

At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held at the BUNNY HILL CENTRE, NORTH HYLTON ROAD, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 4th SEPTEMBER, 2008 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Copeland, Foster, Francis, G. Hall, Howe, Leadbitter, Shattock, Stewart, Symonds, J. Walton, L. Walton, D. Wilson and N. Wright

Apologies for Absence

All Members being present there were no apologies for absence.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Musgrove and Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer to their first meeting of the Committee. He also advised Members that this would be the last meeting of the Democratic Support Officer as she was starting her maternity leave and the Committee wished her well and thanked her for her contributions and support.

Minutes of the last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee (copy circulated) held on 5th June, 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The respective Councillors declared interests in the undermentioned items of business as follows:-

Item 6 – Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report

Councillors Bell and Wilson declared personal interests in the application from the Hylton Castle Business Planning Project as they were friends with some of the interested parties.

Councillor Copeland declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application from the Southwick Youth and Community Association as a Council appointed Members of the board and withdrew from the meeting prior to consideration of the application.

Item 10 – Proposed Programme for Heritage Open Days 2008

Item 11 – Sunderland History Fair

Councillor Hall declared personal interests in the above items as Chairman of Sunderland Voluntary Life Brigade who had participated in some of the events.

Presentation from Northumbria Police on Crime Rates Relating to the North Sunderland Area

Inspector Musgrove presented a statistics document (copy circulated) illustrating crime, detection and arrest management information for the North Sunderland Area, for the five week period 23 June, 2008 to 27 July, 2008 comparing them to figures from the same time period the previous year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Musgrove reported that the information she had provided was for the Sunderland North area as a whole and advised that there had been an overall reduction in crime of 21.3%, which translated to 110 less offences. With regards to arrests, she advised that there had been a reduction of 1.6%, 6 arrests and incidents had reduced by 2.3%, approximately 55 incidents.

The Committee were updated on other crime rates as follows:-

Criminal Damage	18.4% reduction	26 less incidents
Violent Crime	8.5% reduction	9 less incidents
Violence against a person	7.6% reduction	5 less incidents
Robbery	50% reduction	2 less incidents
Vehicle Crime	42.9% reduction	30 less incidents
Burglary Dwelling	26.9% reduction	7 less incidents
Drug Offences	50% reduction	9 less incidents

Councillor Hall commented that previously the Committee had received the crime figures on a ward by ward basis and was advised by the Inspector that the figures were now presented on an area basis but that this had been raised with Area Command who had advised that a new format would be coming forward to the Area Committees sometime in the future.

Councillors Copeland and Wright brought to the attention of the Inspector, issues regarding areas of the Southwick ward and police presence. The Inspector explained that as she had only been appointed the post in August she had invited all ward Councillors within her area to meet with herself on an

individual basis, so that she could explain the process and plans for the area in the future. This would also give Members the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have or identify any priority issues.

Councillors Charlton and Wilson advised that they had both attended one to one meetings with the Inspector and found them to be valuable in sharing information between themselves. They recommended that any Councillors who had not yet arranged this meeting do so.

Councillor Foster advised that the next meeting of the Southwick Forum was being arranged to give members of the public a chance to air their views and issues on the area and Councillor Wright thanked him for his involvement in this and informed the Committee that it would be meeting in St Andrew's Church, Old Mill Road and that the date and time would be publicised once it had been confirmed.

Councillor Walton raised a concern over the continuity of staff policing the North area, and was advised by Inspector Musgrove that unfortunately, staff did move on through promotion or retirement but informed Members that the section were fully staffed, with the exception of two Community Support Officers, and that there were a lot of new support roles with the police service to help those out on patrol.

Inspector Musgrove also advised Members that their Evaluation Team were undertaking a twelve month programme and would be coming to the January meeting of the Committee to seek opinions of changes to the service from Members. They would provide a similar monitoring and review report at the end of the project so Members would be fully involved in the changes being proposed.

The Chairman having congratulated the Inspector on behalf of the Committee, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the statistics report be received and noted.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group

The Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with the report of the minutes of their meetings held on 27th May and 1st July, 2008 for information.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Musgrove presented the report and advised that this report was in a new format summarising the minutes of the previous meetings of the LMAPS groups.

Councillor Walton asked for an update with regards to CCTV provision at the Fulwell Skate Park and was advised that a review of all CCTV available to the North area of the city was being undertaken and that resources to purchase further equipment had been secured. Work was ongoing on this but Councillors would be involved to help indicate areas of high priority.

Having answered Members' queries on the minutes of the LMAPS Group, the Chairman thanked Inspector Musgrove for her attendance at the meeting, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report of the LMAPS group held on 27th May and 1st July, 2008 be received and noted.

Strategic Initiative Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining proposals for the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) to support the following new initiatives to benefit the area:-

- (i) Southwick Youth and Community Association;
- (ii) Improving Health and Independent Living (Mature Moves) Project;
- (iii) Hylton Castle Bowling Club;
- (iv) Hylton Castle Business Planning Project; and
- (v) Dance for Children with Mobility Issues Project.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Margaret Walker presented the application in respect of Southwick Youth and Community Association, Ms. Lynn Summerside presented the application in respect of Improving the Health and Independent Living (Mature Moves) Project, Mr. Kenneth Young presented the application in respect of the Hylton Castle Bowling Club, Mr. John Coulthard presented the application in respect of Hylton Castle Business Planning Project and Ms. Deloris Martin presented the application in respect of Dance Mobility for Children with Mobility Issues Project.

