



COUNCIL MEETING

10 November 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 September – November 2016.

PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

2. PEOPLE

Children and Young People

Ofsted inspection of Roman Road Primary School

Roman Road Primary School was inspected by Ofsted in June 2016, with an overall outcome of Outstanding. Previously the school had been judged as Good.

The inspectors noted that the “inspirational head teacher has fostered a culture of high expectations, where barriers to learning are not accepted and a ‘can do’ approach informs every action” and that leadership is the responsibility of all staff. It was also noted that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was outstanding.

The inspectors commented that the pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and a highly developed understanding of fairness and acceptance towards those from backgrounds and lifestyles different from their own. It was noted that pupils at key stage 2 are making exceptional progress and most go on to achieve beyond expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Ofsted suggested one improvement linked to the school continuing to improve the rate of progress children make in the early years so that it matches that seen in the rest of the school.

National Adoption Week

Each year a national campaign is ran to both raise the profile of adoption and recruit prospective adoptive families. The campaign is led by First4Adoption, the national information service for people interested in adopting a child in England, and this year’s theme was represented by the hashtag “#Support Adoption”. As in previous years, the need to find families for some of our most vulnerable children remained at the heart of the campaign but it also aims to paint a true picture of what adoption is actually like today.

The Council’s Adoption Service recruits adopters all year round to meet the needs of the service but always supports the national campaign in order to further raise our profile locally and increase the impact of the national message.

This year the campaign activities included:

- bridge banners on Felling bypass and civic centre perimeter fencing,
- information in Council Info/Council News,
- promotional advert on plasma screen in Gateshead Civic Centre,
- information included in “Gateshead Now” direct email, and
- a week long social media campaign.

The Adoption Service does not typically experience an immediate increase in enquiries following National Adoption Week but all promotional activities are worthwhile as they raise awareness of the need for adopters and promote “how to get in touch”. Whilst there was not a notable increase in enquiries during National Adoption Week, there was an immediate response to the social media campaign. Messages were posted all week on the Service’s Facebook page as well as the Council’s Facebook and Twitter pages. The results of the local Facebook campaign saw an increase in of 8.5% in the number of likes. The number following the joint Fostering & Adoption Facebook page has risen from 483 on Sunday 16 October to 524 on Monday 25 October. This increase in followers means that we will reach more people in future when using this tool.

The Adoption Service will continue its recruitment activities in order to increase the number of adoptive families.

Celebrating Achievement event for Looked After Children

It’s now 16 years since the Council introduced the Annual Celebrating Achievement Awards for Gateshead’s Looked After Children and Young People. This year, the event took place on 27 October 2016 at the Lancastrian Suite, Dunston.

The event was well attended with 346 young people nominated to receive awards by social workers, foster carers, teachers and other professionals. The nomination categories were:

- Be Healthy
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Wellbeing

As well as the standard nomination areas listed, young people were also nominated for several special awards including the Lorna Gallagher Award for outstanding achievement in sport or performing arts, The Finton O’Regan Award for most improved attendance since coming into care, and the Virtual School Head Awards linked to educational attainment.

The awards were supported by The Gateshead Housing Company and Intu Metrocentre.

Health and Wellbeing

LGC Awards Submission 2016 – Hot Food Takeaway SPD

The Council’s ‘pioneering fight against obesity’ has been submitted to the LGC Awards. The Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document was the first in the UK to go beyond traditional planning considerations and tackle health issues head on.

Officers developed a Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) based on up to date research to justify criteria, based purely on health, which allows the limitation of the proliferation of hot food takeaways selling unhealthy foods and actively encourage those that sold healthier options. Recognition of the pioneering nature of the Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document has already been recognised at the National Planning Award 2016 a Finalist in the Best Health Scheme Category.

Alcohol Related Hospital Admission and Health Inequalities

Balance (The North East Regional Alcohol Office) recently participated in a piece of research analysing the patterns of inequality for alcohol-specific hospital admissions over the time period, 2006-2015.

This shows that nationally there has been a rise in admission rates for alcohol-specific conditions, and that the rates are much higher in the more deprived areas. However, there is some progress on closing the inequality gap between the most and least deprived areas, with a smaller (23%) increase in the rate in the most deprived wards, compared to the larger (50%) increase in the rate in the least deprived wards. In more deprived wards the rates have now started to fall, whilst they continue to rise in the more affluent wards.

