232	1.78
Low Fell	-	£0.00	£7,600	£0.90	£1.18	£15,994	£1.89	£0.32	£7,970	0.89
Wardley and Leam Lane	-	£0.24	£9,424	£1.14	£1.21	£15,855	£1.92	£0.00	£5,173	0.58
Dunston Hill and Whickham East	-	£0.64	£13,991	£1.54	£0.00	£6,460	£0.71	£0.00	£5,708	0.58
Crawcrook and Greenside	-	£2.16	£26,964	£3.06	£1.14	£16,249	£1.85	£0.00	£5,522	0.58
Chopwell and Rowlands Gill	-	£1.27	£20,094	£2.17	£0.00	£6,566	£0.71	£1.23	£17,738	1.87
Ryton, Crookhill and Stella	-	£1.76	£22,916	£2.66	£1.08	£15,355	£1.79	£0.00	£5,394	0.58
Pelaw and Heworth	-	£0.00	£7,967	£0.90	£2.19	£24,791	£2.92	£0.00	£5,141	0.58
Whickham North	-	£0.00	£7,377	£0.90	£0.00	£5,818	£0.71	£0.00	£5,141	0.58
Whickham South and Sunniside	-	£0.00	£7,252	£0.90	£0.00	£5,720	£0.71	£0.00	£5,054	0.58
Winlaton and High Spen	-	£0.00	£7,469	£0.90	£0.98	£14,041	£1.69	£1.02	£13,705	1.60
Totals			£360,065			£311,883			£248,527	

*Includes a proportion of Gateshead-wide expenditure calculated on the basis of ward population.

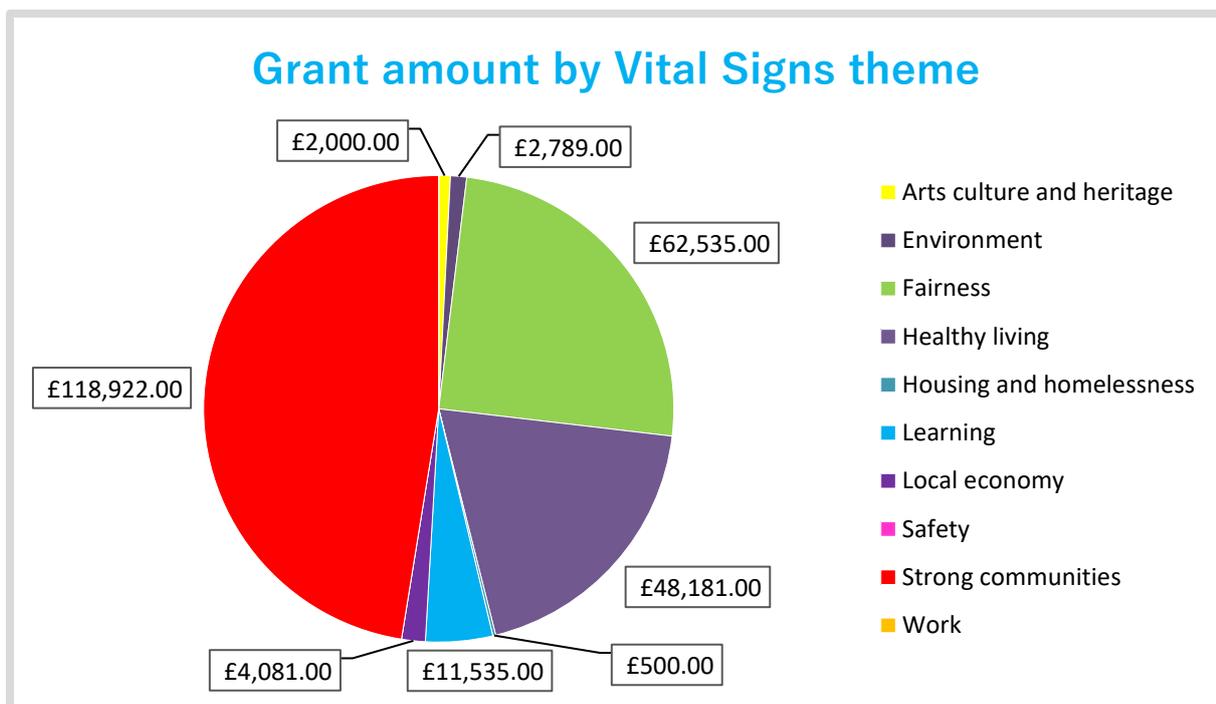
Vital Signs

Our Vital Signs work enables us to prioritise our efforts to support projects addressing poverty, diversity and mental health, all of which are significant causes for concern. Appendix one (p54) details our recent Vital Signs report on Food Poverty, highlighting the issue and how grant-making and philanthropy can make a difference in our region.

We also continue to seek to target more support towards geographic “cold spots” where we wish to make more grants; as part of our strategy to address this, I am delighted to announce that at the start of this year we made £620,000 of unrestricted grants to trusted groups working to address these issues in our area.

Grant distribution

The following graph show the distribution of your grants* across our Vital Signs themes.



* Data includes grants subsequently withdrawn or refunded

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The Millin Charity	
Project	Local Women Local Enterprise Gateshead
Grant amount	£9,923

“This grant has ensured continuity of much needed services in Gateshead over the last year so that women have continued to have a specialist service they can engage with when they are considering self-employment. Additionally, this has also enabled us as an organisation to gain a greater understanding of the needs of target groups of women in Gateshead. Delivery included accredited training, Inspiring Enterprise and Crafts workshops, a winter Market to enable women to trial trade to the public. Delivery also included a celebration event attended by 60 women from Gateshead.

Funding has enabled us to develop a greater understanding of the needs of key underrepresented groups in Gateshead. We have run the project in line with a research project commissioned by Gateshead Council Economic Development Team into Female Entrepreneurship in the Borough. We now have a full research report into the needs of women in Gateshead considering self-employment, the existing services, the current gaps and the proposed services that would create a woman focused enterprise offer.

We have developed stronger connections with local organisations and have been able to use evaluations to develop our future delivery plan, including the creation of the monthly network. Delivering to the JCCG has enabled us to develop a greater understand of the Jewish Community in Gateshead. From this we have tailored a number of workshops to ensure they are fit for purpose, developing capacity and understanding of this community. As well as developing relationships with key delivery partners we have formed referral links with the Gateshead Carers Centre, Comfrey Project, Local Primary Schools, Gateshead CLLD, Wise Steps and Gateshead Council’s Community Development Team.

We have found that for many of the women from the Muslim community the perception of what it means to have a business was a physical space such as a shop, this was creating a barrier in terms of start-up finances and increasing their risks. It is essential that we continue to offer these communities opportunities to explore different types of business structures and be exposed to role models who can share they own experiences of setting up business. We have found that from many of the young mothers we have worked with that they have very low confidence in their own ability and how they feel communities perceive them.

This in-depth knowledge makes a key difference as we are able to develop our services to challenge and change perceptions. Lack of role models and positive female only support services is often a barrier; many women have little or no experience of running a business or working as part of a business therefore opportunities to take part in hands on training experiences lead by other women who have been through the process of self-employment has been beneficial. Continued access to these types of opportunities including a chance to volunteer within a real-life business is still a very much needed service.”

Ryton Triathlon Club

Project	Junior Development
Grant amount	£8,000

“Our first and primary objective was to create a youth and junior development section to allow a pathway of progression following our very successful kids section created in Aug 2015. We were unable to cater for all of those kids/parents who wished to join due to the limitations of facility space and coaching staff. Thanks to the funding award we have been able to educate and train additional volunteers to become coaches.

Now that we have created the youth/junior section of the club we were able to open up the books of the waiting list and invite these younger ones to join. There is now a defined pathway for inclusion and development within the club structure which would not have been possible without the development funding. We delivered what was voted the "best kids/youth race of 2017" by the regional committee and its membership by hosting the open water Hetton triathlon. We also received some very positive feedback from British Triathlon Staff who attended, so much so we have been offered the status of a European qualifier event this year and we will host the event as part of the British Triathlon youth and Junior Super Series.

We provided CPD and mentoring for all our volunteer coaches who are now supplied with uniform and kit to enable them to be identified as Ryton Tri coaching team. We have a Facebook site and website with all photographs and results form 2017. We have also formed a kids/youth sub-committee where we meet regularly to discuss planning and organisational issues relating to the smooth running of the Junior section of the club. We are in the process of updating the web site via our own web meister and have team kit suppliers on board.

We ended the 2017 season with a presentation evening held at Swalwell Cricket Club in November where over 100 attended a very successful evening to reward not only the winners of races within the regional grand prix but those who have progressed within the coaching programme of training sessions.”



Gateshead Older People's Assembly

Project	Development of diversified income streams
Grant amount	£9,921

“This project has been very important to Gateshead Older People's Assembly. We know that funding from local authorities as well as trusts and foundations is becoming more scarce and we have been able, as a result of this grant, to increase the amount of unrestricted donations we have received through community fundraising. We have spent a lot of time working with external organisations (running clubs, supermarkets, social groups) to encourage them to support us in our community fundraising efforts. We have also held small fundraising events within our activities across Gateshead. The amount of income we received as donations increased from £4,481 to £14,705 from 2017 to 2018 as can be seen in our latest audited accounts.

One particular highlight was receiving a cheque from local co-op customers for £7,356. We now have a plan in place and we have set ourselves a high target for community fundraising in 2019 as well. With an increase in community-raised income, we are able to make improvements to our centre without relying on grant funding. Our boiler was condemned last year, and it cost £7,000 to replace. We needed it replacing quickly and a grant application process would have taken too long, but we were able to use community generated unrestricted income instead.

With a plan in place, we can also plan further fundraising activities in future. This project has not only allowed us to increase the amount of income we have been able to raise from community fundraising, but it has also reconfirmed our charitable status to many of our beneficiaries. It seemed as if some of our beneficiaries may have considered us to be a service, like those provided by local authorities, which are being funded from a bottomless well. Community fundraising activity has helped us remind them that we rely on donations and grants in order to continue to provide the activities we do.

Another benefit has been the relationships we have been able to develop with external organisations who are able to raise money on our behalf. Just last week, the treasurer of Saltwell Harriers running club came to our office and presented us with a cheque for £250. We didn't even know the club was raising money for us.”

Peace of Mind	
Project	Peace of Mind - Governance & Sustainability
Grant amount	£5,680

“This grant helped us with the running costs over a 12 months period. During this time, with the support of NCVS, we have also worked to ensure the organisation is in a much stronger position to support the needs of our beneficiaries. We had a few meetings with NCVS to discuss the more suitable charity status for Peace of Mind. NCVS identified CIO, as this suits most of our aims and objectives.

