



# COUNCIL MEETING

16 July 2009

## GATESHEAD COUNCIL

### REPORT FROM THE CABINET

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This is the report of the Cabinet. Its purpose is to report on issues for the period June and July 2009.

#### PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

#### 2. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES – AREAS

##### **Carr Hill Park Improvements**

The results from the public consultation exercise to help shape the improvements to the Carr Hill Park have now been received and analysed. To add to the views from young people, 145 survey responses from households within the Park's catchment were received, expressing support for four key components:

- lowering the mound to reduce anti-social activities taking place when hidden from view;
- improving the drainage to the kickabout area;
- introducing a new toddler play area; and
- improving junior play provision

An outline design scheme is now being drafted and, once the necessary permissions have been obtained, work on site is anticipated to commence in November 2009.

##### **Community participation in the Teams area**

A bid has been submitted to the Regional Efficiency and Improvement Partnership for the development of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership. The bid is being led by the Criminal Justice Board with the Council as a partner and demonstration site. The project will focus on widening community participation in the Teams.

#### 3. ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

##### **The Health Bill**

Tobacco is a legal product, but for many years it has been known that use of tobacco leads to the premature death of half of its long term users. Illnesses caused by smoking are the major contributor to poor health in Gateshead. Smoking rates in Gateshead are amongst the top 25 in England and, annually, almost 500 Gateshead residents die prematurely from illnesses directly related to smoking.

Smoking rates are falling, but alarming numbers of children are continuing to take up the habit. In the last major school survey in 2007, it was discovered that 14% of boys were smoking regularly by year 10 (aged 15-16), but for girls this figure was 30%. If this habit continues into adulthood, around 50% of these children can expect their life to be ended prematurely by a smoking-related disease.

There are many factors influencing whether children will take up smoking. One of the most influential is their perception of smoking. Cigarette packaging, and displays in shops, help to create the impression that smoking is a normal activity that is promoted alongside day to day products such as confectionery.

Cigarette vending machines also provide an unfortunately convenient way for minors to access the purchase of cigarettes, and can act as a source of tobacco for children unable to get it by other means. In a recent test purchasing exercise in Gateshead, a 15 year old child was able to buy cigarettes from every functioning machine they tried without intervention from on site staff. There are provisions in the Health Bill currently going through Parliament that would help to tackle the very high numbers of children influenced into taking up smoking in Gateshead.

If children in Gateshead were protected from the influence of tobacco packaging, displays, and from illicit purchases from vending machines, it is felt that they would be far less likely to start smoking. Adult smokers will still be able to purchase their tobacco products unhindered, as having the products out of sight at the point of retail will not impact upon the still legitimate adult trade.

Taken in conjunction with existing efforts to eliminate underage sales, and to control the supply of illicit tobacco, the measures in the Bill could lead to a far better life expectancy across all Gateshead's population and prevent children from ever becoming addicted.

### **Personalisation – “Choice and Control Starts Here”**

Over 100 people from voluntary organisations, the Council, provider organisations, users and carers, attended a recent event aimed to assist the Council with its development of Personalisation in Gateshead - “Choice and Control Starts Here”. Building on existing knowledge and experience the Council is developing a Programme Plan for 2009-10 which identifies four key projects for the year which are:

#### **1. Supported Self Assessment and the Resource Allocation System**

This project will create an assessment tool for worker-led and self-supported assessment

#### **2. Developing the To Be Processes**

A workforce development programme will be undertaken to deliver to a model for self-directed support, focussing on support planning and service brokerage.

#### **3. Joint Commissioning Project**

This project will map and analyse the current market and contribute to a market stimulation strategy.

#### **4. Users and Carers as Care Partners.**

This will focus on the values which underpin 'Putting People First' and will develop '*mainstream mechanisms to develop networks which ensure people using services and their families have a collective voice, influencing policy and provision*'.

#### **Safely on Board**

Older people are "climbing on board" to raise awareness about falls on buses. Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly held an event in June involving bus operators Stagecoach, where people learnt what they can do to reduce the risk of falls.

#### **Gateshead Home Carer Wins award for her work in domiciliary care**

Margaret Hughes, a Senior Domiciliary Care worker, won the North East Carer of the Year award at the Ceretas National Home Care Awards held in June 2009. Margaret, who has been with the Council's Domiciliary Care Services for nearly 20 years, was nominated for her dedication to her role, her forward thinking ways and her commitment to the public.

Ceretas was formally known as the British Association of Domiciliary Care (BADCO) and is a professional association dedicated to individuals working in Homecare.

