

NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2012

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY ACTION IN SUNDERLAND NORTH – PROGRESS REVIEW Workplan 2011/2012 – HERITAGE

1.0 WHY HAS IT COME TO COMMITTEE?

1.1 The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current years (2011/2012) workplan, **ANNEX 1**.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Heritage was agreed as one of the North Area Committee main priorities as part of setting its annual work plan in July 2010. In view of this a task and finish group was established consisting of Members, Officers and Members of the Voluntary and Community Sector to develop a Heritage Priorities Work Plan, which was completed and agreed by Committee in June 2011.

2.2 The task and finish group identified that in order to deliver against the Heritage Priorities Work Plan a Community Heritage Development Officer (CHDO) should be employed in order to take forward the priorities and deliver the necessary outcomes.

2.3 To maximise resources and achieve value for money it was agreed that the CHDO would be appointed via the City Council's SWITCH project with a full time post being created to work between the North and Coalfield areas of the City. As part of the actual appointment process undertaken it was later agreed that two full time officers be appointed to work across both areas. Due to utilising SWITCH there was no additional cost to the project budget.

2.4 The funding of the current posts is being supported jointly through SIB (£10,000 allocation), and the City Council's SWITCH project. The CHDOs will as part of their role continue to look for external funding opportunities to support the future sustainability of the post following completion of the project in November 2012. Following on from this further discussions with the Area Committee will continue to assess the success of the project and the future direction of heritage as a priority for the Committee.

3.0 COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

3.1 The two full-time Community Heritage Development Officers (CHDOs) will be in post until October 2012. The officers (Ian Bower and Phil Connolly) will provide the staffing resources required to enable a range of the projects identified in the Heritage Priorities Work Plan to be investigated and delivered.

3.2 During the first weeks of the project, officers have initiated research to establish what heritage projects, groups and/or activities already exist

in the North Area. A number of meetings have also taken place with colleagues across the City Council including a range of potential partners from community based heritage groups. The details of these meetings are outlined in Appendix One of this report.

- 3.3 Given the project will be for a period of one year, it will be necessary to focus work on an identified number of priorities. The CHDOs will work with the Area Committee and the North Area Heritage Task and Finish Group and other partners to establish what can be progressed and developed over the project period. The outcomes will be measurable and sustainable and will be aligned to achieving corporate outcomes including wellness, social inclusion and promoting opportunities for volunteering.

4.0 HERITAGE PRIORITIES WORKPLAN

- 4.1 Attached at **Annex 4** is a summary of work plan priorities agreed by the Task and Finish Group and Area Committee with progress to date.

5.0 SUMMARY OF OTHER WORK UNDERTAKEN

- 5.1 Below is a summary of recent work undertaken by the Community Heritage Development Officers since commencing their role:

- Commenced audit of Heritage walks in the North Area
- Commenced production of Heritage Gazetteer for North Area
- Created list of Heritage sites and community based organisations to visit in the North Area during early part of 2012
- Reviewed North Area Action Plan to identify potential partners, resources needed and operational and strategic issues involved in achieving the required outcomes
- Arranged meeting for January 2012 with the Council's Community ICT Team to consider the potential development of a community website. This will provide information and resources to support the development of heritage projects and also the activities of community heritage groups based in the North Area.

6.0 HYLTON CASTLE UPDATE

- 6.1 Members will be aware that the Friends of Hylton Castle and Dene have been working for a number of years in order to develop the Hylton Castle site and bring the Castle and Chapel back into use. The main aspiration has been to carry out a refurbishment of the Castle and Chapel to establish a community based facility offering education and social facilities as well as promoting the site as one of the city's heritage attractions.

- 6.2 At the request of the Friends Group a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid was prepared by the North of England Civic Trust in consultation with a number of partners and submitted by the City Council on behalf of the group to HLF in April 2011. The bid to carry out a two stage restoration of the Castle and Chapel was submitted, with estimated costs of approximately £3 million put forward for the Stage 2 works.

- 6.3 The bid was presented to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Board of Trustees on 19 July 2011 but was unsuccessful.
- 6.4 Following the news of the rejection a meeting with the Friends of Hylton Castle chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Safer City and Culture has taken place. A decision has now been taken by the group that a bid resubmission will be developed by officers in City Services working alongside the Friends Group.
- 6.5 The Portfolio Holder informed the Friends Group that the Hylton Castle Restoration bid to HLF will remain a priority for the City Council and adequate time and resource will be provided to ensure a quality bid resubmission is developed.
- 6.6 The resubmission will primarily focus around the following elements:
- Restoration and Safeguarding of the Castle and Chapel
 - Enhancing the Learning, Conservation and Participation offer
 - Strengthening options for working with the community through local schools, universities, Voluntary and Community Sector and local businesses
 - Strengthening the long term sustainability of the site
 - Options for skills, employment and training
- 6.7 The timeline and methodology for a resubmission is currently being addressed by City Services who are working closely with the Friends of Hylton Castle and English Heritage to agree the full content of the resubmission.
- 6.8 Members will be provided with regular updates throughout the resubmission process.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Area Committee is recommended to:

- i) Note the contents of the report.
- ii) Receive further update reports regarding Heritage in North Sunderland in the future.

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