

At an Extraordinary Meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at EASINGTON LANE COMMUNITY ACCESS POINT, THE BRICKGARTH, EASINGTON LANE on WEDNESDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY, 2010 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor J. Scott in the Chair

Councillors Anderson, Ellis, A. Hall, Heron, D. Richardson, Rolph, D. Smith and Speding.

Also in Attendance:-

Graham Carr	-	Highway Maintenance, Sunderland Council
Susan Brown	-	Community Development, Sunderland Council
Victoria French	-	Community Services, Sunderland Council
Julie Heathcote	-	Corporate Communications, Sunderland Council
Lynden Langman	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Jill Laverick	-	Corporate Communications, Sunderland Council
Pam Lee	-	Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
Liz St. Louis	-	Head of Customer Services and Development, Sunderland Council
Vivienne Metcalf	-	Community Development, Sunderland Council
Pauline Hopper	-	Area Officer, Sunderland Council
Helen Paterson	-	Director of Children's Services, Area Lead Executive
Dave Richardson	-	City Services

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Blackburn, Tate and Wakefield.

Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all those present to introduce themselves.

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4th November, 2009

- i) Councillor Speding requested further information on the number of children in the Coalfields area who crossed the boundary to attend schools outside of Sunderland Authority.
 - ii) Councillor D. Smith asked for further clarification as to whether the current 3G system could accommodate a capacity of for example 40 cameras even if only 20 could be in use at any given time.
1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4th November, 2009 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 7 – Financial Statements and Funding Requests

Councillor Rolph declared a personal interest in the item in relation to the Community Chest proposals as a Council appointed member of Houghton Feast Steering Committee.

Questions to Area Committee

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the Questions to Area Committees received to date and sought the Committee's agreement to extend the pilot for a review to be undertaken and reports to the March meeting.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Emma Hindmarsh, Democratic Services Officer, presented the report to the Committee, advising that to date the following questions had been received for each of the area committees as follows:-

-	Coalfield Area	-	0
-	East Area	-	3
-	North Area	-	0
-	Washington Area	-	7
-	West Area	-	1

In view of the relatively low number of questions received and the fact that this Committee was one of two not to have received any questions it was proposed to extend the pilot and undertake a review, with a report to be submitted to the March meeting for Members consideration.

The Chairman having thanked the Officer for her report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that a review of the pilot to Questions to Area Committees be submitted to the March meeting of the Area Committee for Members' consideration.

Coalfield A Healthy Area

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which asked Members to consider and identify their main proposals for further development and action in relation to their Healthy priority theme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Officer reminded Members that the Committee had agreed its work programme for the year at its meeting held in June and that the Health priority was the fourth to come to the Committee for discussion and consideration. The report detailed five priority issues (below) and Members were provided with an update with regard to current activity and actions taken for each:-

- i) Provide more information on mobile health provision e.g. Sunderland Active Bus, to ensure that all areas of the Coalfield have access to services;
- ii) Gather more information regarding healthy lifestyle activities commissioned by the Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust.
- iii) Nexus to ensure full consultation with the Committee and local residents on the Secured Services Network.
- iv) Request information from planners regarding bus accessibility at the new Primary Care Centre at Houghton.
- v) Refresh priorities in light of the health profile for the area.

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Pam Lee, Public Health Specialist, Sunderland TPCT and invited her to present the report.

Members agreed to conduct a debate in relation to specific health indicators in the Coalfields area.

Councillor Ellis stated that an essential health consideration would be the water pollution caused by substances leaking from the landfill site at Houghton.

The Chairman advised that he had not seen sight of any evidence relating to Councillor Ellis's assertion and therefore the Committee would not discuss the issue any further.

Councillor J. Heron, Hetton Town Council advised that trained volunteers were working on the Racecourse Estate to provide smoking cessation guidance.

Ms. Lee advised that 25% of the population that were diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease continued to smoke. It was important to target young people who were continually being recruited into smoking.

Councillor Rolph referred to the table of key measures in relation to health on a ward by ward basis and commented that it was important to acknowledge that the statistics were not uniform within the given categories. They could serve as a means of determining whether something was happening in one ward but not necessarily in others.

Councillor Rolph commented that hospital admissions due to alcohol related issues may be treated in Durham hospitals rather than those in Sunderland and she questioned whether this would be reflected in the table.

In relation to hospital admission data, Ms. Lee advised that data was collected on a commissioner basis which was based on Sunderland residents, therefore any patients treated in the Durham area would be captured in the statistics. A very thorough data collection system was in place.

Ms. Lee advised that it was important to drill down to neighbourhoods within wards and target resources to look at inequalities. It was also important to acknowledge that health equity was not about spending money equally but rather targeting where need was most acute. She advised that a number of indicators were missing from the table such as teenage pregnancy.

Councillor Speding queried how Councillors could help to reduce the increase in underage drinking. He suggested that the table masked some of the problems in the area when highlighted with a green indicator. Just because an issue was flagged as being better than the city average, there would still be pockets in wards where the issue was a serious one.