We have made a positive difference to the lives of numerous individuals and families. People have developed an improved understanding of the community of which they are now a part. We also know, we have made a positive difference in terms of reducing isolation and promoting community cohesion by offering volunteering opportunities to asylum seekers. Seeds for change training for volunteers and updated policies and procedures helped us to be much more structured and transparent in our approach.

Being able to cover the venue hire, volunteer out of pocket expenses for meetings and networking events helped us to be more visible in the voluntary sector. A range of new (informal) partnerships were developed as a result of this funding. This funding also enabled us to recruit more volunteers which has been a strength for our organisation as we don't have a paid staff and we totally rely on volunteers' commitment and their hard work.

For the very first time since we established, we were able to setup An Advisory Group of committed volunteers. Their role has been very important as they became the voice of their community and started identifying concerns and issues of the members. This helped us to be more effective in what we do. Advisory Group always met independently. This funding also ensured that trustees are up to date with organisation's activities and administration work. Trustees and volunteers were able to allocate time to update our policies. Our Safeguarding Policy, Vulnerable Adult Policy, Finance Policy was updated. Public liability Insurance was put in place for volunteers and members.

We are considering putting together some information about Brexit implications on Asylum Seekers and Refugees as this has created a lot of fear among this community. One of our biggest achievement: 3 (Asylum Seeker) Volunteers from Peace of Mind have secured scholarships for further education last year. Their contribution of community work and experience of volunteering with Peace of Mind was seen as a positive factor by the universities. We were also asked to provide a reference for 3 of them.”

Gateshead and Whickham Amateur Swimming Club

Project	Building capacity
Grant amount	£10,000

“Pool costs increased from £76K in 2015 to £110,00k in 2017 which put a great strain on the club’s resources. The club ran two successful galas and a number of fundraising events which meant that with the support of the grant we were able to meet the demands of the pool costs. A number of volunteers attended various courses including team module, time to listen and a number of safeguarding modules. 38 coaches and volunteers were registered for DBS checks. Despite the increase in the pool costs, there are a number of individual and team achievements that have been attained with the support of the grant.

Three Gateshead and Whickham Athletes were selected to attend the Swim England Pathway County Development Camps, as a result of their top 10 positions in one or more Olympic events at the recent county championships. The camps provided an opportunity for swimmers to develop technical, tactical, physical and psychological skills with swimmers of a similar age and ability from across the county. The camps also provide an opportunity for swimmers to work with different coaches and train in different environments. Six swimmers qualified for this year’s top-class 3-day Scottish short course championships with a number of all-time club records being achieved.

Gateshead and Whickham invested in an online ordering system to help with efficiency and speed of processing money and accounting. The initial investment was £1,200 to set up the ecommerce site for processing gala and now merchandising of club kit and associated products.”



Blue Sky Trust	
Project	Think For Yourself
Grant amount	£5,000

“The funding has helped us to maintain relationships with schools in Gateshead and develop new ones. It has given us time to attend training and develop the team’s knowledge and networks. The funding has also given us time to update and develop our session plans and materials ensuring they are up to date and effective. Overall, the project is developing and growing and is set to be in a good position when Sex and Relationship education becomes compulsory.

Accurate information, a forum for safe discussion and skills/resilience development are all essential to give young people the confidence and knowledge to make safe and healthy choices about sex and relationships. 1079 young people have had a unique opportunity to learn more about topics that affect their lives such as online safety, puberty, sexual exploitation and so on. This gives them an excellent foundation for all their relationships in life.

Participants say they have had time to think through issues and learn facts about what is and isn't legal, how to stay safe, how to protect their identity, consent, puberty, HIV, what they want in a relationship, sexual exploitation and so on. Young people rarely have access to other structured and safe groups where they can explore their values, feelings and thoughts relating to relationships and think freely about what they want for their life.

Most importantly, they have learnt that if they are in trouble or worried about something, there are people and helplines that they can go to for support. This is essential as often in teen suicides, it emerges that they were being bullied or had sent nude pictures of themselves and didn't know what to do or where to get help. The young people are taught about where they can report inappropriate material on social media and other sites. Essentially, the young people have a greater chance of keeping themselves safe and healthy as they progress through life.”

Parish of Bensham and Teams Parochial Church Council	
Project	St. Chad's Church - Inspired Futures
Grant amount	£9,500

“The grant has enabled St Chads Church to make the most of current opportunities by increasing the staff capacity, which has meant that the church has been open so that local people could come in for support and advice or just for company, e.g. An elderly woman now visits every Tuesday morning just for a coffee and a chat with the project worker. As noted above we have realised that our enterprise ideas need more time to become established and we now better understand the challenges we face when trying to generate income in a mostly poor community – most people in the area need support and are not in a position to pay (much or anything). This has been a useful discovery, which helps St Chads Church to reconsider its options for future sustainability.

An unexpected outcome has been gaining a commitment to and genuine collaboration in creating an area partnership that works together to provide a consistent support offer in the community and avoids duplication. This extends to joint funding applications and is expected to continue to develop to jointly provide services. This again has been the result of conversations and efforts by the project worker and lead.

The project worker has been successful in gaining some additional small grants, including a grant to purchase 2 lap top computers so that people can access a range of online information and services, benefits, advice and job searches. To support this activity a number of volunteers received “Turn 2 Us’ training to equip them to support others to access benefits and other information. One volunteers has been so motivated by this that she has requested further training in other areas to develop her own skills and what she can give back to the church.

St Chads Church was fortunate to be introduced to the Ballinger Trust and have brokered a relationship with the trust. This has resulted in a joint ‘meet the funder’ session (in Mid Nov) for local groups to talk with the Ballinger Trustees with a view to gaining small grants for their activities. This is unlikely to have been possible without the capacity made possible by this grant.”

Gateshead Redheugh 1957

Project	Being Self Sufficient/New Tractor and Attachments
Grant amount	£10,000

“Over the last 12 months the club were able to purchase a new Tractor and attachments due to the grant we received from the Community Foundation. The purpose of the project was to secure funding from the Football Foundation of 23403 and from the Community Foundation of 10000 making a total of 33403 for the equipment we required. Both grants were secured, and we were able to purchase our Tractor and attachments.

Since the purchase of our equipment through the funding we received, we have been able to maintain and improve the quality our 4 grass pitches which has reduced the number of cancellations of games given our members more game time. This has benefitted the club as it has increased the use of the facilities and also increased revenue from pitch hire etc. We are now also able to decrease our expenditure to external contractors thus enabling us as a club to look at other areas of development to improve our facilities for the young people of the area of Eslington Park.

The grant has enabled the club to purchase a new Tractor and Attachments through matched funding. The new equipment has helped the club improve its maintenance to its four grass pitches by improving the quality of the playing surfaces.

The problems we had in the past were poor quality playing surface and waterlogging and as a result of the Tractor and new Equipment we have been able to increase the number of games been played as the grass pitches have been improved which has given the local community and the club better facilities increasing the number of local people using the site.

The grant has also helped us as a club increase the number of teams within the club. This season 2018/2019 we have been able to maintain all our teams and also from 2 new boys' teams plus a girls' team at u11s for the first time.”

Caprian Theatre Company	
Project	Theatre Seating for Community Pantomime
Grant amount	£1,800

“The generous funding we received paid for the hire of ramping for our January 2018 pantomime production of Snow White. This was a successful production with approximately 970 attendees. As a result of funding and sales we made an overall profit of £3000 on the show which will allow us to reinvest in future productions.

In previous years this ramping was included in the price to hire the venue so when this became a separate expense, we were struggling to afford this. We had considered not having the ramping at all however we felt this may not have prevented small children from seeing the stage and may have impacted the enjoyment of the performance. This may also have affected ticket sales as some people will only attend if raised seating is available to allow a clear view of the stage.

As a result of funding and all of the additional efforts by the society, we have this year made a profit which we will be re-investing in future productions. We can now look at different and more popular shows which we may not previously have been able to consider due to cost. More popular shows will be more appealing to the local community, encouraging people to attend the theatre and ensuring the future of one of Gateshead’s longest running theatre companies.

We have made significant changes to Caprian Theatre company over the past year to modernise our processes and introduce cost saving measures. We have a new website to better enable us to promote our productions and increase ticket sales. We have also increased our social media presence with accounts on Twitter and Facebook which we use for free advertising.

We have introduced an online booking system which is more cost effective and easier for customers which opens the productions up to a wider audience. We have also hired a card machine to allow us to take payments easier.

We usually hold a production in May however in recent years this has been at a financial loss. This year the committee decided to cancel this production to allow us to be in a better financial position to invest in a more modern production this coming May.

We have had a very productive year where we have rallied around as a group to better promote and support our society for the benefit of the community. All members actively promote our productions, including attending fairs, markets and local events such as the Christmas light switch on. All of which were attended by actors in full costume, to the delight of the local people.

We are making every effort to modernise our society whilst retaining the traditional values that we and the community hold dear.”

Comfrey Project CIO

Project	Refugee Volunteering Celebration Event
Grant amount	£500

"This event we organised to mark both Gateshead Volunteers Month and Refugee Week 2018, aimed at promoting the positive impact of volunteering, and in particular as a means for refugees and asylum seekers to improve their own wellbeing while contributing to their community.

This was the first formal invitation from The Comfrey Project to the local community to see the culmination of two years of hard work on the Windmill Hills site, since we moved here in 2016. By demonstrating how our volunteers (both the referred asylum seekers and refugees and those coming from the "traditional " volunteering routes) have transformed a previously disused site into a vibrant community space which can be used for the wellbeing of all local residents, we aimed at inspiring more to volunteer but also to create positive associations around migration.

The raving feedback we received from residents and organisation representatives (approximately 18 different organisations in attendance) at the event, about the "wonderfully unexpected" "oasis" we have created in the middle of Gateshead and the "warm and welcoming" atmosphere justified our efforts.





By organising sample gardening and creative activities for people to take part, and a delicious multicultural buffet to feast on we intended to show how the site might be used. Indeed a few organisations approached us regarding partnering to support various groups, such as stroke survivors or disabled people. We were particularly pleasantly surprised with feedback from a group of disabled people attending with support workers that the Windmill Hills site is almost fully accessible in its current layout and form. As a result we moved plans to work with this client group forward and went on to apply for and receive £1,000 from Ballinger Trust for the purchase of accessible gardening tools and equipment.

Another crucial outcome for The Comfrey Project has been recruitment of five new volunteers: two pensioners who love gardening, a full-time carer keen to get a sense of contributing to the wider community, a local business-woman who wants to find out more about refugee matters and a landscape architect who would like to help short-term with a particular development idea our volunteers have.

Moreover the event was a great occasion for the all at the Comfrey Project to "pull together" and work as a team to prepare everything. It was great to see new friendships being formed and people's confidence increasing while working for a common goal. The feedback we received was about the importance to have something to look forward to and a sense of plan, especially for the long term asylum seekers. As a result of those observations and discussions we have decided together to schedule in three community events per year and to create a rough annual timetable.