Whilst the North East mirrors the national trend, the figures are positive for Gateshead. Gateshead shows an overall decrease in the rates of alcohol-specific hospital admissions in both the most and least deprived wards. This reduction is greater in the most deprived wards (49.3%), with only a 14.1% reduction in the least deprived wards, therefore reducing the health inequalities gap.

These findings must be held in context. Gateshead currently has the 7th highest rate of alcohol related admissions to hospital in England (2014/15), though these figures show an early indication of a positive downward trend. In 2014/15 there were 494 alcohol-specific admissions, and 2615 alcohol-related (which has a wider definition) admissions per 100,000 people in Gateshead.

Public health will continue to monitor these trends to inform service development. The decline in admission rates may be linked to austerity, with the poorest reducing alcohol consumption because of cost. This highlights the fact that cost affects consumption and supports the introduction of a minimum unit price to reduce harm in the most deprived wards, where the most low-cost, high volume alcohol is consumed and the need to continue to work together to make sure that alcohol related harm does not increase when we return to economic prosperity. Furthermore, Gateshead also shows a marked increase in the rate of female admissions for alcohol-specific conditions, which is an area of concern. The current draft Substance Misuse Strategy will also use these findings to inform the strategy and subsequent action planning.

World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day is a significant date in the health calendar each year as it helps to highlight the importance of mental health in everyday life. Good mental health is important to each and every person

Gateshead celebrated World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2016 when 34 Mental Health related organisations came together to raise awareness of mental health and to provide advice, information and support about dealing with mental health issues, and ways to take positive steps to improve and protect mental wellbeing. A free event at

Gateshead Leisure Centre ran from 10.30am till 2.30pm and was attended by over 100 members of the public.

A wide range of activities were available for attendees to try including zumba, badminton, table tennis, yoga, tai chi, boccia (a precision ball sport, similar to bocce, and related to bowls and pétanque) as well as time and space to relax, and take in acoustic sessions on the main stage in the main hall. There were also relaxation sessions including an introduction to massage and mindfulness and for younger children who could also participate in face painting and soft play.

Mental health can be a focus for all of us every day, however it's important that the mental health community (those engaged in supporting people with Mental Health issues) comes together in events across the world on October 10th. This event in Gateshead celebrates the work being done in local communities and recognises and promotes the support that is available to those who need it.

Responses from some of the members of the public who attended the event in Gateshead included:

"I enjoyed talking to people it makes me feel more confident about my mental health"

"I have enjoyed the whole Event. I have picked up some useful information and feel better in approaching people for help"

"I am very mindful of my situation now and know that I am not alone in the world"

Adult Social Care

Armed Forces Outreach Scheme

A one off opportunity has arisen for Gateshead to work in partnership with Durham and Northumberland County Councils to submit a bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund for 2016-17 to extend our award winning Armed Forces Outreach Service by creating Outreach Worker posts in these local authority areas. The Outreach Service is a crisis prevention service, staffed by ex-service leavers, that supports individuals within the Armed Forces community facing difficulties as a result of their or their family members' service and provides direct assistance, support and signposting to other relevant organisations. The Service is well regarded and has a proven track record of positive joint working across several local authority areas and won a prestigious local government award, the Municipal Journal "Delivering Better Outcomes Award" in 2013.

If the bid is successful it will lead to the Service covering approximately half of the region. It will also provide a range of benefits as it will prevent members of the armed forces community from experiencing issues such as homelessness; the need for urgent medical assistance and referrals to the criminal justice system. It will also enable savings to be made the local authorities and partners. At the end of the period of bid funding, each of the authorities wishing to sustain the Service will need to fund the costs of their individual outreach workers. Applications were submitted on 27 October 2016 and awards will be made between £20,000 and £500,000.

3. PLACE AND ECONOMY

Environment and Transport

SOCITM Website Inspection Result – Pay a Parking Fine

The Society of Information Technology Management, (SOCITM) promotes the effective and efficient use of Information Technology in Local Government and the Public Sector. Since 1999, the annual SOCITM Better Connected website inspection survey has been the definitive benchmark of all local authority websites.

This year they opened up the inspection by publishing all results online one scenario at a time with an individual star rating. The first scenario they reviewed was 'Pay a Parking Fine' and this was recently published on their website.

