



# COUNCIL MEETING

23 MAY 2019

## 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 March – May 2019.

#### PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

#### 2. PEOPLE

##### *Adult Social Care*

##### CQC Inspection

Southernwood received an unannounced inspection from the Care Quality Commission on 4 March 2019. Southernwood has received a 'Good' rating from the inspection. The service was deemed as being very caring and engaging with service users and "people and relatives were positive about the support from staff". CQC noted that the service had received many compliments from people, relatives and health and social care professionals. CQC praised the quality of Southernwood's care plans which highlighted people's strengths and were the means to promote people's independence. The service was deemed as well-led with "a robust governance framework in place".

Despite an overall good rating, (with 4 key lines of enquiry rated as 'good') Southernwood was given a 'Requires Improvement' status in the 'safe' key line of enquiry, due to 2 observations that the CQC Regulatory Inspector made when she undertook a health and safety tour of the building during the inspection. The first observation surrounded the medical room door being ajar and not having been locked after a District Nurse (who had visited Southernwood that morning to provide treatments) had left. The second observation surrounded doors at the top of the two stairwells at Southernwood not possessing a keypad system, which, in the inspector's view elicits a risk of service users potentially falling down the stairs.

#### 3. PLACE AND ECONOMY

##### *Environment and Transport*

##### Electric Vehicle Charging

The Council has been successful in bidding along with the other seven North East authorities for ERDF funding for rapid electric charging facilities. The Council is already working the supplier/operator to install chargers for four vehicles at Gateshead Leisure Centre and now has agreement for additional funding. A preferred location for further

rapid chargers has been identified at the Angel of the North car park. Officers are working with suppliers on the details for this location.

#### Air Quality Update

The air quality consultation ran from 6 March – 23 May. Over 6,000 responses were received. Over the next few weeks the data will be analysed and used in conjunction with the modelling to inform the development of the Full Business Case to government. This will be reported to Cabinet in the autumn for agreement.

#### Fuel Poverty Update

Rising levels of fuel poverty are a challenge for many residents in Gateshead, whilst remaining a further challenge for voluntary sector organisations who seek to support them.

A campaign has been developed to tackle fuel poverty and to encourage and support all Gateshead residents to switch their energy supplier to access cheaper tariffs and reduce household energy bills.

- 11,600 fuel poor households in Gateshead, that's 12.8% of all households
- This increases to 32% of residents over 65.
- In the UK almost 60% of households are on the most expensive standard variable tariffs
- Almost a quarter of all UK households (23%) have never switched supplier.
- Recent figures from Ofgem show the average saving to a household switching their energy supplier is an average £308.22

In response, a borough wide fuel poverty campaign for Gateshead has been developed. The campaign will be a collaborative initiative, using resources and expertise from the public and voluntary sector. It will focus on helping residents obtain reduced fuel bills via switching, energy efficiency, debt advice and income maximisation.

The pilot will also ensure training in fuel poverty awareness and the switching process is delivered to officers from across the Council and its partners who have direct contact with residents to allow them to promote the campaign, encourage residents to switch and provide advice and support around switching and saving money. This training will be delivered by National Energy Action (NEA) which is a national fuel poverty charity.

The campaign will be a whole population offer, residents of all demographics and financial means can benefit from switching. Those most vulnerable, for example those with fuel debt or other complex circumstances will be supported with specialist fuel poverty advice delivered by partners from the voluntary sector. This will be an extremely important element of the campaign.

The campaign would also refer into both LEAP (Local Energy Assistance Programme) and ECHO (Emergency Central Heating Offer) which are launching via a partnership with AgilityEco in Gateshead at a similar time of May/June and which carry a household eligibility criteria to enable households to access this support.

#### Energy Schemes Update

In 2010, the Council published its Climate Change Strategy seeking to reduce borough-wide carbon emissions by 40% by 2025. In 2011, the Council signed the EU Covenant

of Mayors on Climate Change and published the Sustainable Energy Action Plan in 2012 with an interim target of 20% reduction by 2020.

The Council has invested over £60m installing and building energy saving and low-carbon technology, for its own operations, and for the community. The Civic Centre is a leading example - energy efficiency investment has seen its energy use fall by around 28% in the last 10 years - and since 2018, 100% of its heat and power is served by low-carbon sources - a 200kW PV array installed on the roof, and all other heat and power supplied via underground pipes and wire from good quality combined heat and power, generated at Gateshead Energy Centre.

Gateshead's streetlights, thanks to investment in LED lighting and dimming, now use 60% less electricity than they did 10 years ago. We installed 2MW of solar panels across 35 buildings and schools, and solar energy now provides 5% of power for all Council buildings and schools.

As a result, in under 10 years, the Council's own carbon emissions from all its operations and services has fallen by 40% since 2010, and we are aiming for 50% by 2020. Investment in home energy conservation across the borough has seen the number of homes classed as energy efficient increase from 15% in 2003 to 56% in 2018.

The Council and the Gateshead Energy Company are now a generator and supplier of low carbon and renewable energy, supplying Council buildings, homes and other buildings across the borough. Gateshead Energy Centre supplies heat and power to more than 10 buildings in Gateshead Town Centre over a 4km network, and the Gateshead HEIGHTs scheme has installed new low-carbon heat networks to 620 high rise homes, cutting carbon emissions and energy costs significantly.

These resources, supported by national policies, has seen the borough's carbon emissions fall by 36% since 2005, exceeding our target of 20% by 2020, and on target to meet the 40% target by 2025.