With regard to the application for the Dance Mobility for Children with Mobility Issues Project, Members asked if they could receive details of how the request for funding had been proportioned over a number of areas. Ms. Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, advised that it had been discussed at the Area Chairman's meeting how best to apportion the funding. Councillor Stewart asked for guidelines on how multi-ward applications are broken down and a report be submitted to the Area Chairman's meeting for their discussion and agreement.

The representatives having answered Members' questions, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £10,660 from the 2008/09 budget as a contribution to the health and safety works at Southwick Youth and Community Association;
- (ii) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £5,000 from the 2008/09 budget as a contribution towards the Improving Health and Independent Living (Mature Moves) Project;
- (iii) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £6,646 from the 2008/09 budget as a contribution towards the Irrigation System at Hylton Castle Bowling Club;
- (iv) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £20,000 from the 2008/09 budget as a contribution to the Hylton Castle Business Planning Project;
- (v) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £11,684 from the 2008/09 budget as a contribution towards the Dance for Children with Mobility Issues Project; and
- (vi) that a report be submitted to the Area Chairman's Meeting to set guidelines on how multi-area applications be dealt with.

Regeneration Issues Report : Feedback on Projects Previously Funded Through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB)

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) providing information to the Area Committee on expenditure from the SIB towards the following:-

- North Victim Support Project, awarded £29,994 in June 2007; and
- Summerbell Allotments Environmental Improvements, awarded £6,000 in September 2007.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Kevin Rigg, Manager, North Victim Support Group and Mr. E. Green from Summerbell Allotments Environmental Improvements, and having presented their feedback reports and answered Members' questions, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the presentation of the feedback reports be received and noted.

Integrated Youth Strategy 2008-2011 : Consultation Document

The Director of Children's Service submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed members of the draft Sunderland Integrated Youth Strategy 2008/2011 and the associated consultation process.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Lynda Brown, Head of Standards and Mr. Andy Neal, Acting Youth Development Group Manager, gave the Committee a presentation on the draft of the Integrated Youth Strategy 2008-2011 and welcomed views from Members.

In response to a query from Councillor Copeland on the involvement of the Youth Offending Team, Ms. Brown advised that Judith Hay was a member on the Children's Services Leadership Team and had previously had the role of Youth Offending Services Manager. Mr. Neal explained that all services aimed to work together to ensure that services that were being provided by the Council and external partners were not being duplicated.

Councillor Charlton commented that he hoped the strategy would address areas of the city where youth provision was lacking and Mr. Neal advised that an in depth audit of youth provision within the city had been undertaken which identified any areas of need. Funding streams would be looked at which may have certain criteria that would only be met by some areas of the city but Officers would always look to meet any gaps in provision where possible.

In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding how the strategy would be used, Mr. Neal advised that it would be used to address the balance of youth provision around the city and that each ward would be given a score and criteria identifying the areas of need. He explained that once the final strategy was published a copy would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Councillor Hall referred to the fact that there was a large percentage of young people who did not take part in anti social behaviour activities who should be commended.

Councillor Copeland referred to the Youth Café based in Houghton le Spring which she had visited and commented that it was a good idea for youths to have somewhere they felt safe to meet and use. Mr. Neal advised that the café had been funded through the Youth Opportunity Fund and was now being held as an example of good practice.

Councillor Stewart asked how sustainable the extra weekends and holiday youth provision would be and was informed that the Positive Activities Grant was a two year renewable grant which was currently out to tender and would help to provide two additional weekend and holiday sessions.

Councillor Stewart asked that once plans for youth provision in the North Area were proposed they be submitted to the Area Committee for consideration.

The Chairman thanked for the Officers for their presentation and it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the presentation and report on the draft of the Integrated Youth Strategy be received and noted and the Committee receive further reports as requested.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Progress Report

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) informing Members of the performance of the Benefits Section in the processing of new claims for the period 1st April, 2008 to 31st July, 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Steve Atkinson, Benefits Manager presented the report stating that now the problems with processing claims had been resolved, the speed of processing had increased considerably to approximately 16.35 days, which was almost twice as quick as the same period the previous year.

In response to a question from Councillor Hall regarding the number of people in receipt of the benefits, Mr. Atkinson advised that the number of residents in receipt of both housing and council tax benefit was approximately 37,000. When asked if this could increase with the recent 'credit crunch' and job losses, etc., Mr. Atkinson agreed that this could be a possibility.

Councillor Copeland referred to residents that may have lost their job and could lose their excellent tenancy rating with housing groups, such as Gentoo, due to the processing of their claim. Mr. Atkinson advised that at present the service was doing well in processing new claims and quite often hold ups in processing of the claims could be down to waiting for the submission of evidence from residents. He explained the service were in good contact with housing and landlords and would advise them accordingly if a claim was being processed and pending so that this should not affect their rating.

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

7. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

Proposed Programme for Heritage Open Days 2008

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on Heritage Open Days 2008.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Having considered the report, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted for information and further updates on Heritage Open Days be received throughout the year.

Sunderland History Fair 2008

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) updating Members on the History Fair 2008.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Having considered the report, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget : 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) to bring forward 29 proposals relating to the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

10. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 29 proposals recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest with a total value of £9,515 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report.

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

(Signed) R. BELL,
Chairman.