



COUNCIL MEETING

16 June 2017

GATESHEAD COUNCIL

REPORT FROM THE CABINET

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This is the report from the Cabinet. Its purpose is to report on issues for the period May to June 2017.

PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

2. PEOPLE

Children and Young People

Ofsted Short Inspection – Gibside School

Gibside School was the subject of a short inspection on 7 March 2017.

The Inspectors confirmed the school continues to be Outstanding and found that the senior team, staff and governors are extremely ambitious for the pupils, and that collectively they have been very successful in maintaining, and then building on, the significant strengths evident at the time of the last inspection in 2012.

They noted the superb relationships between staff and pupils pervade the school's work, and commented that pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that is enriched by many visits out of school.

It was also noted that pupils' behaviour is a credit to the school and to the pupils themselves, many of which overcome significant challenges successfully because of the care taken to understand and then manage their complex behavioural, social and communication needs.

The inspection team has recommended Gibside School ensures the most able pupils are challenged consistently to make sure that they can make the best possible progress in their learning.

Gibside School is a maintained special school for children from the ages of 3 to 11 with profound and multiple learning difficulties. It also meets the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and children with severe learning difficulties.

Ofsted Inspection of Eslington Primary School

Ofsted Inspectors visited Eslington Primary School over the period 14 – 15 March 2017 and judged that the school continues to be Outstanding.

The Inspectors found that determined, visionary leadership has sustained the strengths noted at the time of the previous inspection and driven further improvement in all aspects of the school's work. It was also noted that governors share leaders' passion to do the best for their pupils.

It was highlighted that pupils feel safe and secure and speak movingly of the tangible improvements in their learning, behaviour, confidence and self-esteem. It was also noted that disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who are looked after by the Council, achieve as well as their peers.

The Inspectors found that the teachers and staff are highly trained in order to identify and then meet the complex needs of their pupils.

Eslington is a special school for primary aged pupils. It provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The majority of pupils have additional special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Great Gateshead Fun Run

Forty eight Gateshead Primary Schools took part in a mass Fun Run on 26 May at Saltwell Park. Nearly 4,500 children between the ages of 5 and 11 descended upon Saltwell Park to take part in the intu Metrocentre Great Gateshead Fun Run, organised by Gateshead School Sport Partnership.

The day started with a mass warm up, led by intu Metrocentre's popular mascots the Metrognomes, and the panto cast from Sleeping Beauty. Participants completed the course in a number of 'waves', beginning with an elite 1 mile run featuring 150 competitors (aged 9-11). Nursery and reception pupils (aged 3-5) completed a slighter shorter course of 0.68 miles.

3. PLACE AND ECONOMY

Environment and Transport

Local Authority Building Control Awards

Two construction schemes were awarded winners in the annual Local Authority Building Control Building Excellence Awards 2017. The schemes from Gateshead won the Best Local Builder of Traditional Craftsperson – Homework; and for Best Partnership with a Local Authority Building Control Team which the Council's Building Control Team won with Ian Belsham Associates.

These awards recognise the high level of skill and professionalism the building industry is capable of reaching. They demonstrate the contribution that local authority building control brings to the industry, providing a high quality service to many of the region's finest construction professionals

Housing

Review of the Housing Strategy 2013-18

It has been agreed that a review of the Housing Strategy will take place. A programme for review has been agreed which intends that a draft Strategy will be ready for consideration by Council in July 2018.

The Strategy will be evidence based, and developed in consultation with services across the Council and external stakeholders. It will set out priorities under the themes of housing supply, housing standards and housing support, and consider existing and emerging legislation and Government Policy, including duties under Housing Act(s), Homelessness Reduction Act; and Care Act.

The proposal is for the Strategy to have a 5 year lifespan, with annually reviewed action plan(s). The review will have both staff and financial resource implications.

Economy

Business and Investment Activity

The Council seeks to attract, retain and develop businesses in the borough in order to create more and better employment opportunities for local people.

Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, the Council has worked with over 93 businesses to deliver successful investment projects. The benefits arising from this activity include the creation of 1,087 new jobs and a further 504 safeguarded; generating in excess of £508,000 of National Non-domestic Rates (NNDR) payable to the Council, per annum.

In contrast to business investment activity, the Council has also worked with businesses at risk of closure to minimise the impact on the local economy. Earlier in the year, we worked with AEI cables to support the case for the operation to remain open, following an announcement to cease manufacturing at Birtley. Subsequently, we worked with partners to support employees affected by the closure. The Council has also been working closely with National Oilwell Varco, Team Valley, following an announcement to review its manufacturing operations. In May, a decision was reached to keep facility open and safeguard over 130 jobs.

Business Centres 2016-17

Last financial year (2016/17) the portfolio collected £1.33m of private sector income and direct operating costs (including staff) totalled £1.21m. Amongst this expenditure was more than £250,000 of services provided by other parts of the group (including Facilities Management, Cleaning and Construction Services).

Investment into the portfolio will continue using retained surpluses rather than the Council's Capital Programme. This year we will update the reception and meeting spaces at Gateshead International Business Centre.

In 2016/17 business rates from the portfolio totalled £500,000, of which £300,000 came from within the Gateshead Quays Accelerated Development Zone.

The team worked with over 130 businesses employing more than 400 people and hosts 5,000 visitors each year.

In the summer of 2016 a customer satisfaction survey was undertaken and the results were very positive:

- Out of 10 we scored an average of 8.6 for our team
- Out of 10 we scored 8.2 for our facilities
- 68% of our occupiers were sure our facility contributed to their businesses

Follingsby Enterprise Zone Update

Follingsby Enterprise Zone is a 28 hectare site that will support the growth in the manufacturing and distribution sectors in Gateshead. The site can accommodate 120,000 sqm of employment space and provide up to 2,000 jobs.

It is anticipated that the landowner will soon appoint a development partner for the site which the Council will work with to draw down c£12 million from the LEP to fund the delivery of critical infrastructure.

In order to accelerate delivery of infrastructure to the site (once the developer in place) officers have commissioned consultants to produce site access designs and legal advice to ensure funding is state aid compliant.

4. COMMUNITIES

Communities and Volunteering

Fly Tipping Update

Since April 2016 the investigation and enforcement of fly tipping incidents has been carried out by a small team in Development, Transport and Public Protection. These officers are also responsible for planning and highways enforcement, highway licensing and other Environmental Enforcement issues.

The Team's aim is to permanently solve fly tipping problems by fining and prosecuting the worst offenders and making it easy for those who want to do the right thing to dispose of their waste lawfully. Since the team have taken over fly tipping they have:

- Carried out over 700 investigations and assessed over 4,000 reported fly tipping cases.
- Carried out over 100 duty of care inspections of local businesses to establish how they are managing and disposing of their waste to help them operate in a compliant and effective way.
- Given advice to local business and residents regarding waste disposal, sold bins to residents, arranged bulky waste collections and required those identified as responsible for fly tipping incidents to clear up.
- Undertaken more formal action including warning letters, statutory notices and fixed penalty notices.
- Brought 11 successful prosecutions and have a number of pending prosecutions.
- Carried out joint operations with the Environment Agency, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, HM Revenue and Customs, DVLA, DVSA and Northumbria Police.

Culture, Sport and Leisure

Read North East

A new campaign to boost children's literacy levels in the North East has been announced by the North East Literacy Forum, led by the National Literacy Trust.

The Read North East campaign will focus on early year's literacy, encouraging parents to read with their children from birth to give them the best start in life. A series of events and activities will raise awareness of the importance of literacy skills and inspire local children and families to pick up a book.

Library services around the region, including Gateshead will play an important role in this campaign as part of the North East Literacy Forum.

5. CONCLUSION

The Council is asked to note this report.