



# COUNCIL MEETING

26 May 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 April – May 2016.

#### PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

#### 2. PEOPLE

##### *Children and Young People*

##### *Adult Social Care*

##### North East Disabilities Sports Awards

The North East Disability Awards were held in April to recognise and reward the sporting achievements of local participants, clubs, coaches and volunteers in 2015.

‘Team North East’, a disability athletics club developed from the North East Legacy Games event, was highly commended in the Team of the Year category for its success over the last three years in the National Disability Athletics Championships.

The Outstanding Club Award was won by the Gateshead Special Olympics, which has had many successes since it was set up in 2014.

Two Gateshead Athletes were given a special mention in the Young Male (Joseph Grey) and Female (Emily Stewart) achiever award for their accomplishments in athletics.

In addition, one of the Special Olympics athletes, Jemma Robinson, was given the ‘Female Sports Personality’ award for her international powerlifting accomplishments.

##### Foster Carers Awards Ceremony 2016

The annual Foster Carer Awards were held on 19 April, at the Lancastrian Suite in Gateshead, recognising the dedication and hard work of all of the Council’s foster carers. In Gateshead, there are 297 children placed in short and long term foster placements, including those children placed with relative and friend foster carers. Without our foster carers, the Council would not be able to offer these children safe, nurturing family homes.

The awards enable the opportunity to celebrate some of the fantastic work that goes on behind the scenes every day in the Fostering Service. This year’s event was slightly different as it had a theme running through it: the theme was what Fostering does for the children in Gateshead...“Live in the now and prepare for the future”.

The evening saw the acknowledgement of the following:

- 26 sets of new foster carers welcomed to the service
- 27 sets of foster carers achieving their certificates for Department of Education, Training, Support & Development Standards
- 15 foster carers achieving a Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's workforce
- 8 foster carers successfully completing the Bridging Units for the Level 3 Diploma, and
- Long Service awards were presented to 16 sets of foster carers for achieving their 5, 10, 15 and 20 year anniversaries.

In addition to these achievements, there were also the following awards given:

- **Foster Carer Support Award** – Awarded to fellow foster carers for proving peer support and advice.
- **Extra Mile Award** – Awarded to foster carers who regularly go above and beyond what is expected of them in delivering an exceptional standard of care. They provide a unique level of service that enhances the reputation of foster carers and Gateshead Council.
- **Unsung Hero Award** - Awarded to foster carers who have a sense of enthusiasm that drives them to put in extraordinary effort to deliver safe, high quality care and support. They epitomise dedication and drive and always deliver on their promises in an unassuming way. They never seek recognition and work really hard behind the scenes delivering what is needed.
- **Outstanding Newcomer of the Year Award** – Awarded to foster carers who have joined the organisation since 1 April 2015 and have brought a fresh perspective to the service. They show real drive, exceptional performance, enthusiasm, motivation and inspire those around them.
- **Most Amazing Carer Award** - We asked our looked after children to nominate their foster carer(s) for an award if they believe them to be amazing.

The evening saw two fantastic performances by looked after children and birth children of foster carers. The first performance being a contemporary dance, which was choreographed by Megan (aged 16) who is also one of the Council's Looked After Children. Megan has worked really hard not only choreographing this performance but leading all of the rehearsals. The event ended on a high with a breath-taking singing performance by Courtney, also a looked after child.

The event was inspiring for all who attended and the following quotes from children in foster care demonstrate the real difference foster carers in Gateshead make to the children in our care.

- *"My foster family is one of the best things that have happened to me. They care for me, they support me and they help me. They also take you to school no matter what the weather is!"*
- *"Being with my foster family makes me feel warm, loved, protected and safe. I love them because they are kind helpful and joyful!"*
- *"My carers are amazing and make everyone smile. They never give up on me and I feel like I am part of the family."*

### **3. PLACE AND ECONOMY**

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

##### Pothole Action Fund

The Government has confirmed Gateshead's allocation from its 'Pothole Action Fund' of £143,000. This is a national fund to help support efforts to fix potholes permanently, or to stop them forming in the first place. It has also confirmed an additional £153,000 for 2016/17 as part of its incentive based approach towards highways maintenance funding.