The Council is also working in partnership with other Councils in the region, to update our carbon reduction actions and targets to 2030. There are plans to continue to expand Gateshead District Energy Scheme, connecting new developments on Gateshead Quays and Baltic Business Quarter and exploring new energy networks in across Gateshead.

The Council will also continue to find energy efficiency solutions for hard-to-treat homes, such as high-rise and solid wall housing, and are seeking funds to support these where ever possible.

## ***Housing***

### Keelman Homes - Empty Property Purchase and Repair

Since 2015 Keelman Homes has brought back into use 75 empty properties across Gateshead. By March 2022 this work will result in the acquisition of a total of 120 empty homes to be let to people from Gateshead Councils housing register.

Working with Homes England, the Empty Homes programme has taken place over two grant periods.

The 2015-2018 programme acquired 40 empty homes in the period up to June 2018. The programme was funded via £796k grant and a loan facility from Gateshead Council totalling £1.44m

The 2016-2021 programme will deliver a further 80 properties using a total of 1.25m grant and loan finance up to a maximum of £2.8m. Within this period 35 empty properties have been purchased to date with a further 5 expected to be completed by September 2019. The remaining 40 properties in this programme will be delivered by March 2022.

#### **4. COMMUNITIES**

##### ***Communities and Volunteering***

###### Gateshead Holiday Activities and Food

The Council has secured for £204,000 to provide free summer holiday activities and healthy food for disadvantaged children including those who are eligible for free school meals from the Department for Education Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

The bidding process was very competitive with the Department for Education (DfE) seeking to fund a more joined up approach to the delivery of free holiday clubs in nine local authority areas in England. The DfE feedback has been extremely positive with the value for money and sustainable approach of Gateshead specifically highlighted.

Work is currently taking place with the venues that have expressed an interest in delivering activity that includes sports, arts and drama. Venues are being mapped to assess whether the coverage is in line with what is required. Areas of high need are mainly in the East and Central areas but there are pockets of need across Gateshead including Birtley, Chopwell, Chowdene, and Highfield.

Venues will be supported to deliver activity in line with DfE guidance which is four weeks of the summer holiday; for four days per week and for four hours per day. Work will also take place with schools and services providing support to young people to engage eligible children in activities in their nearest venue.

###### Gateshead Friends of Groups

On 11 April 2019, at the Dryden Centre, the Council hosted the first Environmental Friends of conference. All Friends of Groups across Gateshead were invited. On the day the conference welcomed volunteers from around 30 environmental Friends of Groups.

Presentations were provided from National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, Green Flag and The Big Lottery Fund. Workshops were provided on various topics including event planning and risk assessments and information was provided from various groups including Sustrans, Durham Wildlife Trust, National Lottery and Newcastle CVS.

The day closed with some general questions and a statement about how we can move forward. There has been positive feedback following the conference and it is hoped to provide this networking event several times a year.

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

### Elmer Parade 2019

Elmer's Parade is a project led nationally by Wild in Art working with three charities to turn the country patchwork in Suffolk, Plymouth and Tyne and Wear. St Oswald's Hospice is the charity in the North East leading on this project with support from businesses and local authorities across the Tyne & Wear region. The Elmer parade will include 70+ designed elephants and will run from Wednesday 21 August – Sunday 27 October or Friday 1 November (tbc) 2019.

Sites for Gateshead Elmer's are being confirmed with over 10 suitable locations based on success of the Snowdogs trail from 2017. This event promises to be an autumn highlight and will be supported by a number of linked events in the library service.

### Angel Adventures

The Angel of the North has been on lots of exciting adventures over the last 12 months thanks to young people across Gateshead and one lucky school has received a prize for their efforts.

Last year to mark the Angel's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday Gateshead's Knit n Natter groups, who meet regularly in Gateshead Libraries, knitted a mini Angel for every primary school in Gateshead. Since then these angels have been on lots of different adventures with young people across the borough right up to the Angel celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday last month.

South Street Primary School were chosen to win vouchers for Clip and Climb at Gateshead Leisure Centre as a prize to recognise the enthusiastic and creative way they made their angel part of school life. From school trips to visiting the pupils homes, from taking part in lessons to having Christmas fun Cuthbert the Angel has had many adventures throughout the year.

Find out about Cuthbert's adventures here - <http://southstreetprimary.org/angel/>

### Special Olympics

Special Olympics is the largest organisation in the world that provides sporting training and competition opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Over 7,000 athletes from 194 countries competed in 24 sports at the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E from the 14 – 21 March 2019.

Special Olympics Gateshead Tyne and Wear athletes has 174 athletes and 2 of those athletes, Sandra Armstrong (who attends Phoenix Community Base) and Mark Proctor (who uses Gateshead Shared Lives) were selected to represent Great Britain at the World Games. Each athlete has been trained by qualified coaches at either Gateshead Leisure Centre or Gateshead International Stadium each week, as a means to develop their skills and confidence for the World Games.

All the efforts of Sandra and Mark have paid dividends with Sandra competing in swimming and Mark in Powerlifting. Both athletes have had a wonderful experience at the World Games meeting many new friends and produced some sterling performances.

Sandra helped Great Britain win gold within the 4 x 25 metre freestyle relay and then went onto win gold in the individual 25 metre freestyle race, beating other finalists from Iraq, the Czech Republic, Brazil, Syria and Israel. Sandra finished her games by placing 6th in her 25 metres backstroke final. Sandra from Felling, is now a double world champion!

Mark came 4th in his bench press final and secured 5th places in both the deadlift and combined bench press and deadlift event, beating his personal best in both of these lifts.

The day closed with some general questions and a statement about how we can move forward. There has been positive feedback following the conference and it is hoped to provide this networking event at least four times a year.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The Council is asked to note this report.