Gateshead achieved the maximum 4 star rating. We were one of just 12 commended websites for this scenario. The associated observation stated that the Gateshead approach was a "great example of how to keep it simple and faultless navigation".

Trading Standards & Northumbria Police & Operation Halt & Friends Against Scams

The Council's Trading Standards Service have signed an agreement to work in partnership with Northumbria Police in order to protect vulnerable persons, in particular in relation to the tackling of on-line and postal fraud and similar scams.

The aim of Operation Halt is to reduce harm posed by organised crime to the victims within Gateshead and elsewhere. Trading standards and Northumbria police will assist each other to share information with respect to potential victims and gather intelligence on identified frauds and create partnerships to improve knowledge and awareness.

Trading standards staff have been trained by the National Trading Standards Scams Team (NTSST) on the Friends Against Scams initiative. The training was developed to help trading standards deliver key messages to community groups in order to identify people in the community who can help those affected by scams. This training is also being offered to post office sorting staff so that they can identify if a person is receiving a lot of scam mail.

Housing

Assisted Living Scheme

An assisted living scheme for people with autism/learning disabilities and their carers is being developed on three separate sites in Winlaton and Blaydon.

The scheme will be for rent, and will be managed by the Gateshead Housing Company and the Council. The development is designed by Council Housing, Design and Technical Services and the build managed by Construction Services.

Funding for the scheme has been obtained from the Homes and Communities Agency conditional on completion by June 2019.

Economy

Education and Business Partnership

The Council, working with businesses across Gateshead and the region, is helping to facilitate a partnership, whose objectives are to deliver a series of business-led events and interventions aimed at inspiring young people with the range of careers available to them. The partnership, through developing closer relationships with schools, hopes to give young people the opportunity to be engaged with business, have clear direction and be confident in making choices about their future.

4. COMMUNITIES

Communities and Volunteering

Marine Management Volunteers Day

On 4 October, the Council working with local community groups, arranged a volunteer experience for 200 employees of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) who were in the area to attend their annual conference. Employees volunteered to help out with four community projects:

- Springwell – 30 employees supported Cumbric who are located in the former Springwell Community centre. The volunteers helped with the Community Garden, the Sliverline's garden, and also litter picking in the general area and removing some large household items that have been dumped in the area.
- Dodds Dene – 20 employees were assigned to Dodds Dene based at Low Fell. They were supporting the Friends of Low Fell with planters, and planting some bulbs in the local dene.
- Felling Allotment – 50 employees were helping out at Felling Allotments based near the former Brandling Community Centre. They were helping to clear an allotment for the Platform project and generally clearing the local area.
- Friars Goose – 100 employees focussed on the Friars Goose site located behind Gateshead Stadium. Volunteers helped the Countryside Ranger Volunteers to remove a large stretch of fence at the site which will open the place up to the community and enable more wildlife growth.

There are Council officers assigned to each of the projects as well as officers from the MMO.

Culture, Sport and Leisure

Celebrate Lottery Programme

Big Lottery Fund launched the Celebrate England funding programme in July 2016.

The aim of the programme is to enable communities to celebrate through bringing people together to create a sense of community spirit. This could be to celebrate something in around local history, culture or a local community hero, to mark something important to the community such as the Queen's 90th Birthday, or simply to get to know neighbours better.

A total of £3.875m has been made available across England to apply for grants of between £300 and £10,000. The Council has been successful in securing £10,000.

Over the last two years, the Council has worked closely with a range of voluntary and community organisations to help facilitate and develop a co-ordinated approach to support the delivery of 'Fill the Holiday Gap' projects across the Borough. The projects successfully supported children and families, who normally receive free school meals, in some of the most deprived communities across the Borough during the school holidays in 2015 and 2016.

The Gateshead Together at Christmas project will be funded from the Celebrate programme aims to build on this success and widen the offer to the whole community by bringing residents, of all ages, together. The aim is to help alleviate the problems and disadvantage faced by individuals and families who struggle to meet the costs of feeding themselves and their families over the Christmas period and encourage greater social interaction. Volunteers will help to address the feelings of social isolation often experienced by residents and increase community cohesion and future resilience within neighbourhoods.

The funding will enable volunteers from across community organisations in Gateshead to deliver activities in 15 priority neighbourhoods during the Christmas holidays. Each community organisation will develop its own event which will include a Christmas lunch together with a range of activities for their neighbourhood based on the needs they have identified through a consultation carried out in 2015.