Finally, having received musical instruments and equipment on loan from Sage Gateshead for this event we had the opportunity for a first attempt to form a choir. It became clear how

much music inspired and brought people together and we decided to look for a way to acquire some musical instruments and to continue with the choir.

The impact of the event on individuals was also significant: D. is a single father of two, an asylum seeker who suffers from severe depression. Being a musician previously expressed an interest in playing music at the event. However in the lead up to the event, his mental health deteriorated and therefore told us that he was not going to play. He did attend however and was sitting on the side watching and listening to the music being played. At some point when the local musician that was playing until then, he got up and approached the keyboard and started playing almost as if to himself. He then started playing louder and louder. Visitors got up and started dancing to his music and then C. another asylum seeker who had been feeling quite low on that day and again said he was not going to play the djembes we borrowed for him joined D. and grabbed the mic and started singing traditional songs. Slowly slowly more people started getting up, grabbing the guitars, the djembes and the mics sharing songs and music from the different places they had come from while visitors were clapping and dancing along. The difference in the group dynamic and for D. since the event has been dramatic. From being threatened with removal of his children due to his situation he has not missed a single session since, he is taking part and is in good spirits!”



Skills 4 Work (Gateshead) Limited

Project	Volunteering and Wellbeing in Gateshead
Grant amount	£485

“We recognise the variety of roles our volunteers take and the on-going dedication of our 22 volunteers, many who have been with us for 4 years since we started in July 2014. They praised the work and the dedication of all involved and were now more aware of their role as we discussed how this is a 'team' approach to the on-going development of the charity.

Communication channels need to be developed and we are looking at how we can engage a volunteer to focus on this as many volunteers do not use social media. The younger volunteers discussed how they felt their comments and suggestions are valued, which is the core of our work.

We were delighted with the positive experiences of our volunteer team and recognised the opportunities that we are able to offer young people due to the volunteer support. We offer a variety of volunteer roles within our charity, including professional support with business development, support within the class setting/visits, support within the fundraising and positive encouragement from all volunteers to encourage all to be involved.

The Volunteering in Gateshead Awareness Day was attended by 28 retired ladies who found the information very helpful and talk from Citizens Advice very informative - 3 ladies expressed an interest to attend their next open day, in Gateshead.

We also had a display board which displayed information and take-away resources at the entrance to Fusion Studio, which is attended by over 150 people on a weekly basis. The take-away resources were re-stocked 3 times during volunteer month.

We also discussed The Great Exhibition of the North and offered a free service to print-out any maps, literature that people may need to visit the venues, available until September, which some local people have already taken use of.

The grant allowed us the opportunity to thank our volunteers with a free lunch and the opportunity for volunteers to come together. We also took the opportunity to discuss safeguarding in more detail to our younger volunteers and it was worth noting that all our young volunteers feel valued and respected for their contribution and took comfort that the staff team are highly qualified and the volunteers carry-out an induction period and references are carried out and if required police cleared, only in the case of work placements is this required. All aspects of their engagement with the charity were questioned class sessions, external visits, work placements, fundraisers and all were aware of staying safe and importance to do so.”

Leam Lane Bowling Club

Project	Family Fun Day
Grant amount	£320

“This has helped us showcase our friendly club and amenities and was very gratefully received. We advertised this fun day as a showcase for our bowling club to attract families to compete and gave out prizes, food and drink to everyone. Our volunteers brought friends and neighbours along and many did not know we had a bowling green and hold a social night every Friday.

We were pleased to welcome another 3 new social members and 2 new volunteers. All now come along to try the game of bowls and are really enjoying themselves.”



Crawcrook & Greenside Local Environment Group

Project	Village Tidy-Up
Grant amount	£324

“The appearance of public spaces in the village has been improved, fostering an increased sense of pride in the local area.

The stock of equipment held by Our Villages has been increased, improving capacity to hold future events and to support a network of individual volunteers who pick litter in their own time.

The profile of the group has been raised and the work it does in improving the local area has been promoted, increasing potential to recruit additional volunteers.”

Your Voice Counts

Project	Promoting volunteer opportunities
Grant amount	£230

“Funds were used to purchase a pop up display banner to promote our volunteer opportunities and to print volunteer flyers. A gazebo was provided free of charge by the management team at Trinity Centre where our promotional event was held. We recruited 3 new local volunteers at the event. Our stall was supported by our volunteer coordinator, 3 of our volunteers, and 4 people with learning disabilities. We also held a volunteer lunch celebration, providing us with an opportunity to thank our volunteers for their hard work and to enable newly recruited volunteers to meet some of our more experienced volunteers and share learning.

The grant enabled us to recruit 3 new volunteers and to develop stronger links with services and businesses in our local area. For example, we made new links with the student liaison officer at Gateshead College and have since recruited 2 students from the College. Our volunteer celebration event helped us to establish stronger peer support networks between our volunteers and provided an opportunity for people with learning disabilities to explore volunteering opportunities with us as Peer Advocates - using their lived experience to support other people with learning disabilities who access our service.”

Friends of Shadon House

Project	Shadon House Needs You!
Grant amount	£270

“With this grant we were able to host an event at Shadon House, which was part of a care home open day event, and recruit relatives of the service users to take part in the creative writing sessions. This was beneficial to all parties as it meant that the staff were able to have an extra pair of hands and the relatives were able to spend some quality time with their loved ones through creative activity. We were also able to recruit some members of the local community who have a variety of different skills and since then we have had many people working with us. Currently we have a volunteer who will be helping us to work in the garden with the residents and a horticulture specialist. This project has helped us gain the confidence to grow a good group of volunteers.

This project fed into a larger creative writing project that we were delivering where we were running sessions at Birtley Library. During these sessions we created an imaginative children's story which we wanted to read to some children in the local community. We reached out to our local primary Barley Mow and it led to us forming a strong relationship with them where we then were able to deliver weekly sessions at Shadon House and with 22 reception children. We intend to continue to work with the school and develop our relationship. The children loved the story the older people had created during sessions at Birtley Library.”

Friends of Winlaton Village

Project	Community Summer planting and litter pick
Grant amount	£500

“The Friends of Winlaton planted out the Barrier baskets, 3 tier planter and the raised flower beds (helped by the Winlaton cubs). Watering cans were provided to the Traders in Winlaton who we work in partnership with to water the barrier baskets.

A litter pick was carried out after the planting in the village. 3 of our members have completed the NSPCC online training course and certificates obtained. The grant has enabled the Friends of Winlaton Village to purchase all of the plants to plant out every barrier basket and planter in the village. Also the raised flower beds around the village.

The plants give a cheerful look to the area and brighten it up. The community come together with help from the Cubs, Princes Trust members (who helped to clear the raised flower bed area of weeds before planting) and also the traders in the village. There is a lot of praise around the village for the good work that has been done and it has helped to raise moral in the village.”

Birtley Community Association

Project	Volunteer evaluation and planning event
Grant amount	£450

“The volunteers met to discuss the past year. We looked at changes needed to needed of the centre. We also looked at how we can make our volunteers feel important and needed. Few spoke about how they feel a rota system for those ony able to give a few hours a week would be more adbantageous that way people may be able to put htemselfs up for particular roles. Importance of the volunteer was looked and although those present dod not feel need for constane recognition we thought it was a step forward into ad hoc volunteers feeling valued. We are starting up a time line so volunteers can add to the form there input by hours and also roles.

The grant gave us the opportunity of acknowledging our volunteers who are so important to the infrastructure of the work. It gave us a relaxed time to look at issues that have been presented over the past year and give us all an opportunity of coming up with solutions to prevent this from happening in future, For exaple a valued volunteer left feeling she was giving the responsibiity of purchasing etc. However there was other issues to it which a lot did not see . To this end we have come up with a template to give people a thorough knowledge of the duties that the volunteer can take on.

The meeting was relaxed and there was a few suggestions giving such as name badges etc whcih we are to intriduce as soon as possible, There will be procedures put in place fpr those who wsh to volunteer looking more at the needs of the services and ways of getting poeple to agree t swopping of tasks form time to time as opposed to keeping their posts.

A good day and everyone gained a better insight into what we are trying to achieve.”

Artful Codgers of Winton Court

Project	The Artful Codgers Exhibition
Grant amount	£500

A massive thankyou to the community foundation for awarding the ACOWC with this £500 grant to recruit more volunteers. This grant enabled us to run a volunteer recruitment day at the Winton Court residence in Winlaton. Residents were really thrilled to show off their work and potential volunteers that attended the event were surprised by the quality of the work and were full of positive comments for the residents.

Potential volunteers had the chance to get to know the lovely residents and were told many stories about all the creative activities they had got up to across the year.

Thanks to this grant we were able to recruit more volunteers than expected.

A huge thankyou from the Artful Codgers of Winton Court.

Birkheads Wild CIC

Project	The Free Range Thankyou
Grant amount	£385

“Our regular volunteers are all Gateshead-based and happily give time and energy to support sessions with young people and help with site maintenance and gardening - in all weathers!

This grant made a difference to us and our beneficiaries by building connections, knowledge and links between our volunteers. Since we have only been trading for 18 months, it was the first time we had all gathered together for a meeting on site, (and the first time some had met each other). What struck us was the large range of ages - our youngest volunteer is currently an 18 year old Gateshead College student with Autism who enjoyed meeting and working with our older, more experienced volunteers. The 3 local parent helpers who do not have much outdoor experience really relished being given the opportunity to learn knife craft and a skill they could share with the young people who visit us. The Directors felt connected closely to the work of the social enterprise and inspired by the conversations about the future success of the organisation and what it might look like in 3 years, the volunteers reported that they felt thanked and appreciated, and part of a team building an exciting future for Birkheads Wild.”



Gateshead People	
Project	Picnic in the Park
Grant amount	£390

“At the first event we had the sponsored walk (raising £320) and one hour of activities with Smile through Sports. At the second we had two hours with Smile through Sports and a healthy picnic. 28 people attended the first event and 40 people attended the second.

Preparation for the sponsored walk was led by our member volunteers who have learning disabilities. Two members went to the park in advance to plan the route with a support worker. They then organised by themselves to revisit the route to check its accessibility with a volunteer who is a wheelchair user. We held two smaller events for the reason described above, however both events met the objectives. The events celebrated volunteering and also attracted 3 new volunteers. One of the new volunteers raised money for Gateshead People on the sponsored walk. Another of the new volunteers is a wheelchair user and although she had heard of the game Boccia, which is often played by wheelchair users, she had never played it before. She played it for the first time and enjoyed it. Everyone enjoyed the the healthy food, some people trying something they had not eaten before.