##### Changes to Local Air Quality Management Report

The Government are greatly simplifying the process for councils to report progress against improving air quality in their areas. Within Gateshead, there is one Air Quality Management Area covering the Town Centre and a part of Durham Road. The area is in place because the levels of Nitrogen Oxide from traffic pollution slightly exceeds the European standard, and transport management solutions are being applied in an attempt to reduce this, including the fitting of exhaust cleaning systems to a number of older buses travelling on routes through the area.

##### Warm Up North Update

Warm Up North is a partnership of nine North East councils delivering energy efficiency to homes and public buildings, in partnership with British Gas. Since it started in July 2013 across the region, Warm Up North has delivered 5,000 measures, to over 4,000 homes, and improvements to public building, amounting to £12m of investment to date, with a further £15m in the pipeline for delivery over the next 12 months. Gateshead has received the most investment of any partner to date, with 54% of all investment being delivered in Gateshead. Highlights include:

- £4m invested in home energy efficiency to 680 private and council homes, of which £1m was funded from energy company grants;
- Works included 322 improvements to private, vulnerable households, external wall insulation to 210 Council homes in Leam Lane, and a full insulation scheme – walls, windows and roofs - for Fell, Lough and Beacon Courts in Wrekenton;
- £2.8m invested in solar PV systems on Gateshead Council buildings, schools and academies.

The project is led by Newcastle City Council, and received development funding from the EU-Elena programme. During its three-year assessment of Warm Up North, Gateshead was chosen by partners to host the European Committee representative, who commended Gateshead on its approach and achievements to energy efficiency and generation, which have been particularly challenging given the significant changes in national policy and funding around energy efficiency over the past three years.

### **4. COMMUNITIES**

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

##### Crime Related Performance

The number of recorded crimes in Gateshead increased by 37% in 2015/16 compared to the same period last year – equating to an additional 3,431 offences. Although crime

increased, Gateshead continues to be one of the best performing Community Safety Partnerships within its Most Similar Family Group and across Northumbria. Increases were reported in most crime categories with violence increasing by 67% (+1,381), burglary dwelling rising by almost a fifth (+86) and criminal damage offences increasing by 46% (+856) in the last 12 months. Reports of anti-social behaviour to Northumbria Police have continued to fall year-on-year, with a total of 8,077 incidents reported in Gateshead, a reduction of 8%.

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

#### Inclusive Futures National Camp

'Lead your generation: An inclusive future' programme is a leadership and volunteering initiative for young people, with special emphasis on inclusion. The project delivers regular regional training camps along with other events/activities throughout the year. Volunteers also have the opportunity to attend large scale sporting events. In September 2015, the charity *Spirit of 2012* confirmed funding for the programme up until September 2016.

#### Gateshead Leisure Centre – Boxing Event

On 26 March, Fighting Chance promotions made their promoting debut at Gateshead Leisure Centre with their "Genesis" fight night. Fighting Chance is based in Felling, at the former Branding Community Centre.

The event was televised on Made in Tyne & Wear and is the first of 4 to be staged at the venue during 2016.

#### Arts Council England - Digital Arts Funding Award

A successful application has been made to Arts Council England (ACE) for funding to support the implementation of a library service based digital arts project. The application for £40,000 external funding has been confirmed by ACE. Digital Makings will be a year-long programme of participatory Digital Arts activities encompassing a broad range of specialisms for people to discover and explore.

At the centre of the project there will be two Artists in Residence working in Gateshead's Libraries, building on the experience gained from last year's Creative Makings project. Each artist will have expertise in a different digital process and approach the project by highlighting different techniques, skills and applications.

#### Local History Month

Local History Month is being held this month. It offers a wide range of walks, talks, events and exhibitions at St Mary's Heritage Centre and in Libraries throughout Gateshead and is well supported by both Gateshead's Local History groups and library employees. Our local history walks enable residents to discover hidden buildings, landscapes and stories of Gateshead. This year's walks include tours of the Elisabethville boundaries (Birtley's First World War Belgian refugee colony) by Birtley Heritage Group and a gentle stroll along Front Street with Whickham Local History Society. Gateshead Local History Society will again celebrate the ancient practice of walking Gateshead's boundaries and will also lead a walk around Shipcote.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The Council is asked to note this report.