



COUNCIL MEETING

15 December 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 November to December 2016.

PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

2. PLACE AND ECONOMY

Environment and Transport

Land of Oak and Iron

Heritage Centre

Planning permission has been granted for the £1.3million Land of Oak and Iron Heritage Centre which is to be located at Winlaton Mill. The design is in the shape of a water wheel which has been inspired by the world leading 17th Century Iron Works at 'Old' Winlaton Mill which used water wheels to harness the power of the river Derwent.

Construction of the Heritage Centre is subject to external funding but if bids are successful it is expected to be completed in 2018. It features a café and shop specialising in local produce; exhibition space that celebrates the fascinating local history and small business incubation units. The Centre will directly create at least five new jobs and will generate £1million of additional revenue in the local economy. Extra on-site parking will be provided by doubling the capacity of the existing car park.

Access Improvements

Work has recently taken place at Greenside to resurface a section of Greenside Waggonway to the rear of Burnhills Gardens. Resurfacing works are also underway along the route of the former Garesfield to Chopwell railway between Ramsey Road in Chopwell and Milkwellburn Wood.

Fish Pass

Another project is the building of a rock pool fish pass on the river Derwent at Lintzford Weir to allow sea trout and salmon to freely move up the river to spawn. Local stone is being used to preserve the character and heritage of this 300 year old structure which was built to provide water power to Lintzford Corn Mill.

Community Grants

Grants of between £500 and £2,000 are available to community groups and organisations for projects and initiatives that conserve, enhance and celebrate the heritage of the Land of Oak and Iron area. The next bidding round deadline is 16 December with details available on the County Durham Community Foundation website.

Road Safety on Fellside Road

Following the tragic road traffic accident that occurred earlier this year, a meeting was held to review road safety on Fellside Road. Attendees at the meeting included six local ward councillors and representation from Northumbria Police, Durham County Council and the MPs office. It was agreed at the meeting that Council officers would investigate a speed limit reduction from 50mph to 40mph along this road and that Northumbria Police would develop a strategy to undertake more enforcement and to offer a greater visible presence in the area.

Felling Bypass

The works on the Felling bypass were necessary as two of the signalised junctions were found to be obsolete and at risk of failure. It was originally envisaged that the work could take up to six weeks; however, due to efficient ways of working we were able to practically complete the work in two weeks. The remainder of the work will be completed at nights and/or weekends and will have minimal disruption to the travelling public.

District Energy Scheme

The Town Centre District energy scheme is nearing completion. Over recent weeks, part of the private wire network has been energised, electricity is now being supplied to the Sage and Baltic, and Gateshead College and the Civic Centre will be connected to the private wire by early in the New Year. As of 2 December, the Energy Centre has a live gas supply, and heating plant is being commissioned, with the heat network, which is 95% complete, aiming to start being commissioned in the New Year.

The final heat network works have been underway on Gateshead High Street since mid-August. The majority of heat pipes have now been laid, and the southern end of the High St is being re-opened to two-way traffic again. Completion of this section has been delayed due to the discovery of a sewer and a water main in two areas of Gateshead High Street which were not located as recorded on the utility plans, and are obstructing the pipe route. Working with Northumbrian Water, one water main has been diverted at the junction of Hopper Place and High Street, and the heating pipes should be completed by the end of January 2017, allowing Jackson Street to be fully opened again, and normal bus access to resume.

At the southern end (junction of High St and Ann Street), the Council is awaiting Northumbrian Water to carry out a diversion, which is planned to begin on 16 January 2017 and will take 5 weeks. After these works have been completed, it is anticipated that the District Energy Scheme apparatus can then be installed afterwards with works finishing by the end of March 2017. Until completion, works will be done under a short lane closure of High Street northbound carriageway with temporary traffic management in place.

Housing

Keelman Homes Empty Homes Purchase and Repair

In October 2016, Keelman Homes secured additional grant to boost the current programme to purchase and repair empty homes. In April 2015, with the support of the Council, Keelman Homes was successful in a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for Empty Homes Grant 2015-18. Grant was awarded totalling £360,000 to purchase and repair 18 homes. This year with further support from the

Council a successful bid to the HCA has been made. This has generated an additional £400,000 of grant funding and increased the target to purchase and repair up to 40 empty homes by March 2018. Work on the scheme is progressing and to date, 14 properties have been successfully identified, surveyed, purchased, refurbished and let to applicants who were on the Housing Register.

Economy

Business Investment Activity 2016/17

The Council has continued to promote economic development by supporting indigenous growth in key business sectors and delivering a high quality response to new inward investors. Between 1 April and 30 September 2016, the Council has worked with over 165 businesses to support their investment plans, delivering a number of successful investment projects; resulting 860 new jobs being created and a further 85 jobs safeguarded.

These employment opportunities have been made available to Gateshead residents through the employment support programmes operated by the council and its partners.

The Council has worked with the North East Combined Authority's Inward Investment Team, the Department for International Trade's (DIT) Investment Services and other partners to support inward investment activities; resulting in a further 226 new jobs being created in Gateshead.

Converge

Converge seeks to provide good quality educational opportunities for people with mental health problems, encouraging personal development. It will challenge the dynamics of social exclusion that makes it difficult for people who use mental health services to access good quality educational and employment opportunities.

The North East pilot hosted by Northumbria University was successfully launched on the 26 October and will engage the first tranche of up to 20 students in a course starting in February 2017. The students will be 'buddied' and the sessions facilitated by graduate students from the school of performing arts at Northumbria University.