Gateshead People have had to reduce their regular meetings this year due to lack of funds. It was a boost to the members to be able to plan a social events that successfully brought everyone together to socialise with friends, raise funds with the sponsored walk and take part in accessible sports together. We promoted Saltwell Park and the fun of walking together. Following the walk some members have been talking about forming a walking group and we have gained some new volunteers.”

Age UK Gateshead	
Project	Annual Volunteers Picnic
Grant amount	£500

“The main objective of the grant was to provide a picnic for Age UK Gateshead’s Volunteers to thank them for their support over the past year. It was also a great opportunity for Volunteers from different projects to mix with those they wouldn’t normally see, so it had the added benefit of bringing everyone together for a memorable social experience, thus helping with our aim of targeting social isolation.

Although arranged especially for our Volunteers, we were happy to see that some had brought friends and family along to take part in the day, and so we were able to let others see and hear about the sort of things we do at Age UK Gateshead. This was an added benefit as it certainly helped us spread the word, leading to enquiries about our services. This was deemed a very successful venture for Age UK Gateshead as it provided a thoroughly enjoyable day for all concerned.”

Friends of Watergate Forest Park

Project	Watergate Forest Park Volunteer Day
Grant amount	£465

"I was delighted to be able to offer the participants some dedicated equipment, brand new, and gloves in different sizes, which suited both adults and children. We had previously been using a very small number of borrowed equipment from the Council. Previously we have only attracted about 5 participants on our regular litter picks and have only ever had one family with two young children join us before. This event meant we could include more families, as they were attracted by the Bird theme of the activity with Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT), and were keen to help litter pick afterwards.

It was obvious from both the enthusiasm of the DWT and the interest and enthusiasm of the children and their parents/grandparents that they would be very keen to have further activities organised at the Lake on the theme of Wildlife or Botany. Therefore, the possibility of creating a Nature Club will be explored with local businesses and funding sources approached for funding to keep costs as low as possible for families. This will have the additional objective to promote the use of the Watergate Forest park amongst families, both local and from further afield, and to educate them all on the importance of looking after our natural habitats. Litter picking will always be a key part of any activities, with the emphasis on keeping the Park as natural as possible."

Gateshead and South Tyneside Sight Service

Project	Volunteering Exhibition
Grant amount	£450

"We recruited 5 new volunteers and they have supported the organisation in several ways, enabling us to continue to provide services to blind and partially sighted people across Gateshead and South Tyneside. 4 of the volunteers are visually impaired and this has given former service users the opportunity to progress into volunteering roles. This has increased their confidence and given them the chance to learn new skills. It has also reduced their isolation by enabling them to get out of their homes.

Recruiting the volunteers has allowed us to utilise the many skills those volunteers bring to the roles. Our café has seen increased sales since the recruitment of our café volunteer. As a direct result of recruiting our volunteer, our café is now open Monday to Thursday and this has also proved beneficial to people in the local community, as they now regularly access the café during the day. Our training volunteer has benefited from the opportunity to share his experiences of visual impairment with other people via our My Sight My Future course, designed and delivered to newly diagnosed people to increase their knowledge of visual impairment and the various ways in which they can access equipment, support, learn independent living skills and meet others who are also learning to live with visual impairment."

Peace of Mind	
Project	Volunteer Celebration and Recruitment Event 2018
Grant amount	£498

“This funding award enabled us to hold the volunteer appreciation event. The event took place at Whitehall Road, Methodist Church, Gateshead on Wednesday 04-07-2018. (This change was agreed by the grant manager as we received the funding one day before the event was due to take place and it was difficult to arrange things) The grant was used towards the costs of venue hire, volunteer travel expenses, Lunch and towards the cost of publicity materials. Some of these publicity materials (roll up stand) will be used at future events as well.

This event also helped us to showcase the work undertaken by the organisation over a period of one year. We celebrated the contribution of existing volunteers as well as recruited 4 new volunteers. We had another 5 people at the event who are interested in volunteering with Peace of Mind from the beginning of September.

We celebrated the achievements of existing volunteers and rewarded them by presenting volunteer appreciation certificates and a 3 course meal cooked by Samosa Sisters. This was a very well attended event. Existing volunteers gave speeches to demonstrate the importance of volunteering for individuals and for the community. New volunteers also talked briefly about what they would like to achieve by volunteering with us and how they would like to support Peace of Mind and the local community.

Volunteers were pleased to receive the certificates as this is a good addition to their CV. One of volunteer (Rachel) found a job after she started volunteering with us and asked us to provide a reference as she mentioned her volunteering role with Peace of Mind to her employer, which was appreciated by the employer. We provided the reference and Rachel started the new job. She still volunteers with Peace of Mind every fortnight. Rachel commented on how volunteering with Peace of Mind has improved her confidence and self esteem. She can use these skills at her job now to improve her performance at work.”



Birtley Community Partnership

Project	Celebrating volunteers
Grant amount	£500

“Although we didn't meet our targets, we were very pleased with how the events went. The publicity posters for the recruitment event brought us 2 new volunteers. Recruiters at our event included British Red Cross, Hope NE, The Children's Society, Station Lane Residents Association and NEFirst Credit Union. We were able to build better links with these organisations and understand more of what they do. We are also better equipped to give information about these organisations to potential volunteers and the general public who may require their services.

The Volunteer Celebration Event was a great success. As our volunteers often work different days, it enabled them to socialise and get to know each other better. The Trustees also attended and this was a great opportunity for them to socialise with the volunteers. All of the volunteers and Trustees who recently completed training in Safeguarding, Roles and Responsibilities and Equality and Diversity were presented with certificates from Liz Twist MP. Liz also spoke about how valuable volunteers are to the community. The night helped boost morale and helped show how much our volunteers do and how much they are appreciated. This all helps in retaining our volunteers and building a better organisation.

A special award went to our most hardworking volunteer, Paul Murray. Paul has been with us a while now and has learning difficulties. He has proved without a doubt that this is no barrier when it comes to volunteering. He has great enthusiasm, participates in all our training and is a great asset to Birtley Community Partnership. We hope his example will encourage more organisations to be diverse when recruiting volunteers.”



Thank you letters from funded groups





Gateshead Fund

20 April 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

On behalf of everyone at Special Olympics Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, I wish to convey our thanks to everyone at Gateshead Fund for the generous donation of £5000.

This money will contribute towards our athlete's attendance to the World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi 2019, entry into regional & national competitions and it will also contribute to securing training facilities for our athletes weekly training sessions.

All at Special Olympics really appreciate your kindness and once again, sincere thanks for your support.

Kind Regards

Danielle Appleby
Treasurer

Dear Sir/ Madam

Gateshead Fund (181868)

On behalf of Wayout in Gateshead (WinG) and all the people associated with us we would like to take this opportunity to offer a huge thank you for the grant awarded from you through the Community Foundation.

The grant will allow us to offer outdoor adventurous activities to Syrian refugees to allow participation in outdoor personal development activities.

As well as taking part in the activities and the health benefits of doing an outdoor activity, it will also offer them the opportunity to take them out of their usual environment and comfort zones as well as learn new skills allowing them to gain in confidence and self-esteem which will impact on their everyday lives.

Thank you again for the opportunity to run these activities for Syrian refugees.

Yours faithfully

Simon Tibbitts

Simon Tibbitts
Centre Manager



Dear Advisory Board,

Re: 'Gateshead Thrive Fund' Grant Award – Ref: 190827

On behalf of all at The Comfrey Project, I wish to thank you for your generous donation of £10,000 towards core costs of our service.

Undoubtedly, your support is going to play a critical role in developing the capacity within The Comfrey Project, so that we can finalise and start implementing our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. At large, this plan focuses on the establishment of The Comfrey Project as a vital community resource for the residents of Gateshead, for local organisations and for the council.

We are looking forward to [continue](#) working closely with you for the benefit of the community of Gateshead, and we welcome you to visit the project again soon, to observe how our work develops.

Yours faithfully,

Eleni [Venaki](#)



Peace of Mind Community Project
 22 Rectory place
 Gateshead
 NE8 1XN

Tel: 07595300326

Email: peaceofmind455@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Peaceofmind-Communities-1652578041691574/>

13 June 2018

Dear Community Foundation,

On behalf of Peace of Mind, I would like to thank you for the grant award of £498.00.

This grant will help us to run the volunteer celebration event in Gateshead to Thank and appreciate the (Peace of Mind) volunteers for their hard work and commitment over the past 1 year.

We are a volunteer led organisation and volunteers play a very important role in running of the organisation. It is very important to appreciate the hard work of volunteers as it keeps them motivated. This event will also help us to recruit more volunteers.

The generous support of organisations and people like you makes it possible for our organisation to exist and to make the community a great place to live. Thank you again for your support!

Yours Sincerely,
 Nida Muzaffar
 On behalf of the Committee of Peace of Mind



Birtley Community Partnership

The Hub Resource Centre, 16 Harraton Terrace, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, DH3 2QG
 is a Charity (no. 1133663) and a Registered Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 7031458).
 Telephone no. 0191 4920434; email: admin@thebirtleyhub.co.uk

15th November 2018

Reference 190805

Dear Community Foundation,

On behalf of Birtley Community Partnership, I would like to thank you for considering our application to the Gateshead (Capacity Building) Fund.

We are obviously delighted that our application was successful. The £10,000 towards core funding for The Hub will go a long way to help us continue the work we do in our community. We look forward to showing you the difference this will make to our organisation and the impact on the community.

Thank you once again

Tracy Rogers
 Development Worker
 Birtley Community Partnership



Birkheads Wild CIC
1 Birkheads
Marley Hill
Newcastle
NE16 5EL

Dear Rob

Volunteers Month Grant ref: 190356

I am writing on behalf of Birkheads Wild CIC to pass on my sincere thanks to the Community Foundation for our Grant to celebrate Volunteers Month from the Gateshead Volunteers Month Local Fund, and would be grateful if you could also pass on this letter to the fund holders if relevant.

As a tiny, start-up social enterprise, the vast majority of our work is done by volunteers, and we could not have achieved all we have done in the past 18 months without the huge commitment of time and energy from volunteer hours on the project. So, I am delighted to be in the midst of planning our teambuilding and bushcraft event for next Friday evening with the funding we have received - which will enable us to thank and celebrate with our dedicated volunteers. The team are surprised and delighted to be appreciated in this way and we are all looking forward to a great event together.

Thanks again for your support of our CIC and of the local people who volunteer for us, we will ensure we send photos and credit the support in our social media around the event next week for you to share with the fund holders.

Kind regards

Fiona O'Connor
Director
Birkheads Wild Community Interest Company

LEAM LANE BOWLING CLUB
OLIVER HENDERSON PARK
GATESHEAD

30th June 2018

On behalf of Leam Lane Bowling Club I would like to thank you for our grant from yourselves for £320.