Ms. Lee advised that hospital admissions due to alcohol related harm was a typical problem where people's consumption behaviour needed to be changed. The obesity issue had been on the health radar for 20-30 years, however public messages around alcohol had just come to light.

Members requested that the key messages table reflect the distinction between male and female.

Councillor A. Hall concurred that it was extremely important to put money into neighbourhoods and that industrial heritage health related issues affected women as well as men.

Ms. Pam Lee advised that smoking in women was likely to become a significant issue as smoking was more prevalent among young girls. Accordingly smoking during pregnancy was also an issue in Sunderland.

Councillor D. Smith queried whether an analytical exercise had been carried out to compare the percentage of people smoking with the number who had stopped through the 'Quit' system.

Ms. Lee advised that health equity in relation to access to services was consistently monitored.

Councillor F. Anderson stated that a significant number of residents on the Durham/Sunderland border cross the border into Durham to access their nearest GP surgery and she queried how this affected the delivery of services.

Ms. French, Wellness Manager, City Services advised that specific services to Sunderland residents did exist within given parameters, however there were very close working relationships with colleagues across the border.

Councillor R. Heron requested that the extra care scheme at Houghton be included in the refresh.

Referring to the wellness centres, Councillor Heron queried whether it was possible for any one to book a session at a wellness centre or if they had to be referred by a GP.

Ms. French advised that a member of the public could use the facilities alongside people who attended through the exercise referral route. She stated that physiotherapy services would be available at the centre to save people from having to travel to City Hospitals.

Ms. Hopper agreed to provide the Committee with information on GP surgeries in Coalfield that offered extended opening hours.

Councillor Rolph advised that more information was needed in relation to older people's needs and aspirations.

Councillor Rolph advised that the TPCT had proposed to commission a 'new' GP practice in the Coalfields area, however no interest had been shown by any company to deliver the service. Councillor Rolph had heard nothing more and queried what was happening in relation to the provision.

Ms. Lee and Ms. Hopper agreed to find out more information.

Referring to the wellness service's citywide walking programme, Councillor Rolph questioned why only two parks out of a possible ten were being used in the Coalfields area.

Ms. French advised that two parks in each of the City's given areas had been chosen as a starting point and the identified parks had been selected as those that were appropriate to mark a 1, 2 or 3 mile route. Ms. French agreed to take on board Councillor Rolph's comments that the Coalfields was a large geographical area consisting of a number of parks.

Councillor Rolph advised that the statement in the report that NHS Patient Transport Services were arranged depending on patient needs was contrary to her understanding which was that people had to fit around transport availability.

Ms. Hopper agreed to ascertain how the service was managed.

In response to a question from Councillor D. Richardson, Ms. French advised that gyms in the Coalfields did charge more to people using the facility from outside the area.

Councillor Speding advised the development of extra care housing was an important service for older people and a balance needed to be sought between residential and nursing home accommodation and supporting people in their own home which would aid quality of life and promote health and active living.

Councillor Speding also requested that the refreshed priorities takes into consideration financial inclusion and welfare rights issues as this could have a significant impact on health outcomes.

In response to a comment from Councillor Speding regarding the request for further information from Nexus regarding bus services, Dr. Helen Paterson advised that a Nexus representative would be attending the next meeting.

The Chairman having thanked the officers for the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report and actions within it be received and noted.

Thematic Feedback Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with feedback from the established working groups for each of the five thematic priorities the Area Committee had agreed and considered as set out in the work plan for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In July, September and November 2009 the Area Committee had agreed a number of actions and proposals relating to the Attractive and Inclusive, Safe and Learning priorities, respectively, which had both been formulated into action plans for Members to monitor.

Ms. Hopper took Members through the report highlighting any progress against the actions and identifying proposals which had come from them for Members' consideration.

She requested that Members respond to her two weeks prior to the next Committee meeting with potential areas for the Youth Offending Team to carry out clean up operations.

Councillor Rolph advised that the details regarding the Youth Development Group were out of date.

Ms. Hopper agreed to ascertain where the forestry commission had replanted the trees in Russell Foster Woods.

Ms. Hopper agreed to amend the action in relation to legislation and Council policy and powers in relation to private landlords so that the statistics are provided at ward level.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Hopper for her report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report and action plans be agreed.

Financial Statements and Funding Requests

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with the current expenditure from the SIB, SIP and Community Chest and applications for funding from these budgets in order to support new initiatives.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper presented the report, advising Members that there were ten proposals for support from the 2009/2010 Community Chest budget – the proposal for Hetton Park Bowls Club and Youth Musical Spectacular having been agreed under the emergency arrangements. There were seven proposals for consideration from the 2009/2010 SIB budget and two proposals for support from the 2009/2010 SIP budget. Members were also advised of the financial statement for 2009/2010.

Ms. Hopper took the Committee through each of the applications for SIB and SIP funding, the Community Chest proposals and the financial statement.

