

# Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives



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## Foreword by the Leader of the Council

Gateshead is a fantastic place with amazing people and I'm very proud to say that Gateshead is my home.

Gateshead is a vibrant place and residents have a strong sense of community and local pride. Gateshead people are compassionate, warm and generous. They are willing to share and there is a great sense of belonging. **It's a place where people really care for each other.**

The Council wants the best possible outcomes for the people of Gateshead. We want to make sure we listen and understand what matters most to local people whilst **always standing up for the most vulnerable and those in need.**

The Council has always been ambitious and the borough has a reputation for innovation and vision with economic regeneration, culture and art firmly putting Gateshead on the map.

However, these **achievements sit alongside significant levels of poverty and inequality.** I have seen the vast government cuts and radical changes in government policies making negative and disproportionate impacts on the people of Gateshead.

Tackling inequality is not new, this Council has always focused on fairness and social justice. **We know that if we can narrow the inequality gap people will live longer, healthier and happier lives.**

# We want Gateshead to be a place where everyone thrives.

If we are to achieve this a **radical rethink is needed about the way we work as a council**, the way we spend the money, the way we work with partner organisations, businesses and how we work with our local people and communities. **Big change is needed and fast.**

**We want everyone in Gateshead to be involved in this transformation.** We know we can do it, but only if we do it together. We need to know what matters most to you and what you think you can do to make sure Gateshead is a place where everyone thrives.

**This is the start of a new era for Gateshead, we've made our pledges for a fairer Gateshead, we want to hear yours**

For our part **we have developed FIVE pledges** to help and guide us when we make decisions.

You can find out how you can get involved on page 14.

## We pledge to:

- Put people and families at the heart of everything we do
- Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
- Support our communities to support themselves and each other
- Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
- Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead

**Martin Gannon**  
Leader of Gateshead Council



# Background

“There is immense pride in Gateshead as a place.... people talk readily of the achievements the council has made to the physical environment. There is also considerable pride in the Council’s values and it is widely acknowledged as wanting to care for its communities.”

*LGA Peer Challenge Report, November 2016*

The Council has always been fiercely ambitious for the people of Gateshead. The Council and its partners have a reputation for achievement, innovation and vision.

Quality services and targeted interventions for those people most in need have formed the backbone of the Council’s approach.

Developments like the Angel of the North, Gateshead Quayside and the MetroCentre along with Saltwell Park and the Gateshead International Stadium have put Gateshead firmly on the map.

The ambition and aspiration for the people and the borough has not changed.

## Changing context

What has changed is the context within which the Council is working. There have been 10 years of austerity and major government policy changes including Welfare Reform, Housing Reforms, National Living Wage, duties through the Care Act and changes to the education system forcing speedy and sometimes counterproductive change.

Uncertainty still lies ahead both locally and nationally with the impact of Universal Credit, implications of Brexit, Business Rate retention and Funding Formula changes.

Since 2010 budgets have significantly reduced across all of the public sector providing services to the people of Gateshead. The Council alone has had to make savings of over £143 million since 2010 and is looking at a funding gap of a further £88 million in the next five years.

## Demand for services

Demand for all services is high including services that help to keep the place looking clean, tidy and attractive. Demand for some council services has greatly increased.

The number of children with protection plans and the numbers of looked after children are increasing month on month. As our population ages we are seeing an increase in the number of older people needing support to live independently at home, particularly when discharged from hospital.

With reduced resources and increased demand for services the Council will not be able to make ends meet. The Council is proud of how much it does and cares for its residents however this has created expectations in communities that can no longer be met by the existing approach.

In the current context it would not be sustainable for the council to operate or maintain all services in the same way as they are currently provided.

## Developing a new approach

The new leadership of the Council has taken the opportunity to take a step back and reflect on the core purpose of the Council and very importantly what matters most to the people of Gateshead.

Work so far includes a high level analysis of the Borough's profile to ascertain future demand pressures, a refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Local Government Association undertaking a fundamental and independent look at the Council through their Peer Challenge review programme.

The following sections of this document explain the rationale and the main elements of the new approach. It also gives details of how everyone who has an interest in Gateshead can get involved to...

