



Gateshead Strategic Partnership Steering Group

24 November 2015

Minutes

Present:	Cllr Mick Henry	Gateshead Council
	Richie Jackson	Northumbria Police
	Alison Dunn	Gateshead Advice Partnership
	Dave Escott	Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service
	Helen Mathews	NEXUS
	Dominic Parker	Sage Gateshead
	Andrew Sugden	Northumbria University
	Craig Bankhead	Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly
	Carole Wood	Gateshead Council
	Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council

In Attendance:

Sheila Johnston	Gateshead Council
Charlotte Wainwright	Gateshead Council
Rosalyn White	Gateshead Council

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Jane Mulholland, Sandra Brydon, Esther Ward, Judith Doyle, Ian Atkinson, Vikas Kumar, Trevor Atkinson, Joan Moon and Martyn Strike.

2. MINUTES

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. PARTNER UPDATES

- **Nexus**

The QCS Board has rejected proposals, three out of five public interest tests were failed. The outcome of the report will be provided to the Tyne and Wear Leaders Board to decide what will happen next. Officers are awaiting legislation around bus franchising in the new year.

- **Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service**

Statistics from the Fire and Rescue Service were provided to the Group for the period over Bonfire Night. It was reported that across the Service there was a 9.6% reduction in the total number of incidents on 5 November. In Gateshead there were 21 incidents, which is a 50% reduction since 2010. It was reported that in the lead up to Bonfire Night there was a total of 448 incidents across the service, 53 of which were in Gateshead. It was noted that despite there being only one organised event in Gateshead this did not make any difference to the number of incidents.

It was reported that in September the targeted response vehicles were launched, to respond to secondary fires.

- **Sage Gateshead**

Commercial activity at the Sage is currently being looked at and there is a keen focus on the Gateshead community. There is also a mapping exercise to look at who are the participants and their needs, this will end in January. It was suggested that the findings would be beneficial to the Steering Group.

5. COUNCIL BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Steering Group received a presentation on the Council's budget consultation. It was noted that since 2010 there has been a 45% reduction in Government funding, leading to £110M worth of savings. This equates to £300 less per person to spend. There are now fewer people working for the Council resulting in reduced capacity.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy indicates that £78M will be required over the next five years, this will be front loaded with savings of £50M in the next two years. The provisional settlement will be received at the end of December so a clearer picture will be known then.

The Council Plan 2015-20 has been developed which focuses on working with partners and others to deliver positive outcomes for the people of Gateshead. The approach is around maximising growth, reducing costs and increasing collective responsibility.

A two year approach has been developed, approved by Cabinet on 3 November and currently out for public consultation. The consultation is in themed areas;

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Services
- Communities and Volunteers
- Economic Growth
- Environment
- Public Health
- Governance and Resources
- Efficiency and Effectiveness

Draft proposals for each area were outlined and partners were asked to discuss the consultation with their organisations. The consultation ends on 30 December and the 2015-17 budget will go to Cabinet and Council on 23 and 25 February 2016.

6. ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

Carole Wood gave a presentation to the Steering Group on how more can be achieved by working together to deliver Vision 2030 and through an asset based approach to meet the needs of the community.

Following initial discussions at the last meeting work is ongoing to look at specific areas in which to apply this approach, such as; health, adult social care and children's, environment and workforce.

It was noted that community engagement and partnership working are key to making the approach work. The Council is at the heart of the community, therefore it is important to look at how Councillors can be supported to be the voice of the community and mobilise action in local areas. It is important that the voluntary and community sector supports infrastructure to aid community development, capacity building and mobilising volunteers.

It was proposed that a session be held with Cormac Russell, he has worked with a number of local authorities to help them understand what this means to communities and the authority. The session will be held over two days, potentially 14 and 15 March 2016 and will involve groups of stakeholders, partners and communities. The Steering Group was asked to consider who should be engaged with for the event.

The Steering Group felt that this was a worthwhile approach as with reduced resources the Council moves from a paternal role to enabler. The Steering Group provided a comprehensive list of potential groups and organisations who should be included in discussions. It was agreed that the suggested list would be prioritised and mapped and conversations would continue prior to the event.

7. DEVOLUTION

Sheila Johnston gave a presentation to the Steering Group on the proposed agreement on devolution for the North East. It was confirmed that the proposed agreement has been signed which is a significant step, however it is still in the early stages so work is ongoing to ensure the right outcome for the North East and build on the strengths of the region.

The challenges for the area were identified, including; shortage of private sector jobs, skill shortages, under performing education and lack of confidence in place.

The proposed agreement sets out terms between NECA and Government to move forward with devolution of funding, powers and responsibilities. The final agreement is conditional upon;

- Formal approval by Councils, NECA and Ministers
- Legislative processes
- Spending Review
- Further public consultation

It was noted that in Gateshead work is ongoing to consult with as many groups as possible. Alongside devolved powers and responsibilities, new governance arrangements will be adopted, this includes the election of a Mayor for the North

East Combined Authority in 2017. It was also reported that the proposals must be considered in the context of further reductions in spending, however the North East Investment Fund will be used to help borrow and will create certainty through stability of investment opportunities.

It was noted that there will be additional and extended Enterprise Zones as well as decision making power on European funds. NECA also wants to ensure that businesses in the North East do not face higher costs than Scottish businesses. The costs of a Mayoral combined authority would come from the resources being devolved from Government.

Proposals around human capital development include an innovative strategy focused around transforming aspiration and opportunity through linking early years intervention with targeted community employment initiatives. In terms of transport proposals, NECA is working towards an upgraded transport system with devolved responsibility for all aspects of capital and revenue funding. It is proposed that a Health and Social Care Commission be established, to improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities. In terms of business and innovation it is proposed to simplify and strengthen the support available for business growth, innovation and global trade in the North East, to create more and better jobs. It is proposed to introduce new approaches to deliver sites for economic development use and drive housing growth, as well as devolved regulatory powers so local authorities can tackle key issues affecting their communities. Further details are being worked through the implementation plan.

The next steps of the process are continued consultation, themed consultation will be undertaken to plan the future work. The necessary legislation to put the proposals into effect is being considered in Parliament and it is expected to be in place by the end of the year. The individual councils will consider the proposals, with formal endorsement expected in early 2016.

The Steering Group was asked to feedback their views on whether the right areas for devolution have been highlighted, which are most important and whether there are other issues that should be included in negotiations. Feedback is to be provided to Sheila Johnston and Charlotte Wainwright.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place at 2.00pm on Tuesday 23 February 2016, in the Whickham Room, Gateshead Civic Centre.