



# COUNCIL MEETING

4 February 2016

## 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 December 2015 – February 2016.

#### PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

#### 2. PLACE AND ECONOMY

##### *Economy*

##### Social Enterprise Sector Development Update

Social Enterprise in Gateshead has seen a trajectory of growth through difficult economic times, with a sustained increase of new starts year-on-year. Gateshead Council has been supporting the start-up, development and growth of social enterprises in the borough for over 25 years, and hosts an established social enterprise sector with in excess of 120 businesses including trading charities, community interest companies and co-operatives. Gateshead was recognised by Social Enterprise UK as an area of social enterprise excellence, and was awarded Social Enterprise Places Status in 2014.

The Council provides a wide range of bespoke business advice, from business planning and cash flow forecasting to supporting with bid preparation for grants and tenders. Since January 2015, officers have supported the sector to secure grants and contracts in the region of £1.7 million, and have assisted many organisations to diversify, develop and expand their service offer, while contributing to economic growth and job creation.

The Economic and Housing Growth Service has also supported 30 local people with start-up enquiries and over 40 established social enterprises to develop their businesses.

Gateshead based social enterprises have, on the whole, remained stable and resilient, while balancing the challenge of increased beneficiary demand as a consequence of impacting austerity measures and public sector reform. Many existing organisations have diversified their services and new enterprises have been established to meet growing and emerging demand, create and sustain jobs and contribute to economic growth priorities. Examples include:

- **North East Counselling Services CIC (NECS)** who were awarded a grant from the Big Lottery to deliver a four year family resilience programme that will complement the Families Gateshead agenda.

- **Gateshead & South Tyneside Sight Service** has attracted two significant grants from the Big Lottery, Reaching Communities fund.
- **Aukestral Creative Solutions CIC (ACS)** began trading in September 2015, based at Mary Sanders Hall in Birtley, providing an innovative alternative for day centre provision for young adults with autism.

Officers will continue to support the development of new and existing social enterprises, which will play a significant role in economic growth and job creation within the Borough.

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

#### The Saltmarsh Garden Project – Update

This three-year community outreach and environmental education project in partnership with Durham Wildlife Trust is progressing, supported by Taylor Wimpey at the Saltmarsh Dunston Staiths. Since it began in April, the project has delivered and/or supported a number of public, community and educational events, including school visits, guided walks and volunteer tasks. An event for the Saltmarsh Garden Project is now being timetabled for late spring 2016 when the site should be looking at its best.

#### Ravensworth Castle

Ravensworth Castle has been on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register since 1998 and is a priority for the North East region. The Council and Historic England have been working together, in partnership with the owner, since 1997, to try and secure a sustainable future for the site.

In 2013, a team of experts were asked to assess and understand the condition of the site and costs of repair/reuse options. The survey of the Castle highlighted areas where stabilisation works were immediately required. Following this, the owner undertook the full schedules of urgent repairs, for all structures. The owner has now stated he is willing to secure the repair of the Castle as a consolidated standing ruin to prevent further deterioration. There is currently ongoing work with Historic England and the owner to consolidate Ravensworth Castle.

#### Clean Bus Technology Fund

Gateshead will benefit from reduced pollution from buses as a result of recently announced awards from the Government's Clean Bus Technology Fund. A Gateshead led bid for the QuayLink Q1, Q2 and Q3 services and a Sunderland led bid for the X1 Washington-Gateshead-Newcastle service have both been approved. This will see the fitting of emissions reducing technology to buses on these routes, which pass through the Air Quality Management Area in Gateshead Town Centre.

#### Future Transport Schemes

As part of its efforts to develop a longer term perspective on planning for transport schemes, the North East Combined Authority is seeking to develop a 'pipeline' of future schemes. Proposals in Gateshead to be put forward for this include potential schemes across the Borough, from those supporting regeneration proposals, such as the Gateshead Boulevard and at Metro Green, to improvements to the main transport corridors to cope with the additional demands of housing and economic growth in Gateshead and adjoining areas. The focus will continue to be on giving priority to

sustainable transport modes, to limit wider increases in traffic levels generally, but opportunities will also be taken where possible to tackle localised congestion problems.

#### Coatsworth Road Enforcement Project

Concern was raised towards the end of 2015 about a number of long-term environmental issues that had the potential to undermine the improvements being made to the Coatsworth Road area by the Townscape Heritage Initiative project.

At the end of September, a dedicated Enforcement Officer was assigned to develop a co-ordinated enforcement response in the area, building on and testing some of the redesigned processes developed during the Vanguard review in Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance between June 2014 and June 2015.

Work so far has focussed on the management of commercial waste and fly-tipping and has aimed to provide permanent solutions to some of the longstanding problems in the area. Although in the early stages, there has been an increase in the update of trade waste contracts with the Council, an improvement in the management of waste by a number of businesses and a significant reduction in the volume of waste fly-tipped at the recycling area.