Discussion ensued in relation to the application recommended for rejection regarding the Seafront Strategy.

Councillor Anderson expressed surprise that the application had been recommended for rejection given that the seafront was a facility for the whole city to which everyone had access. The SIB contribution requested was relatively small but would help to enhance an area that would benefit the whole City.

Councillors Hall and Heron also expressed surprise. Councillor Heron referred to the Committee's previous discussion on the healthy theme and advised that the seafront facility was an excellent location for walking and health promotion.

Councillor Rolph agreed with the recommendation to reject the application. She stated that the seafront had already secured a large injection of money and the proposed contribution would therefore have a much greater impact if it was spent on an initiative in the Coalfields. Every area of the City had a locality of citywide importance (for example Herrington Country Park).

It was then moved by Councillor Heron and duly seconded to agree the application contrary to the recommendation as set out in the report.

With 3 Members voting in favour and 5 against, the motion was defeated.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the 10 projects recommended for support from the 2009/2010 Community Chest budget with a total value of £5,860 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report;
- (ii) the application relating to the River Wear Trail be deferred;
- (iii) the application relating to Community Leaders of the future be deferred;
- (iv) the application relating to Kool Kids be rejected;
- (v) the application relating to the Sea Front Improvements be rejected;
- (vi) approval be given to the Street Scene Improvements recommended for support, subject to the condition as set out in the report, from the 2009/2010 SIB budget with a contribution of £44,134;
- (vii) approval be given to the Miners Memorial Window recommended for support, subject to the condition as set out in the report, from the 2009/2010 SIB budget with a contribution of £5,000;
- (viii) approval be given to The Keper Hall recommended for support, subject to the condition as set out in the report, from the 2009/2010 SIB budget with a contribution of £3,134;
- (ix) approval be given to the Flatts Play Area recommended for support, subject to the condition as set out in the report, from the 2009/2010 SIP budget with a contribution of £12,000;
- (x) approval be given to The Village Street Lighting Project recommended for support from the 2009/2010 SIP budget with a contribution of £3,134.

Area Review Process – Introduction of a Referral Criteria and Process for Dealing with Issues of Local Concern Incorporating a Revised Mechanism for Councillor Call for Action – Initial Proposals

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which outlined the proposed introduction of a referral criteria and process for dealing with an Area Review Process to be used by Area Committees, Scrutiny Committees and the Sunderland Partnership and included amalgamation with the Councillor Call for Action Mechanism.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper presented the report and acknowledged that Members would have already had sight of the report via the last round of Scrutiny Committees, accordingly, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee support the introduction of the referral criteria and process for determining the appropriateness of undertaking an investigation triggered either by the non-mandatory referral/Councillor Call for Action route; and
- (ii) subject to any comments received from the Area Committees, the Scrutiny Committees and the Sunderland Partnership, the revised procedure be referred to Cabinet for approval, implemented and included in the Area Committee Handbook.

Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Networks and Volunteering in Your Area

The Executive Director City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of progress and proposed future development regarding the involvement and representation of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) within the new Area Arrangements.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Susan Brown, Area Community Co-ordinator for Coalfield, presented the report advising Members that the first meeting of the Area VCS Networks had taken place in December, where the draft terms of reference for the membership and nominations process had been discussed. Self nomination forms had been provided to Members and the VCS, with a deadline of 22nd January, 2010 for submissions. Ms. Brown read out the three nominations for the Coalfield Area. She commented that nominated individuals would represent the views of the VCS within their areas and not their own organisational interests.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Brown for her report, and it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the update on the position of the Area VCS Networks and feedback in relation to the area based Volunteer celebrations be noted.

Responsive Local Services

The Executive Director City Services and the Chief Executive submitted a joint (copy circulated) which presented Members with the current Service Standards for the services currently being reviewed as part of the Responsive Local Services (RLS) project and ascertained present service performance for the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Mike Poulter, Head of Project and Service Development presented the report advising that the reporting systems were still in their infancy and as more 'live' information was fed into it more useful data would be produced and fed back to the Committee. Mr. Poulter requested that the Committee consider a particular problematic issue within the Coalfield as the plan was to take one issue forward in each of the areas as a problem to initially focus on.

Referring to service performance September to October 2009, Councillor Anderson stated that the refuse collection statistics were excellent. She also gave praise to the staff involved in keeping the roads clear and gritted during the recent extreme winter conditions.

Councillor Hall referred to the reduction of incidents of dog fouling in Shiney Row ward. However she felt that litter around takeaways was a particular problem, particularly with school children, and needed to be addressed. She queried what kind of enforcement procedures were in place for people caught littering public land.

Mr. Poulter advised that a number of tools could be used to educate and reinforce the message, including the possibility of enforcement action for persistent offenders.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Poulter for his report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted for information; and
- (ii) the issue of litter be the first of the five areas identified for action.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) J. Scott,
Chairman.