## ...Make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives.

# The key issue | Tackling Inequality

National and international research shows that narrowing the gap of inequality would result in people living longer, healthier and happier lives. Data shows that problems including those in poor health, mental illness, obesity, drug addiction, unequal opportunities, poorer wellbeing for children, violence and imprisonment are more common in unequal societies.

Internationally indexes of quality of life, wellness and deprivation tend to show a correlation between a country's economic inequality and its social outcomes.

Locally as councillors, we see and hear the struggles of our local residents on a daily basis. We have to face the facts - too many of our people and families are just not coping or are in need.

## We've had years of austerity and government cuts, it's not right in Gateshead:

- Government grant funding has halved since 2010
- one in five of our children live in poverty
- over 5,000 people rely on foodbanks
- over 10,000 people struggle to heat their homes
- over 3,000 people need support and advice to prevent or deal with homelessness
- over 7,500 people need social care help
- an average man only lives 57 years in good health (6.4 years less than England average)
- an average woman only lives 59 years in good health (5 years less than England average)
- over 9,000 people can't work because of long term illness
- nearly 13,000 only earn £15,000 a year
- children on free school meals will not achieve as good a level of development at age 5
- nearly 25% of people live in the 20% most deprived areas in England
- the number of people on out of work benefits is 3% higher than elsewhere and just over 10% of claimants are younger than 25.
- average earnings are still well below the national average (£490.90 compared to England median of £544.20 (2016)
- 330 young people are not in education, employment or training
- educational attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in Gateshead is at -14.6% (2015/16)

**We don't believe that in 2017 it is acceptable that there is such inequality in our Borough**



**We know that the vast majority of people in Gateshead care about the community they live in. They don't want to live in a community along side people who are struggling and they want to help and support and do something about that!**



# We want Gateshead to be a place where everyone thrives

We know that over 50% of people and families in Gateshead are either managing or just coping and over 30% are in need or in vulnerable situations. We want to change those statistics and aim to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives.





## Thriving - what do we mean by thriving?

### Flourishing, prosperous, successful, faring well

We know there are people and families in Gateshead who are already thriving. People and families who can be seen to have good jobs, good homes, good health, good support networks and can afford to take advantage of opportunities whether it be cultural, leisure or educational.

There is normally very little interaction between these people and families and the Council.

**We'd like to see a year on year increase of thriving people & families**

## Managing - what do we mean by managing?

### Coping, doing OK, making ends meet, fairly resilient, getting by but may be feeling the pinch

We know there are people and families in Gateshead who are managing. People and families who have a more stable income and can pay their bills but don't have much in the way of spare cash.

People and families who are managing tend to need less support from the Council or other organisations and have strong family and friend support networks.

**We'd like to see more people & families using their own and community support networks**



## Just coping - what do we mean by just coping?

**Just about getting by, surviving, subsisting, just about keeping their heads above water**

We know there are people in our communities who don't have regular income or are unemployed and are just about keeping their family together.

Many of these families may not have the strongest support networks. They may face different issues at different times which they need help from the Council and others to deal with them.

**We'd like to work with partners so that there are earlier, effective interventions trying to prevent just coping people and families from having more complex needs and becoming vulnerable**

## In need - what do we mean by in need?

**Vulnerable, in difficulty, in adversity, not coping**

We know there will always be some people and families that have complex and multiple needs and will need more of our care and support than others. The Council has always given priority to those in the greatest need. We look after children, provide social care for older people, support those people who have found themselves in really vulnerable situations.

Supporting such complex needs is not easy – funding social care takes all the council tax we get...and more. We need to ensure the support we provide for people is helping them to fulfil their potential and independence where possible.