Another area of work is focussing on tackling the irresponsible and unsafe storage of goods, displays and advertising on the highway. A targeted informal approach has resulted in a number of improvements and behaviour changes; however, a more robust enforcement approach is anticipated over the following months.

The Enforcement Officer is working closely with officers from a range of disciplines, including Parking Enforcement, Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement. Developing relationships with traders, together with adopting this multidisciplinary approach, has improved outcomes in the area, particularly in terms of compliance and confidence in the Council and there is potential to apply this approach to other localities.

### **3. COMMUNITIES**

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

##### DCMS Sports Strategy (Sporting Future: A new Strategy for an Active Nation)

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) released its first government strategy for sport in more than a decade in December 2015. The strategy has five key outcomes:

- Physical Wellbeing
- Mental Wellbeing
- Individual Development
- Social and Community Development
- Economic Development.

Funding will be distributed to focus on people who do not tend to take part in sport, including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport England's remit is being broadened to become responsible for sport outside school from the age of 5 rather than the current age of 14.

The policy will better reflect the value of broader engagement in sport, including volunteering and experiencing live sport.

The new strategy states that 'Local authorities will have an important leadership role to play, bringing schools, voluntary sports clubs, National Governing Bodies, health and the private sector together to forge partnerships, unblock barriers to participation and improve the local sport delivery system. Local authorities have, and will continue to have, an absolutely crucial role to play in delivering sport and physical activity opportunities'

In response to this, Sport England will produce their new Sport Strategy in March 2016, which will provide direction of how the DCMS strategy will be implemented on the ground, including the funding streams available to support.

### Heritage Open Days

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Tyne and Wear Heritage Open Days took place in 2015, as part of the national event. The Tyne and Wear event was co-ordinated by the Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils, in association with Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust, NewcastleGateshead Initiative, NE1, Sunderland Heritage Forum, the Newcastle upon Tyne Association of City Guides and volunteers.

The event is only made possible by the generous time, effort and enthusiasm of all the volunteers at the participating buildings, tours and events. The programme included a very high quality and diverse range of 193 buildings in Tyne and Wear, tours and activities, including tours around the cells at Gateshead Old Town Hall in Gateshead. The Heritage Open Days National Partnership has now confirmed that the Heritage Open Days 2016 event will take place from 8-11 September 2016.

### Gateshead Winter Festival

Several events have taken place as part of Gateshead Winter Festival and a summary is provided below:

#### *Enchanted Parks, 9 – 13 December*

Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Enchanted Parks welcomed over 18,500 visitors to Saltwell Park this year (Saturday unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the heavy snow – total tickets were 23,000). Nineteen regional, national and international artists and students from local universities transformed the park into a topsy-turvy dream-like world of flames, fantasy and magical surprises telling the story of Alice in Wonderland.

Volunteers supported the event across the evenings, providing guides in character to help visitors explore the evening trail. There was also an additional catering offer this year, with Saltwell Towers decorated and food themed to Alice in Wonderland.

#### *Arctic Animations, 22 – 24 December*

This unique winter installation at St Mary's Heritage Centre was organised in partnership with Tyneside Cinema. Four animations from across the world were shown with introductions and music from local artists Will Finn and Rosie Calvert. A wonderful set was created by artist Jude Thomas and visitors had blankets and hot chocolate for wintry comfort. All seven shows over the three days were sold out with over 700 visitors enjoying Arctic Animations.

### *Gateshead Town Centre Street Theatre Programme, 27 November – 19 December*

This programme of street theatre was organised to entertain visitors to Gateshead Town Centre, and complement events programmed by Trinity Square. Eight theatre and music groups performed three times each Friday and Saturday, including the Crochet Brothers, Rockin' Robins, Christmas Crackers, Stilt-Walking Christmas Trees and Dunston Silver Band.

### *Festive Fair, 28 November*

The Festive Fair at St Mary's Heritage Centre was a popular and seasonal craft fair with some unique and handcrafted Christmas presents and opportunities to sample festive food and drink. The event was supported by the St Mary's Heritage Group volunteers.

### *Art Workshops*

The Gallery at Gateshead Library had festive themed art workshops in November and December, led by artists for families and adults in jewellery making, papercutting and glass decorations.

### *Winter Concerts*

Tyneside Chamber Orchestra performed at St Mary's Heritage Centre on 5 December. The event was an evening of beautiful chamber music with a baroque programme featuring works by Bach, Corelli and Telemann. The Winter Piano Recital in the Caedmon Hall, Gateshead Central Library on 9 December, under the leadership of Venera Bojkova, was a Winter Recital showcase for local pianists who attend our monthly piano workshops.

### *The Snow Ball – Swing into Christmas!*

This event, held at St Mary's Heritage Centre on 12 December, was a great success and enjoyed by all, with sensational swing music, dancing and Christmas cocktails.

### *Winter Warmer Wanders*

More than 50 people took part in two walks between Christmas and New Year ending at St Mary's Heritage Centre.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The Council is asked to note this report.