This will be put to good use to showcase our club and attract new members and volunteers.

Kind regards
Maureen Newton
Secretary

Gateshead and Whickham Amateur Swimming Club

Dear Gateshead Thrive Fund.

I am writing to you to say a huge thank you to the Community Foundation and Thrive Fund. We are so excited to be able to use this money to help our club out. It will help to relieve the pressure we are under as a small club. We work hard and will continue to do so by holding raffles, bag packs and home gala's, but the grant can assist us to renew some equipment and forge partnerships with the Council to strengthen the club's future.

Gateshead and Whickham Swimming Club has been around for over 100 hundred years and with the help of grant money we hope it will be around for another few years yet.

The club has been very successful over the years, even obtaining a medal at the Para Olympics. The support from its members is paramount in the club continuing to run and the help from volunteers ensure there is real sense of community spirit, not to mention the valuable place the club plays in offering swimming lessons and a sense of belonging to loads of kids and adults.

We cannot thank you enough for this help it really does mean an awful lot to us a small club.

Yours faithfully,

All the members, volunteers, coaches and parents,

Thank you very much.

Gateshead Thrive Fund

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to thank you very much for the funding you provided for the Friends of Watergate Forest Park Volunteer day on Saturday 30th June. We used the funding to provide an expert in ornithology from Durham Wildlife Trust to lead a session on the birds and other wildlife at the Park, followed by a litter pick around the Park afterwards. The funding also covered equipment and gloves for the event.

I am delighted to report that 4 families and five extra adults came along this morning, a total of 6 children and 11 adults, and they all had a great time learning how to identify birds from their songs, their colours and where they were on the lake or in the trees. Some had never visited the lake before, so it was a super introduction to caring for their local nature reserve, and learning about the wildlife there. Afterwards we collected 16 bags of litter, and I gave each adult a list of dates for future litter picks, up until December. We carry out two litter picks every month, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, so our new resources will be put to very good use.

As a Friends group we realise the importance of teaching the next generation about understanding and caring for and about their local environment, as well as appreciating what beautiful scenery we have to enjoy on our doorstep. To that end, we are going to explore the possibility of setting up a young Wildlife group at Watergate Forest Park in the future.

Thank you so much for making this event possible, and also for helping to sow the seeds for further wildlife adventures.

Yours sincerely,

Julie M Scott

Chair

Friends of Watergate Forest Park

 **St Chad's Community Project**

Gateshead Thrive Fund Advisory Group

C/O Community Foundation

Philanthropy House

Woodbine Road

Gosforth

Newcastle

NE3 1DD

19th March 2019

Ref: 191924

To whom it may concern

I am writing to say a huge thank you on behalf of St Chads Community Project, in receipt of your grant for £10,000 for the project Steps to future success. This grant will allow us to strengthen our organisation and work towards becoming more self-sustainable for the future. I look forward to developing this project and will endeavour to keep the Gateshead Thrive Fund Advisory Group updated throughout. I will submit the monitoring form as requested at the end of the project.

Many thanks

On behalf of St Chads Community Project

Leanne Coxon

Dear Community Foundation,

Thank you so much for my grant which you have approved for £200. This will really help me make sure I have the chance to travel at the national competitions this year and next year which I really want to qualify for.

I love swimming, but I know how much money it costs and this grant from you will help me get better and hopefully get to be the best I can.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Adam Strickland

John Bell (High Spen Community Group - Chair)

High Spen Community Group
Telephone : 01207 544764
Email : highspencommunity@gmail.com

14 November 2018

Ref 190761

Nils Stronach
Community Foundation
Philanthropy House
Woodbine Road
Gosforth
Newcastle NE3 1DD

Dear Nils,

On behalf of High Spen Community Group I would like to thank the Community Foundation for the generous grant that you provided to us for the High Spen Heroes event.

The event has taken a great deal of community time to organise, but it has been rewarding. At least twelve members of our community group have been involved in the organisation of this event since plans began to evolve in March and several other local residents helped out on the day.

The day of the event was very successful and far exceeded our own expectations. The community group relied heavily on Mr Firth of High Spen School, Mr Hopkins and the musical directors in staging the reenactment of the heroic acts that led to the award of a Victoria Cross to two of our village residents. The school hall was packed to capacity for the performance and some people even had to watch the event unfold whilst standing in the corridors. The school production was excellent and I was most impressed that everyone became involved including those with disability. I know from discussing the play with teachers and children before and after the event that they all thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience.

Following the performance, the crowd gathered outside the school in the recently restored memorial garden to unveil two blue plaques in memory of the two war heroes. The

unveiling was done by the Mayor of Gateshead with former and serving soldiers of the Coldstream Guards and the Durham Light Infantry in attendance. These were the regiments that our heroes served with. Two new seats were also unveiled in memory to the countless soldiers that have served our country in conflicts since and who should never be forgotten. The memorial garden, seating and plaques was all organized by the Community Group, who also served teas, coffees and specially prepared cakes before and after the event.

I would also like to say thank you here to our ward councilors - Marilyn Charlton, Maria Hall and Julie Simpson for all their invaluable assistance and support toward this event and our wider activities. I would also like to thank High Spen School staff, particularly Mr Firth and Mrs Herron and Mr Hopkins for doing the hard work in applying for this grant.

We have had some excellent feedback on FaceBook from many in our community about the day, including some from the family of the heroes. I do not include these details with this letter, but would encourage you to take a look.

Finally, I would just like to say that our High Spen community grows stronger each year. This is evident from the volume of support and feedback we get both verbally and through social media and through the growing attendance at every event we hold. It is with your kind help and support that we are able to achieve this progress.

Yours sincerely



John Bell (High Spen Community Group - Chair)



Community Foundation

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Saltwell Park Model Boat Club, I would like to extend our grateful thanks to the Community Foundation for offering a grant of £6,650

This will enable us to:

1. To manage the installation and completion of a Conservation Grade A building in Saltwell Park which will be used as a "Clubhouse" by it's members and to allow us to hold meetings with small parties of handicapped children/adults, people with learning difficulties, local schools and the elderly to come along and be given a short talk by club members on all aspects of model boating, and be given a chance to sail our boats on Saltwell Park lake under supervision.
2. To provide the means for applying to become a CIO by end of March 2019.
3. To enable us to use a recognised Financial software package to provide an accurate set of accounts.
4. And to be able to produce our own advertising material to promote the Saltwell Park Model Boat Club to the local community as a whole to involve more people (young and old) to join in the benefits of meeting like-minded people in building/sailing their model boats or to just to be a part of a thriving atmosphere where members meet and enjoy each other company.

Again, thank you for your very kind consideration on this matter.

Kind regards,

Ian Crawford – Treasurer SPMBC

The Friends of Gateshead Central Library



Gateshead Central Library
Prince Consort Road
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE8 4LN

Tel: 0191 433 8494

Gatesheadlibraryfriends@gmail.com

May 10th 2018

Dear Sirs

On behalf of The Friends of Gateshead Central Library I should like to thank you very much for your kind grant to us. The work which we are doing in the community is really bearing fruit, and your generosity will enable us to continue it. May I also express gratitude on behalf of those who benefit from our work.

Yours faithfully

Peter Fairhurst

Peter Fairhurst (Secretary)

Ref: 191371

Hi,

I would just like to express my gratitude to The Community Foundation. I am a springboard diver at National Level with Sunderland City Dive Team. My parents and I are so grateful for the grant you have given. Competing around the country incurs travelling and accommodation expense which puts a strain on our family's finances. I am now competing consistently at level 3, which is part of my pathway to Elite level (Level 4).

The grant will certainly help toward the expense of competing and further my ambition to my sport.

Kindest Regards

Miss Abby Cass ☺

To whom it may concern,

I would like to say thank you for the grant you have awarded me. This will make a big difference to my season.

It will allow me to travel to competitions and to stay over meaning I will be fresher for the competition the next day. It will also allow me to purchase equipment and kit to support my performance.

Thank you again

Emily Stewart

*PELAW BOWLING CLUB
EST. 1955*

PRESIDENT MR. E. NOBLE
CHAIRMAN MR G. MCALLISTER
SECRETARY MR J. SUTHERLAND
Tel 0191 4066457 Mob. 07835977455

For the attention of The Trustees,

We as a club would like to thank you very much for the grant of £500. The money will go towards purchasing a number of sets of woods (size "0" and "1") that ladies would be able to use on the bowling green as we do not have equipment that is small enough for their comfort "hands" and also go towards refreshments.

John Sutherland
Secretary/Treasurer

the brain injury association
Headway
TYNESIDE 

Affiliated to Headway ~ the brain injury association ~ a registered charity
www.headwaytyneside.com ~ info@headwaytyneside.com

Headway Tyneside c/o Irwin Mitchell
 Wellbar Central, 36 Gallowgate
 Newcastle upon Tyne
 NE1 4TD

Tel: 077 2623 2627
 Charity number: 1132713
 Company number: 06992206

Gateshead Fund
 Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering
 Culture, Communities, Leisure and Volunteering
 Civic Centre
 Regent Street
 Gateshead
 NE8 1HH

2nd May 2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the grant you have agreed to give to Headway Tyneside. This is going to make a massive difference to our service users in the Gateshead area.

Brain injury is often referred to as the 'hidden disability', as it is often difficult for others to see or understand; this makes it hard for people with a brain injury or their relatives or carers to explain to others the nature of their difficulties and receive appropriate support. This can lead to social isolation and an inability for them to access services and support from their local community and/or social activities. We are a person-centred organisation so instead of telling our group members what to do, we aim to empower and enable people by supporting them to develop their skills and abilities to cope better with the difficulties which arise from having an acquired brain injury.

We look forward to reporting on the outcomes of the grant and to providing our service users with the vital services they need from us.

Yours sincerely

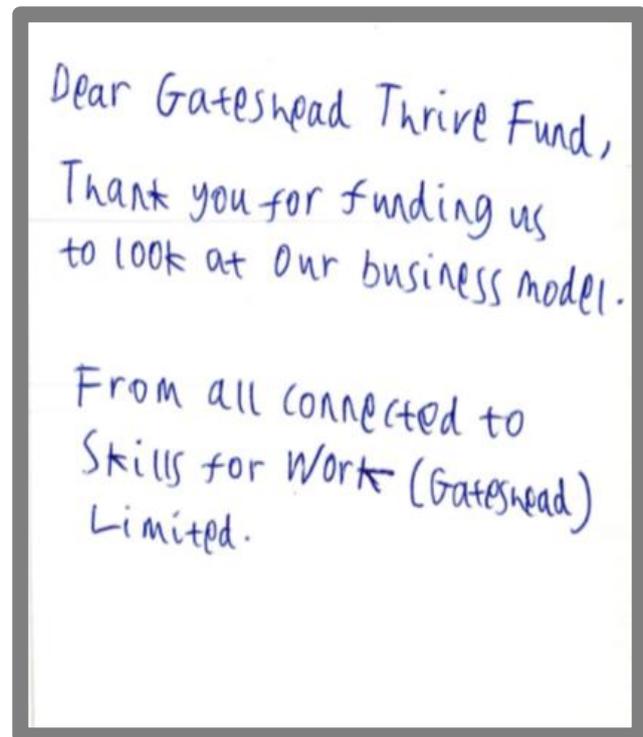
Alistair McDonald
 Chair

We just wanted to say a huge thank you to the foundation and its partners, for your generosity in awarding us a Thrive Grant. The grant will help and support us to increase the health and wellbeing of our beautiful hens who bring so much joy and spirit to our community. It will also help us with the planned visits we have organised with schools and care homes.