Follingsby Enterprise Zone

The Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and Government securing Enterprise Zone status for sites at Follingsby in East Gateshead. Enterprise Zone status will provide access to funding to deliver essential economic infrastructure to enable private sector investment and development supporting growth in the distribution, logistics and manufacturing sectors. It is anticipated that when developed the site will support in excess of 1,500 jobs.

Funding Secured for Delivery of Employment Support Services

This report outlines the recent work of the officers in identifying and securing funding to commission Employment Support Services to benefit Gateshead residents. Recent awards total some £556,000 with further monies expected and this will be utilised by the Council to provide advice and support for over 700 residents with 265 of these being supported into employment.

3. COMMUNITIES

Communities and Volunteering

Community Safety Update

A multi-agency development session was held in November 2016 to discuss the changing landscape of Community Safety and agree the future strategic priorities and operating structures of the Community Safety Board.

The Council has supported a number of regional bids to fund work linked with the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda.

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) has taken place in respect of Adult D (following a murder in October 2016). The Review assesses the victim's and perpetrator's involvement with agencies and Council services to mitigate the potential for future domestic homicides.

Consultation on Gateshead's three proposed Public Space Protection Orders has been completed - and early indications suggest that the public is widely in favour of their introduction.

Crime figures (to September 2016) show a 53% increase in recorded crime in Gateshead (compared to the previous year) with increases in most major crime categories. Despite these increases, perceptions of crime and feelings of safety remain positive.

There are various multi-agency plans in place to address youth-related disorder in hotspot locations within the Borough.

A time-limited Task and Finish Group has been established to look at the most complex and chaotic offenders in Gateshead and consider potential support and enforcement actions to help minimise offending behaviour.

Operation Bond has been implemented to coincide with the darker nights and delivers crime prevention advice to vulnerable individuals and older people (through direct engagement, media campaigns and community messaging).

Culture, Sport and Leisure

Fireworks

On 5 November, Saltwell Park staged the annual Firework Spectacular now promoted and hosted by Metro Radio. Metro Radio secured sponsorship for the event from Intu/Metro Centre and Eldon Square. The event featured live bands, the Metrognomes, a bonfire and small fairground rides and was attended by 24,600 people. A display organised by the community was also held at Barmoor.

Garden of Reflection

The Garden of Reflection was established in Saltwell Park on the site of the former Sensory garden, at the request of family members who have lost service personnel. The Garden opened in 2015 by the Mayor of Gateshead and is sited near to the British Legion's Field of Remembrance.

Part of this partnership project was to also commission a local artist to make an artwork. This has taken the form of a cast glass poppy set within a Stone and mounted on a plinth. The glass was cast in Sunderland and the design concept is that of Regional artist Cate Blatherwick. This is her first public art commission. The artwork was successfully installed on 10 November.

Enchanted Parks Update

Tickets for NewcastleGateshead Initiative and Gateshead Council's popular after-dark arts adventure, Enchanted Parks went on sale on 4 October and sold out within a few days.

The annual evening event, now in its 11th year, sees specially commissioned artists transform Gateshead's Saltwell Park into a magical and mythical wonderland. This year was extended to include an additional night to meet overwhelming public demand. More than 25,000 people visited Enchanted Parks this year to experience the amazing installations, projections, lighting and sculpture.

The theme for this year's Enchanted Parks is inspired by the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death.

Swimming Pools – Impact of Closures

Public Health England (PHE) informed Gateshead Council of 4 cases of Cryptosporidium in Gateshead on 18 October.

It was suspected that they were linked to swimming pools in Gateshead and following confirmation that the pools were contaminated, Blaydon and Dunston pools were closed on 21 October.

The pools reopened on 1 November after a thorough deep clean as advised by PHE which included removing one third of the water and replacing the filtration systems.

The pools were not the source of Cryptosporidium, but they had been contaminated by a service user.

The cost of this (pool clean up and lost income) is £30,000. PHE and Gateshead Council Environmental Health Team will produce a report shortly with their conclusions of the incident.

Heritage at Risk

Historic England launched the 2016 Heritage at Risk register in October. There are 300 sites (listed buildings, scheduled monuments, churches, conservation areas etc.) included on the North East register, which is two fewer than in 2015. In Gateshead there are 6 buildings and structures, 1 place of worship, 2 archaeological sites and 1 conservation area include don the register. Gateshead also shares a joint entry with Sunderland, and one with Newcastle. The entries include Winlaton Mill Ironworks (Crowley Dam), Dunston Staiths, Ravensworth Castle, Gibside Hall, Whinfield Coking Ovens, Bowes Railway and Newburn Ford Battlefield.

As Local Planning Authority, the Council is responsible for dealing with any applications for planning permission or listed building consent which may affect any of these entries. Historic England is responsible for determining applications for scheduled monument consent. Where heritage assets have dual designations, scheduling takes precedent

over listing. Similarly, the Council retains statutory enforcement powers for listed buildings but cannot use these on those assets which are also scheduled. Historic England has limited powers to enforce works to repair scheduled ancient monuments. The Council is working with Historic England and the respective owners to address the 'at risk' issues affecting these heritage assets and is pleased to note that positive steps are being taken in respect of all entries on the at risk register.

Further information is available at <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2016-registers/ne-har-register2016.pdf/>

4. CONCLUSION

The Council is asked to note this report.