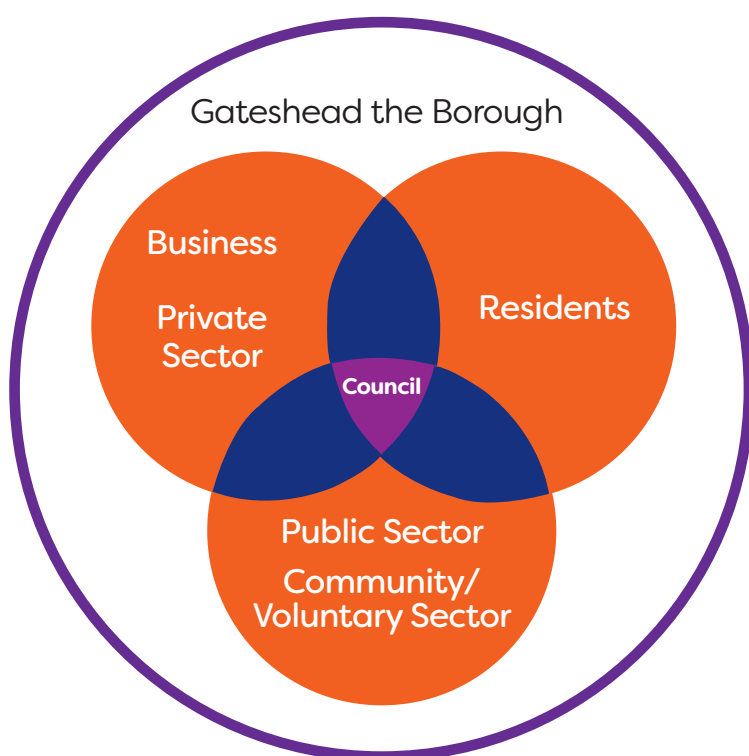
**We'd like to ensure there are appropriate and effective interventions, that have more sustainable impact and help more people cope**

# How can we make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives?

If we are going to achieve our goal it will mean a radical rethink about the way we work as a council, the way we spend the money, the way we work with partner organisations and how we work with our local people, families and communities.

The diagram below aims to illustrate the different interactions residents, businesses, partners and the community and voluntary sector will have with the Council.

## How the Council works



- Council at the heart / co-ordinating
- Provider of services to vulnerable people and universal services
- Key influencer and democratic voice

Some interventions needed

Collaboration & support

# THE NEW APPROACH

The new approach is built on the key principles of:

- Fairness and treating people with dignity and respect
- People and families being at the heart of everything we do; and
- Getting the best outcomes for local people.

We have developed FIVE pledges to help and guide us when we make decisions.

## Our pledges

We pledge to:

- Put people and families at the heart of everything we do
- Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
- Support our communities to support themselves and each other
- Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough
- Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead

## Do you want Gateshead to be a place where everyone thrives?

This new approach gives everyone in Gateshead the opportunity to determine what matters most and the opportunity to contribute and work together to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives.

It is the start of a different conversation with anybody and everybody who has an interest in Gateshead, people and families, partner organisations, employees, other local councils, and national influencers. We intend to develop this approach WITH everyone who has an interest in Gateshead.

# Getting involved

## Here are some of the ways you can get involved

From 21 November 2017 to 21 February 2018 there will be:

- Councillor roadshows
- Partner organisation meetings
- Business sector engagement
- Voluntary sector engagement
- Trade Unions engagement
- Social media information
- Policy plenary sessions - inviting MPs and Ministers to discuss key policy issues
- Council managers conference
- Council Employee Forum (s)
- Drop in sessions for employees

**Please look out for more details on the website:**

**[www.gateshead.gov.uk/ipledge](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/ipledge)**

**or if you are a council  
employee the intranet site**



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## WE WILL (The Council)

- Understand the needs of our communities better
- Attract investment to increase the number of high quality jobs, pay and housing
- Target our resources on those most in need
- Focus on tackling problems sooner to prevent things getting worse
- Work to maximise the potential in businesses, communities and employees

## YOU CAN (Residents)

- Help us understand what really matters to you
- Play your part by getting involved in your community
- Lead an active and healthy life
- Look after and take pride in your local environment
- Support your local economy by shopping local
- Help us save money by going online



## YOU CAN (Employees)

- Use your initiative, do what you think is right, and take personal responsibility for achieving great results
- Work with colleagues across the Council and partner organisations to deliver the best outcomes
- Be creative and don't be afraid to try new approaches



## TOGETHER WE CAN

### (Partner organisations)

- Recognise that issues cross different organisations
- Share expertise, information and knowledge
- Integrate services into co-ordinated packages and focus on those most in need

### (Other local councils)

- Lobby together
- Plan together
- Work together



## I CAN...

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**Find out more at:**  
[www.gateshead.gov.uk/iplodge](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/iplodge)