Kind regards

L Walker

On behalf of The Wood Green Residents Association



To the advisors for the Gateshead Thrive Fund Community Grants Programme,

Please accept this letter as acknowledgement and thanks for your generous grant of £1500 to the Bluebells of Philip's Court.

We really appreciate your support in helping us to set up music sessions for our residents, and know that it is invaluable in improving their daily lives, which we endeavour to do through all our work.

We look forward to progressing with the project and meeting our objectives of:

1. Provide 12 weekly music workshops between January and March 2019
2. Host four open mic nights in March and April 2019
3. 12 relatives or community volunteers will express an interest in continuing their involvement in future activities by May 2019

Thank you again for your generous support,

The Bluebells of Philip's Court.

WORKPLACE FOUNDATION

The Old Post Office
19-21 West Street
Gateshead
NE8 1AD, UK

+44 (0) 191 477 2200
www.workplacegallery.co.uk

Grant offer from the Community Foundation – The Gateshead Fund**Ref: 182036**

FAO: the advisors for the Gateshead Fund

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to thank you for the generous offer of a grant of £2400 to Workplace Foundation from the Gateshead Fund at the Community Foundation for a Workplace Foundation community launch event in 2018.

Workplace Foundation is an exciting new project for us building on nearly 15 years of commitment to the community of Gateshead through our gallery in the Town Centre.

This grant comes at a crucial time as we develop a programme aimed at further adding to the cultural texture of the borough and engaging new audiences in our work.

As we develop our plans we look forward to welcoming you to our projects.

In the meantime if you would like to know more please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

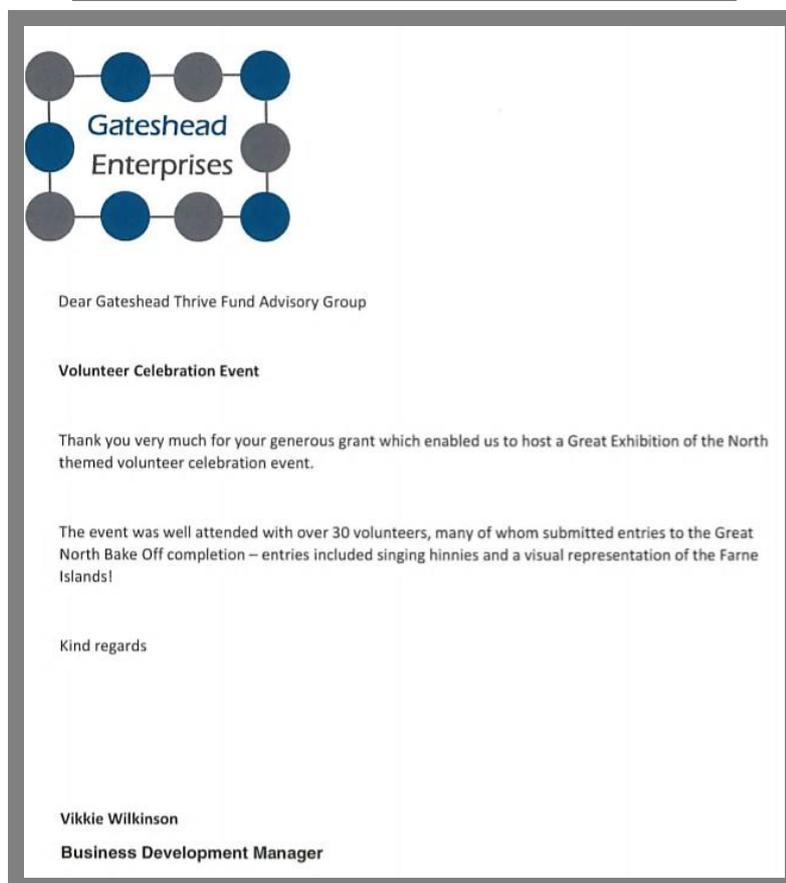


Paul Moss

To Whom it my Concern

On behalf of Gateshead Storm, I would like to Thank the Gateshead Fund / Community Foundation for their support in this project.

We at Gateshead Storm feel there was a need for this as some of our young players fit into this project and the emphases on this been done is also to support the people of Gateshead who find it hard during these school holidays with this now getting the go ahead I feel we can make a difference and will help from other organisations feel this will be delivered to a high standard once again Thank You on behalf of Gateshead Storm.



Appendix one

Vital Signs

Our Vital Signs work enables us to prioritise our efforts to support projects addressing poverty, diversity and mental health, all of which are significant causes for concern. The next section details our recent Vital Signs report on Food Poverty, highlighting the issue and how grant-making and philanthropy can make a difference in our region.

We also continue to seek to target more support towards geographic “cold spots” where we wish to make more grants; as part of our strategy to address this, at the start of 2019 we made £620,000 of unrestricted grants to trusted groups working to address these issues in our area.

Vital Signs 2019: Food poverty: how philanthropy can make a difference

Vital Signs is our flagship initiative to guide effective giving. It is based on national and local statistics and research; learning from our grant making and the views of our partners across the North East. This year we have been concentrating on the growing problem of food poverty in the region, and below we share headlines from our new report on this subject. As always, we have tried to identify ways that philanthropists can best help to address local needs.

People in food poverty are unable to afford to eat properly. There is no definitive measure of the scale of this problem in the North East, but foodbanks run by the national Trussell Trust distributed over 64,000 emergency food packs here in 2018. This is likely to represent the tip of the iceberg since access to such provision is generally by referral only and short-term in nature, and many vulnerable people are put off by the stigma of using such services.

Food poverty facts

The poorest 10% of UK households spend 5x more of their available income on feeding themselves than the most affluent.

1.2 million people in deprived areas now live in food deserts.

The major cause of food poverty is that income from low-paid work or benefits is simply not enough to meet the rising cost of food and fuel. In many poorer or more isolated areas – termed “food deserts” – the problem is made worse by problems with the local availability of good quality, affordable food. The North East is therefore particularly vulnerable. It has a relatively weak regional economy characterised by a predominance of low paid employment. Levels of benefit dependency are high, partially as a result of high unemployment but also reflecting an ageing

population and high rates of disability. In a range of our communities – from deprived urban neighbourhoods to isolated rural settlements – local food shops are becoming few and far between. Getting access to good quality, affordable food is therefore a challenge for residents.

Some groups are at particular risk of falling into food poverty. Often it is just the loss of a few day’s wages, a benefit stoppage or broken washing machine that can tip the balance. For 132,000 children living in poor households in our region the school holidays create problems. It is estimated that one in 6 parents in poverty now skip meals to ensure their children are fed. The amount and quality of food available to their children is dramatically reduced with the loss of breakfast clubs and free school meals. The resulting “holiday hunger” contributes to the educational attainment gap between poor children and their more affluent peers with long term effects on life chances. There is also compelling evidence of food poverty affecting older, vulnerable and disabled people: in Gateshead during 2015 over a third of older people admitted to hospital were malnourished.

The good news is that community and voluntary organisations – often working in partnership with local government and the food industry – have mobilised to tackle the problem of food poverty. The growing visibility of foodbanks is symptomatic of this, but

there are also many other types of service here in the North East that are working to address the problem. These range from schemes that ensure surplus food is redistributed through community cafes and shops, rather than going to landfill, to services that work to maximise family income by advising on issues like benefits and debt.

As always with Vital Signs our aim is to shine a light on where the generosity of North East philanthropists can have the greatest impact. In mid-2019 we will be publishing a detailed research report **“Food Poverty: how philanthropy can make a difference”** that recommends the use of charitable funding for three purposes:

Living in food poverty

“...in the face of having little to spend, households prioritise purchasing foods that will not go to waste and that are most filling. Often this means a reliance on cheap foods that are nutrient-poor but calorie-rich.”

- End Hunger UK

“When my mum’s got the money then we can get snacks. Its 25 pence per item. We don’t get snacks if it’s a bad week. Sometimes we’re hungry.”

- Young person interviewed by the Children’s Commission on Poverty

1. To support the costs of service delivery, and in particular those associated with coordinating provision and covering projects’ core expenditure which are harder to get funded.
2. To increase provision to help children at risk of “holiday hunger”, particularly over the Summer. We recommend funding schemes that combine the minimum “4 hours a day, 4 days per week, 4 weeks per holiday” level of educational, physical activity and food provision that is proven to have maximum benefit to poorer children.
3. To address the causes of the problem by using evidence to influence policy-makers locally and nationally and promoting good practice and partnership working between agencies. We see this as the best way to ensure that food poverty does not become entrenched in our region.

It is anticipated that the publication of our report will spark an interest in securing funding through the Community Foundation for projects that address food poverty. We hope that if these match your philanthropic interests that you will help us to support the important work of local civil society organisations in this area.

Mark Pierce
Director of Community Knowledge and Funding

Community Foundation
Serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland
Philanthropy House,
Woodbine Road, Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1DD

T: 0191 222 0945

F: 0191 284 8413

E: general@communityfoundation.org.uk

W: communityfoundation.org.uk

Twitter: [@CFTyneWearNland](https://twitter.com/CFTyneWearNland)

Facebook: [CommunityFoundationTyneWearNorthumberland](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityFoundationTyneWearNorthumberland)

Photography: Community Foundation and Newcastle Building Society

Registered charity number: 700510

Limited company number: 2273708

TITLE OF REPORT: Helping Out Volunteer Plan – Annual Update

REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Interim Strategic Director,
Communities and Environment

Summary

Corporate Vitality Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously agreed that that Committee should receive an annual update of the implementation of Gateshead's Volunteers Plan, now known as Helping Out.

Introduction

This report provides information about the plan, number of volunteers, the types and examples of volunteer roles, examples of group volunteer projects and the impact of volunteering in Gateshead's communities.

The report also includes some priorities for future consideration.

Appendix 1 in this report lists some examples of volunteer roles, how they have been targeted to volunteers as well as examples of group volunteering and the impact on the community (including economic value).