#### **Focusing on quality services for people with dementia**

The Council and Mental Health Concern have, for the past two years, engaged in a joint project within their residential dementia services. Using 'Dementia Care Mapping', trained employees have measured the quality of care given to people in residential services.

Dementia Care Mapping is an observational tool that, in monitoring the social environment that surrounds the person, helps to evaluate how people with dementia are being cared for. The method draws on a value base of respecting 'personhood' and the assumption that people with dementia can have a sense of well-being and a good quality of life in care environments. The method uses quantitative measurements, which can help staff gain 'concrete' evidence that they are improving and maintaining their person centred practice.

This challenging project has helped both organisations to develop person-centred care and, in particular, increase the level of meaningful activities and opportunities residents have for social contact. The project will continue throughout 2009 and will be focussing on how services help people to:

- promote their independence
- develop a sense of meaning and purpose
- maintain positive relationships
- preserve hope and optimism
- maintain stability
- be an active citizen.

## **4. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Secondary Review in the West**

Consultation events have taken place across the West of the Borough, in primary and secondary schools across the Hookergate and Ryton Comprehensive catchment areas, and their communities, as part of a first, informal consultation period about secondary schools in the West having the necessary investment in buildings and resources to deliver education fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Cabinet members for Children and Young People, and the Cabinet member for Sustainable Communities – West, have taken a lead and/or chairing role, listening, and speaking to those attending. Many ward councillors have also attended. The meetings have been well attended in all cases.

The views and responses from the consultation, which is due to close on 24 July, will be studied over the summer recess and advice on a preferred option will be given to Cabinet in September 2009. The formal, statutory consultation period then begins on what that option means and how the Council will pursue the next stages.

The Council is bidding for over £100 million, to either rebuild or substantially remodel and refurbish not only the secondary schools in the West of the Borough, but also Whickham, St Thomas More and Joseph Swan schools.

## **5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING AND TRANSPORT**

### **Gateshead Warm Zone offers residents free cavity wall insulation**

The Council is working in partnership with Gateshead Warm Zone to improve the energy efficiency of homes, tackle fuel poverty and provide residents with benefits advice. Due to additional funding being attracted, Warm Zone is now offering free cavity wall insulation to Gateshead residents until all the funding has been used.

## **6. SAFER, STRONGER COMMUNITIES AND CULTURE**

### **Big Lottery Fund – Central Library Update**

The first phase of improvement work at the Central Library, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, started in January. This work has seen the creation of a gently sloping and inclusive access to the original historic front entrance.

The Big Lottery Fund has now fully approved the 'Tender Report' which agreed that the Council can appoint the main constructor for the work - Lumsden and Carroll - and they moved on site on 1 June 2009. The construction and fit-out work will take approximately one year.

The library will be remaining open during the construction work. There will obviously be some service disruption and some services will be relocated to Gateshead Old Town Hall, which will be appropriately advertised. Any full closures of the building will be kept to a minimum.

The tender process resulted in very competitive prices from construction companies and a substantial project underspend. The Council has successfully negotiated with Big Lottery Fund who agreed that this funding can still be used for

other improvements. Additional Community Engagement Workers will be appointed for the first year of opening and a range of additional capital items will be resourced. Most significantly, the funding will allow a community garden to be created at the rear of the library and fund the creation of a piece of public art, potentially to be located at the front of the Library. The community led Project Management Board were consulted on their ideas for how the spare funding should be spent and they supported the ideas described.

Working with the Health Improvement Team, a Health Impact Assessment of the project is to be carried out. This will help demonstrate the health and well being benefits of the investment in the library facilities. The Library Service is in the process of establishing a Friends of Central Library Group. So far, 30 library users have signed up. It is anticipated this group will be involved in the reopening of the historic entrance later in the summer.

### **South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Project**

A consensus evaluation meeting was held on 11 June 2009 to reduce the number of bidders from eight to three. The Partnership Joint Executive Committee met on 12 June 2009 and the public announcements of the remaining three bidders were made on Thursday, 25 June 2009. The three bidders are MVV Umwelt GmbH; SITA UK Ltd and United Utilities Plc.

### **Building an Active Future**

Local Environmental Services has won the soft landscaping contract for the five 'Building an Active Future' schemes with Willmott Dixon. The work is valued at approximately £100,000. This will be the first contract to go through the Local Authority Trading Company.

### **Low Carbon and Electric Vans**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has indicated an announcement will be made, later this year, of the four companies who will begin supplying low carbon and all-electric vans to selected public sector organisations. This is part of a £20m DfT scheme to use public sector procurement, to help demonstrate potential of new technologies for decarbonising road transport. Six local authorities, including Gateshead and Newcastle will use the vans. Initial vehicle trials will last three years.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The Council is asked to note this report.