Get Active Boccia Tournament – Celebrating Older Persons Person's Day

On 5 October, Gateshead Leisure Centre played host for the second year to the Get Active Boccia tournament to coincide with the celebration of older person's day. The event, delivered by officers in partnership with the Gateshead Housing Company, engaged over 60 residents from ten sheltered accommodation schemes across the Borough. Ten young volunteers from the Council's Inclusive Futures young volunteer scheme provided invaluable support to the older people playing as well as receiving sporting event experience.

Boccia, a game similar to bowls, is ideal for all ages as it can be enjoyed by participants with a range of different physical ability levels.

Fourteen of Gateshead's Sheltered Housing Schemes now run regular weekly sessions within their community lounges as part of a formal Get Active Boccia League. The schemes play matches both home and away on a regular basis which gives the residents the opportunity to travel to different schemes, and widen their social circle as well as continuing to be active.

Fill the Gap – Holiday Hunger Programme

As part of the Live Well programme funded through Public Health, the officers have worked closely with local partner organisations to facilitate the delivery of the "Fill the Holiday Gap" programme for Gateshead in 2016. A range of partner organisations, including Northumbria University, Children and Families Support, Gateshead food-bank and community volunteers worked together to develop a co-ordinated approach.

In-kind support came from a number of businesses in Gateshead:

- Gateshead Food-bank (5Tonnes)
- Tesco
- Domino Pizza
- Co-op
- The Greggs Foundation
- Hilton Hotel
- A number of very local shops

A strategic steering group is to oversee the development of a sustainable Gateshead wide approach to support families during school holidays in particular the summer holidays.

An initial target of two primary schools in each Neighbourhood Management area has been agreed in principle. Work with Schools on these proposed projects with start in October 2016.

Christmas Shoe Box Appeal

In 2015, the Council supported a Christmas Shoe Box Appeal project. The project collected donations from the public and presented these to young adults leaving Gateshead Council care at Christmas.

Officers collated the donations and invited Council volunteers to attend a wrapping event at the Civic Centre. Over 60 shoe boxes were presented to young people.

As the project was so successful, volunteers who helped out last year have asked if the appeal could be repeated this Christmas. The Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering team will once again co-ordinate the project.

eDay5

Over 350 people attended eDay 5 at the Central Library on 1 October to take part in a wide range of drop in sessions and workshops, all showcasing the latest technology.

The event is an excellent example of partnership working. Gateshead Libraries co-ordinates and markets the event and delivery comes from local business, the voluntary sector, and academic partners.

The event was also part of the Digital Makings programme of participatory digital arts activities currently being delivered by the Council.

The ongoing success of eDay and also the monthly coderdojo coding club at the Central Library helps to cement Gateshead's leading position in libraries providing cutting edge digital activities.

Enchanted Parks

The annual evening event, now in its 11th year, sees specially commissioned artists transform Saltwell Park into a magical and mythical wonderland. This year has been extended to include an additional night to meet overwhelming public demand. More than 25,000 people will be visiting Enchanted Parks this year to experience the amazing installations, projections, lighting and sculpture. Tickets for the event sold out within days of being released.

The theme for this year's Enchanted Parks is inspired by the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare death and takes place from 6 - 11 December.

The commissioned artworks are being created by professional national and regional artists as well as a number of student commissions from Sunderland's Glass and Ceramics course.

Enchanted Parks is funded by Arts Council England and the Council. It is developed and commissioned by NewcastleGateshead Initiative in partnership with the Council.

Bonfire Night Update

Various services in the Council worked with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, The Gateshead Housing Company and Northumbria Police in the run up to Bonfire Night. The aim was to co-ordinate a partnership approach for the prevention, detection and removal of illegal bonfires throughout Gateshead, and therefore reduce deliberate anti-social fires.

Saltwell Park staged the annual Firework Spectacular which was promoted and hosted by Metro Radio. Metro Radio secured sponsorship for the event from Intu/ Metrocentre and Eldon Square.

This year's event featured live bands on stage as well as the Metrognomes, a huge bonfire and small fairground rides. The fairground rides and small number of concessions stalls have enabled us to negotiate the return of the bonfire with Metro Radio – this approach ensures that basic overhead costs can be covered to make the event viable. Displays also took place at Blaydon Rugby Club and Barmoor.

5. CONCLUSION

The Council is asked to note this report.