Background

1. Gateshead Council has adopted the Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives, and this will now supersede the current Council Plan. The pledge "*Support our communities to support themselves and each other*" is at the heart of the Council's approach to volunteering.
2. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2023/24 states that the Council will continue to seek to mitigate demand pressures within services by capacity building within communities, including, where appropriate, work with partners and volunteers.
3. In April 2018 Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the content of the Volunteers Plan Refresh. The plan offered a new set of commitments to support residents and community organisations in Gateshead to help each other out.

Progress to date

4. The original Volunteers Plan (2013) and refresh (2018) have helped provide a co-ordinated approach to volunteering in Gateshead. The plan was originally

structured around key principles which aimed to support volunteers as well as organisations and services delivering volunteer opportunities

5. There are now 2,825 volunteers registered with Gateshead Council (originally 50 in 2013 and 1,978 in 2018). As a very conservative estimate there could be as many as 8,000 – 10,000 volunteers actively helping across our communities.
6. Volunteers in Gateshead provide help to a range of council services and voluntary groups, most notably in the environmental area, social care, health & sport and community centres.
7. Corporate volunteer days continue to grow in demand, with a total of over 125 individual organisations requesting tailored bespoke volunteer days supporting an estimated 2,500 individual employee volunteers (as at 2019). The economic value to the Gateshead community is estimated at £219,995.

Examples of these days can be found at:

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2885/Case-studies>

8. Gateshead's seventh Volunteers' Month took place in June 2019. Throughout June 128,199 hours were recorded on the volunteer totaliser which equates to £1,666,587 economic value for 2019. That's an increase of 15,048 hours over the month and an increase of economic value of £195,624 from the figures in 2018.
9. In 2019 the funding available for Volunteers Month was incorporated into the main Thrive Fund. Grants of 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. This provides groups with more flexibility for their projects and activities. Information about the Thrive Fund can be found using the following link;

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2887/The-Gateshead-Thrive-Fund>

10. For the first time The Gateshead Awards were held in June this year to link into Volunteers Month and increase the recognition of volunteers. The awards were held on the evening of Wednesday 12th 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. This year's winners and photographs from the evening can be viewed using the link below:

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11955/Gateshead-Award-winners-2019>

11. One of the key areas this year has been Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) highlighting how private sector organisations assign their employees to volunteer projects in Gateshead through Helping Out Volunteer Days.
12. The Helping Out Volunteer Days involve any activities that a voluntary group would benefit from including gardening, painting and even website development.

The activities are all delivered over one day. Examples of Corporate Helping Out days can be found in paragraph 7 above.

World Transplant Games 2019

13. From October 2018 (following the previous OSC report) until the end of April 2019, NMV coordinated the recruitment of 600+ volunteers to support the World Transplant Games 2019. Without these volunteer roles including; accommodation & hospitality, sports events & venues, social & cultural programme, marketing and PR, transport, logistics, and Health & Safety the Games could not be delivered.
14. The Games were delivered across Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland and were managed overall by Sport & Leisure employees within Gateshead Council. The Games were live from 17th August 2019 – 23rd August 2019.
15. The results of the World Transplant Games can be seen by using the link below

<https://wtgf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/WTG2019-results.pdf>

Key areas of work moving forward:

Gateshead Volunteer Recruitment

16. The Volunteers Plan and systems for the management of volunteer projects had remained largely unchanged since 2013 until the refresh. Therefore, some of the systems and processes that support the recruitment and retention of volunteers are now difficult to manage efficiently due to the increasing volume of volunteering requests and the capacity available to process the requests.
17. In addition, it has always been acknowledged that the Council's arrangements and systems only cover a fraction of the volunteering that takes place across Gateshead, many community organisations co-ordinate their own volunteering opportunities and have their own systems.
18. Following some research in 2018 and earlier, it was determined that an online system for volunteer recruitment would be the most effective for volunteers, organisations, voluntary groups and Council Officers in Gateshead.
19. A specification is currently being developed following Gateshead Council's procurement process to identify the most suitable provider to create a bespoke online database. External Funding has been sourced by NMV to fund this.

Corporate Volunteering

20. As discussed above in paragraphs 7, 11 & 12, Corporate Volunteering has continued to increase over the last few years. The demand from corporate organisations for community volunteer days has dramatically increased in 2019 and is expected to continue. The benefits of involving groups of corporate

volunteers will continue to be disseminated to the voluntary sector. The main benefits include:

- volunteers become aware of the communities they serve
- projects are provided with physical input from a number of volunteers at one time with immediate outcomes
- potential for individual volunteers to become interested in the project and come back to volunteer longer term of their own accord
- groups are often able to donate the equipment that they use on the day to the group e.g. paint brushes etc. or provide a financial donation to the project for hosting the day
- corporate organisations can become more aware of a voluntary group and help towards wider initiatives such as collections of clothing that they have longer term.

21. Wider development work into the corporate business sector of Gateshead is needed. This will ensure that the aims of organisations Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policies and the projects that are developed are aligned. This would make the development work around group volunteering much more effective and beneficial.

Further engagement with Trade Unions & partners

22. Development work of council volunteer roles continues to involve engagement with Trade Unions & partners. This will ensure that volunteer roles do not encroach into the role of employees.

Gateshead Council Employer Volunteering Scheme

23. The Gateshead Council Employee Volunteering Policy enables employees to request up to 15 hours paid time to volunteer in Gateshead over a 12-month period. This needs to be matched by at least 15 hours pro rata of employee's own time. The scheme also enables teams of employees to take part in taster sessions enabling them to have a half day paid leave to participate in a group project. The policy can be found on the intranet using the link below.

<https://intranet.gateshead.gov.uk/article/2038/Employer-supported-volunteering-scheme>

24. There are currently 78 individual employees registered as volunteers through the scheme. This has increased by 11 since 2018. This is made up of individual volunteers as well as teams of volunteers.

25. In 2019 only 2 internal teams (varying in size) took up the opportunity to be involved in the delivery of a team volunteer day compared to the 30 external organisations requesting volunteer days in 2019 specifically.

26. The opportunity encourages employees to not only get involved in the local community that they serve, but also work together as a team developing their overall and individual skill sets towards a joint objective.

27. Promotional activity will continue in 2019/2020 with an aim to increase the number of employee volunteer days. This is an underused resource that could provide a needed investment into the Community of Gateshead. Activities to develop this further can include promotion in council employee info and updates via Team management meetings.

Environmental Friends of Groups

28. There are currently an estimated 47 Friends of Groups (FOG) at various locations throughout Gateshead. With an average of 15 members per group this is an estimated 705 individual volunteers supporting Gateshead's Environmental open spaces.
29. These groups have continued to grow and have their own aims and objectives as well as support needs.
30. Communication between internal service areas has enabled a joint process to be implemented by NMV, Street Scene, Insurance and the active Unions (Unison and GMB). Working together officers determine the best solution and a bespoke package of support.
31. In the previous OSC report an issue around Public Liability Insurance of Environmental Friends of Groups was raised. This has now been addressed as explained below.
32. Working closely with Emma Batey from Insurance, and the service areas mentioned above a central form has been implemented. This is to prevent several emails being sent between the various parties to comment on each FOG.
33. The form provides all relevant information needed by service areas. NMV take on the coordination of the form. Once complete it is circulated to relevant officers for approval.
34. Once all parties are happy with the content of the form and have given their sign off, a Confirmation letter will be sent to the Friends of Group. This Confirmation Letter will detail all approved activities, requirements of the group, hard copies of each of the risk assessments and named contacts moving forward.

Friends of Group Conference

35. As mentioned as an action in the previous Volunteer OSC report the first Environmental Friends of Groups Conference was held on 11th April 2019 at the Dryden Centre. Street Scene and NMV jointly developed the content of the conference and delivered workshops.
36. The feedback from the event was very positive. From the 32 attendees and 24 completed feedback forms. 75% of the returned questionnaires stated that they thought the day was well organised and beneficial.

37. The main three things that attendees took from the day include; networking, overall number of volunteers in Gateshead, and positive support from council officers. The conference will be delivered bi-annually moving forward.

Future Actions

38. There are several priority areas for future actions which have been identified in the continued delivery of the Volunteers Plan:

- Work with a suitable provider to tailor a new online management system to recruit volunteers, record volunteers, promote volunteer roles and match available volunteers to opportunities within Gateshead. The system will also generate specific reports to monitor volunteering which can be reported back to OSC at a later date.
- Continue promotion of the Employee Volunteering Scheme specifically group volunteer opportunities for teams of Council employees
- Look to refresh the application forms for the Employee Volunteering Scheme to remove any barriers to applying
- Development work with the Private Business Sector of Gateshead to determine Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies aims and align them to project development.
- Continue development work and promotion of individual & group volunteering with corporate organisations and provide links to the voluntary sector
- Creation of new group projects using one central form. These will include proposed projects for volunteers and those for community service.
- Continued development of volunteering opportunities on Gateshead Council website and OurGateshead and using the online resource as a space to share experiences and good news stories to illustrate examples of good practice
- Continued development work with local colleges and universities
- Development of young people and volunteering including sixth forms and secondary schools as well as youth groups
- Continue to provide lead support for volunteering within the Voluntary & Community sector as well as for Council Service projects and roles.
- Continue development work with Environmental Friends of Groups including training needs, insurance issues, continued networking with services including insurance, Street Scene & Unions and the bi-annual Friends of Group Conferences.
- Re-establishment of the Volunteer Action Group. A new group will include Gateshead Council Volunteer Coordinators, as well as those from the Voluntary Sector to enable better communication and contacts to develop naturally.
- Continue working relationships with Trade Unions regarding the creation of further volunteering opportunities and FOG's.
- Development work around training in general for volunteers from a central resource point.

- Detailed Annual timetable to be provided highlighting volunteer events and significant dates for projects etc. which will be available on Gateshead Council's website and OurGateshead.
- Development of certificate and presentation to enable recognition of long serving council volunteers and The Gateshead Awards 2020 onwards.

Recommendations

39. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Note and comment on the progress of implementation of the Volunteers Plan
- ii. Consider the future actions as set out in paragraph 38.

Volunteer Case Studies 2019

Helping hands – Volunteer Group

Helping Hands is a group of volunteers that attend projects and deliver volunteer support. They receive support from New Vision Training which is a user- led enterprise run by seven people with a learning disability, they formed in 2004.

New Vision have a proven track record with three national awards for providing inspirational training that promotes the rights, choices and inclusion of people with learning disabilities.

The group created The Volunteer Crew in early 2019 to help out in volunteer projects that the members of the group would vote on.

By creating the Volunteer Crew New Vision are enabling people with disabilities who would other wise be isolated to come together and make a difference in their community.

