



COUNCIL MEETING

GATESHEAD COUNCIL

22 NOVEMBER 2018

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 September to November 2018.

PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

2. PLACE AND ECONOMY

Economy

PROTO: The Emerging Technology Centre

Gateshead has a growing reputation as a location for animation and design, video game development and software development and IT. The strength in developing video games has translated to a strong immersive technologies sector (virtual reality and augmented reality). These sectors have the potential for significant expansion but can also disrupt traditional industries, creating new products/services and helping to digitalise the wider economy.

The potential for growth is constrained by the cost of specialist kit which acts as a barrier to growth for both small digital companies, but also other businesses keen to implement these new technologies.

PROTO: The Emerging Technology Centre, an £8.4m development at Baltic Quarter, owned and operated by the council as part of its portfolio of Business and Innovation Centres, is Europe's first purpose-built centre of its kind, providing businesses with access to state-of-the-art research and development facilities situated alongside high-quality co-working and office space for businesses in the emerging technologies sector.

European Funding of £3.25m and Local Growth Funding of £968k was secured to complement council investment into the project.

Equipment, including a rig for motion capture and multi-person VR and a 120-camera photogrammetry suite, gives business access to equipment that they would not otherwise have locally and, in some cases, nationally which will enable them to produce content and win business that previously they had been unable to compete for.

The project has enhanced the current proposition for tech investment in Gateshead delivering economic advantage in terms of inward investment to the area, attracting companies seeking to be part of the cluster, with high value and high skilled jobs being created.

The Centre was officially opened by HRH The Duke of Cambridge on 7 September 2018.

Environment and Transport

Road Safety

Gateshead saw a decrease in the numbers of people killed or injured in road accidents in 2017. Over the year there were a total of 471 casualties on Gateshead's roads, a decrease of 18% from 2016. These are the lowest annual number of casualties seen on Gateshead's roads since records began in 1974.

There was also a reduction in the number of people killed (from 7 to 3) or seriously injured (from 60 to 50) during the year. Overall, almost every major road user group travelling on Gateshead's roads saw either their lowest, or amongst their lowest, ever recorded injury numbers in 2017. The only group not to see amongst their lowest recorded injury numbers were pedal cyclists, but even this group saw their smallest casualty numbers since 2008.

Ravensworth Castle

The first phase of a five year programme to secure the full repair and consolidation of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Ravensworth Castle, which comprises the medieval towers and Bartizan Gate has been completed. The repairs carried out to the North and South Tower are of high quality finish. The works are being funded privately by the owner without any contributions from public funds such as Historic England. Phase 2 will commence in the early summer 2019. The phasing is partly due to the financing and partly due to the materials - natural lime is sensitive to low temperatures and generally is not used between October and March.

Bus Lane and Environmental Enforcement

The Council continues to make progress in introducing bus lane and civil enforcement. The first three cameras are now operational and will help to reduce the problems of congestion and delays to bus services caused by unauthorised use of bus lanes. The introduction of Environmental Enforcement, to issue Fixed Penalty Notices is to follow soon after, initially covering offences relating to litter, dog fouling, graffiti and fly posting.

Air Quality Awareness Campaign

The joint work between Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside Councils to reduce the problem of nitrogen dioxide pollution from road traffic at key locations continues. Current activity includes a series of events and engagement sessions being held across the three council areas to gather views and information from groups and interests who may be affected by any proposals. In addition, an awareness campaign has been launched recently across a variety of media to help increase awareness of the problems caused by pollution among the general public.

3. COMMUNITIES

Communities and Volunteering

Hate Crime Awareness Week

National Hate Crime Awareness week took place 13 – 20 October 2018 and was a national week of action to raise awareness of hate crime. In Gateshead, a launch

event took place at Gateshead Stadium which included a walk of solidarity to demonstrate support for those in our community who are affected by hate crime. This involved two laps of the track with banners and posters, some of which were designed by children from a local primary school and the opportunity to make a pledge around Hate Crime which were attached to a wish tree. The event was attended by organisations working in Gateshead and residents living in the Borough who walked in partnership to show that there is no place for hate in Gateshead.

Culture, Sport and Leisure

Animation Programme

The Council enhanced the visitor experience at Gateshead Quays during the Great Exhibition of the North (GETON) by developing a programme of vibrant cultural events that 'animated' the area. The programme aimed to ensure that quality family activities were available in Gateshead each weekend throughout GETON. It was delivered with partners including local arts organisations with a range of engaging and inspiring activities including Gateshead Millennium Bridge tours; street theatre, dancing, choirs, painting and a food market.

Many of the artists and performers were also local, helping to showcase the talent we have. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and over 20,000 people were engaged. Importantly the programme drew people to Gateshead Quays, increasingly footfall and got families involved in arts and culture in a fun and exciting way.

Enchanted Parks

Enchanted Parks is an annual evening arts event bringing specially commissioned artists to transform Gateshead's Saltwell Park into a magical and mythical wonderland.

This year will be the event's 13th year with the lighted trail running over six nights from Tuesday 4 December to Sunday 9 December 2018. Each event has a different theme to inspire artists and create an imaginary world for visitors to enjoy. Artwork will include art installations, lighting, performance and fire sculpture.

This year's theme 'The House of Lost and Found' has been created again by Gateshead based writer Susan Mulholland who also writes plays for Northern Stage.

Sculpture Day

On Sunday 30 September, hundreds of budding artists attended the annual, much loved, Gateshead Family Sculpture Day in Saltwell Park. One of the highlights and traditions in Gateshead's cultural calendar, this family event returned for a day of building and banging, creating and constructing. This was the 33rd year for this unique event organised by the Council which attracted approximately 1500 people to Saltwell Park.

Invitation to the National Service of Remembrance

Jen Bell received a personal invitation to the national Service of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on Sunday 11 November 2018 to commemorate the end of the First World War. Jen works as the Local Studies Librarian at Gateshead Central Library and has organised many different activities during the last four years to commemorate different aspects of the First World War locally. This invitation is great recognition for the success of this programme delivered by Jen and her team at the library.

4. CONCLUSION

The Council is asked to note this report.