This aims to empower people to make decisions, have a say and a valued role leading to an increased sense of achievement, community and citizenship. This project fits well with the brokerage service Neighbourhood Management & Volunteer provide. Moving forward the Volunteer Crew are presented with a number of different group opportunities by NMV to choose from.

The Volunteer Crew have currently being involved in:

- Team building
- Receruitment
- Training in first aid
- Health and safety
- Planning for other volunteer projects.

Some of participants of the group have stated

“Volunteering is about being able to help others”

“Volunteering helps you to meet new people and make new friends”

“It is good to do something new”.

Photos are included below.



Sage, Corporate Volunteer Days

Sage regularly send employee volunteers to volunteer days through the brokerage services provided by Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering.

For example, on Wednesday 11th September 2019, 12 Sage employee volunteers attended Gateshead Redheugh Football Club.

The volunteers helped the community group by painting the changing rooms and the main walk way at the venue.

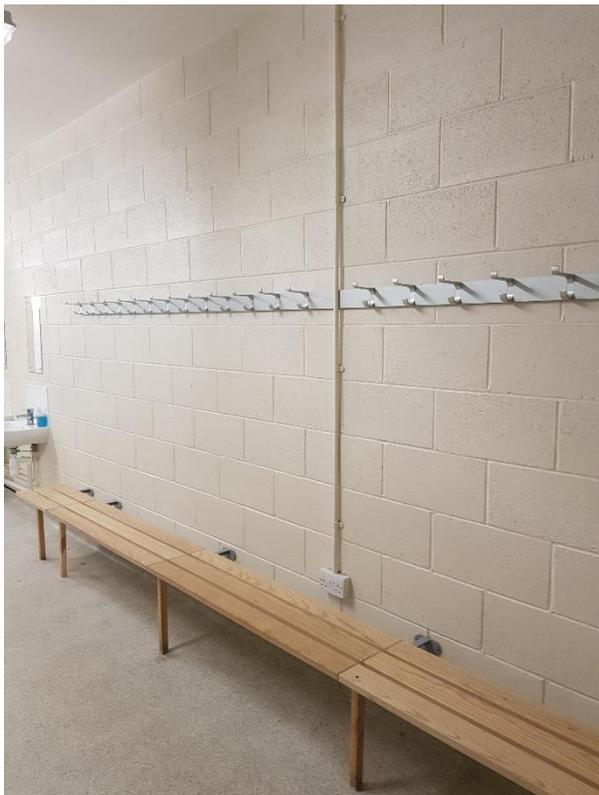
The volunteers spent the full day at the project and were extremely welcoming and friendly. The volunteers spent the day painting and were able to find out more about what the group provide to their local community and residents of Gateshead.

As well as offering their time Sage also purchased the paint for the project, which the group themselves would have had to wait a long time to have the spare funds to purchase. The project has had a huge positive impact, with the project lead Terry Ritson explaining:

“All of the volunteers on the day done an amazing job, they are all a credit to Sage. They worked extremely hard all day and Gateshead Redheugh would like to personally say thank you to all of them. Our changing rooms and corridor are now a much brighter place to be in”.

The economic invest for this project is calculated at £1,548 into the community of Gateshead.

Photographs are included below.



Case Study – Employee Volunteering

Vicki Mcleod is currently employed in Education Support Services at the Dyrden Centre.

Vicki was aware of the Employee Volunteering Scheme for Gateshead Council Employees, however she didn't realise that employees could claim up to 15 paid hours to further their volunteering. It was something that was also present but never seemed relevant to anything she was doing.

Vicki became interested in volunteering in the World Transplant Games 2019 that was promoted through early 2019 in Gateshead including through the Council promotional activities.

Vicki contacted NMV to ask how to become involved and what application form would be needed. After a brief discussion Vicki was reminded that she could claim up to 15 hours paid leave that would need to match with 15 hours of her own time.

Vicki submitted both an application form to volunteer for the Games and the information needed to claim the 15 hours paid leave.

This resulted in Vicki only needing to take 2 days annual leave and she was able to claim 2 days paid leave through the employee volunteering scheme.

Vicki was involved in an Event volunteer role, Hotel Liaison role, and a General Event Volunteer based on the Gateshead side of the Quayside.

Vicki enjoyed the experience of the Games and enjoyed the roles she was involved in. The Employee Volunteering Scheme enabled a Council Employee to become involved in a World Wide project being delivered in Gateshead and only needing to take 2 days annual leave for 4 days involvement.

Vicki explained that she was able to:

“Learn new skills, meet people from different cultures, and have a better understanding of transplant issues, while supporting an international events in Gateshead, and promoting Gateshead as a great place to visit”.

Felling Food Network – Volunteers

The Felling Food Network was set up by residents, Councillors and supported by Garry Stamp a Community Engagement Officer from Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering.

The Felling Food Network was established to provide a weekly three day emergency food parcel distribution point for local people experiencing food poverty in Felling. The project operates from the Felling Community Centre, beneath Crowhill Towers on a Wednesday between 12 noon and 2pm.

The Felling Food Network does not need referrals. People can walk in to the centre without needing any permission. Individuals are asked to provide some basic details, then they will be accompanied by a volunteer to choose what items they would benefit from.

The Felling Food Network provides:

- 3 day food parcels for individuals or families
- allows people to choose their own food for the parcel
- no need for any referral
- there is no time limit on need

The group provide quality food parcels one day each week and also provide practical support for people who need a little extra help. The group also aim to provide refreshments while the group is active.

In order to ensure that Felling Network were able to deliver the project, extra volunteers were identified through the current central process in NMV. Two suitable volunteers were identified from the many that came forward. Using their information, skills and experience these two volunteers were highlighted as the best matched to the role.

Both of these volunteers were sent over to the group and have been and still are committed to the project and return each week to help deliver the project. Garry Stamp continues to support the project in whatever way possible.

Photographs of the project are provided below.





Christmas Shoe Box Appeal

During the festive period Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering coordinate a Christmas collection of donations to help ensure some of Gateshead's most vulnerable residents receive a present at Christmas.

For the 2018 project a collection point was available at the Civic Centre from 12th November until 12th December.

As well as individuals donating items community groups, schools and businesses also helped with their own collections.

Donations were received from the following;

- Sheltered Accommodation Schemes across Gateshead
- Rowlands Gill Primary School
- Shipley Art Gallery
- Oakfield Infant School
- Riverside Primary School
- The Hub at Birtley
- Teleperformance
- Tarmac
- Barley Mow Village Hall
- St Aiden's school
- St Wilfred's Catholic Primary School
- St Leonards Secondary School in Durham.

The items requested as part of the collection drive included:

- Christmas wrapping paper materials and empty shoe boxes
- small children's toys
- hats, scarfs and gloves, hair bobbles & hair brushes
- baby wipes toiletries & hygiene products
- chocolates, sweets and other goodies

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Low Fell hosted the wrapping event as they have in previous years. This year the evening was hosted on Wednesday 12th December 2018. Church members and over 60 volunteers including almost 20 Council and Gateshead Housing Company employees helped wrap all the presents throughout the evening.

Followed by a full turkey Christmas Dinner meal cooked by the church for all volunteers. There were also employees of Wilmot Dixon, Teleperformance and Interserve there at the event.

This year over 450 packages were wrapped and prepared. NMV then distributed these packages out to all those groups & organisations that support people most in need in Gateshead. Some of the organisations who received these gifts to distribute included:

- Salvation Army
- Peace of Mind
- Young People Leaving Care of Gateshead Council
- Birtley Hub
- Whickham School (individual students)
- St Chad's
- Gateshead Council Change Team (individuals and families)
- Bensham Food Coop
- Lobley Hill Food Coop
- Homelessness Services
- Adult and Family Social Services (individuals and families)
- Changing Lives
- Lads & Dads

Some photographs of the evening are included below.





This project has an estimated economic value of £6,840

This project will return in 2019.

The collection points will open from the first week in November 2019 and the wrapping event will provisionally be held on Wednesday 4th December 6:00pm – 9:00pm. The Church of Latter Day Saints will once again be offering their much appreciated help by hosting the wrapping event.

Felling Volunteer Library – Volunteers

Felling Volunteer Library operates from

58 High Street,
Town Centre
Gateshead
NE10 9LT
0191 433 6402

Felling Volunteer Library is a community library run by Trustees and other Volunteers. They are on the High Street, in the heart of Felling and hope to be a focal point for the whole local community.

Anyone who use the library are always met with a very warm welcome.

The volunteer library have an extensive range of non-fiction and fiction books for all ages, free wifi, talking books on CD, Large print Books, and a range of daily newspapers

They also have a children's library with regular events and holiday activities.

Members of the public are welcome to use the groups scanning and photocopying facilities for a small charge.

The group rely upon regular committed volunteers. The Trustess asked NMV to match any more suitable volunteers to their requirements. Two volunteers have been matched to the library, one of which is now volunteering two shifts per week with the possibility of doing more once fully trained.



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TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Work Programme

REPORT OF: Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and
Governance

Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 1 April 2019 and Councillors have agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes/additions to this programme.
2. Appendix 1 sets out the work programme as it currently stands. Any changes proposed to the programme will be set out in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to
 - a) Note the provisional programme;
 - b) Note that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Contact: Angela Frisby

Extension: 2138

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Corporate Resources OSC 2019/2020	
17 June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution/role/remit (to note) • Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives – Year End Assessment and Performance Delivery 2018-19 • Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce - Annual Update • Brexit – Progress Update – agreed to be slotted in to work programme as appropriate • Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector – Interim Report (Findings) • Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2018 • OSC Work Programme
9 Sept 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector – Final Report (Recommendations) • Gateshead Fund - Annual Update • Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework – six monthly progress update • OSC Work Programme
14 Oct 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Gateshead Volunteers Plan – Annual Report • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – six monthly progress update • Gateshead Fund – Annual Update • <i>Apprenticeships Update</i> • OSC Work Programme
2 Dec 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives – Six Monthly Assessment of Performance and Delivery 2019-20 (Including Thrive) • Corporate Asset Management – Delivery and Performance Report • <i>Health & Wellbeing Board Strategy Refresh</i> • PSP Performance Monitoring • Brexit Update / Lessons Learned • OSC Work Programme
20 Jan 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Health and Safety Performance Report • <i>Implementation of Workforce Strategy – Annual Update – moved from September meeting with permission of the Chair</i> • Corporate Complaints Procedure - Annual Report 2018-19 • Work of Poverty Board – Annual Update • OSC Work Programme
2 March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance Report – Annual Update • Resilience and Emergency Planning Performance Framework – six monthly progress update • Welfare Reform / Universal Credit • OSC Work Programme
30 March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Information - Annual Report 2019 • Impact on place shaping partnership work as a result of establishment of two Combined Authorities in NE • Support to Voluntary and Community Sector – six monthly progress update • OSC Work Programme Review

Issues to Slot in
Brexit

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