

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber at City Hall, Sunderland on WEDNESDAY 27th SEPTEMBER, 2023 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Burrell, Dodds, Heron (Vice Chair), Mason-Gage, Price, Rowntree, Scott and D. Snowdon

Also Present:-

Chris Binding	Local Democracy Reporter	
Jill Colbert	Chief Executive	Together for Children
Wendy Cook	Area Network Representative	Sunderland North Community Business Centre
Bill Little	Councillor	Hetton Town Council
Scott Wilson	Station Manager	Tyne and Wear Fire Service
Phil Baker	Inspector	Northumbria Police
Wendy Cook	Area Network Representative	VCS
Vicky Gamblin	Head of Neighbourhoods	Gentoo

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Coalfield Area Committee meeting and in particular Karen Mould, Principal Governance Services Officer.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors K Johnston, Speding and Thornton.

Declarations of Interest

The following declarations were received:-

Item 2 – Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2023-2026

Councillor Dodds declared that she was a member of the Houghton Racecourse CA.

Item 4 – Area Budgets Report

Councillors Blackburn, Heron and Mason-Gage declared that they were Members of the Houghton Feast Steering Committee and withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of Application 1, Houghton Feast Community Programme.

Councillor Price declared that he was a volunteer at Houghton Feast and withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of Application 1, Houghton Feast Community Programme.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 7th June, 2023 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Neighbourhood and Community Board Report

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated), which provided an update on the progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan, which would be the focus for the Coalfield Area Committee during 2023-24.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board, Councillor Heron presented the report and highlighted the projects contained within the Coalfield Delivery Plan which provided an update on progress on the Area Committee's Area Plan.

Drawing the Committee's attention to the Dynamic Smart City priority, Councillor Heron advised that a call for projects had been circulated to groups and schools during September to develop applications to present at the November Neighbourhood and Community Board. She drew Members' attention to the 'Can Do' project highlighting that the deadline for applications was 31 October 2023.

Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead, asked Members to promote the opportunity to groups of young people aged 11-19.

The Chair thanked all the Officers supporting the Area Committee.

Councillor Heron drew Members' attention to Annex 2 of the report, City Development: Economic Regeneration (City Development) and the Houghton Library improvements. Houghton Library would close at the end of October in preparation for the work to begin in December and would be back in operation at the end of March, based upon the current project plan.

Councillor Heron explained that a pop-up library plan would be developed to provide library spaces during the transition period.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:
 - a) the progress and performance update regarding the Coalfield Area Committee Area Plan 2023/2026 be noted; and
 - b) the progress update with regard to Sunderland City Council Service Plans - Area Priorities be noted.

Northumbria Police Update

Inspector Baker, Northumbria Police provided an update to the Committee (copy circulated), giving an overview of crime in the Coalfield area in relation to burglary, vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and an update on the Autumn Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Baker informed the Committee that ASB was tracking below reporting levels from the last three years and reports had reduced by 30 reports in the last period. The Committee's attention was drawn to the ASB hot spots for the sector which were currently Houghton, Shiney Row and Easington Lane which had changed from the published report.

Inspector Baker provided an update on the National ASB week of action. Houghton, Shiney Row and Easington Lane foot beats had had the benefit of multi-agency days which had resulted in: the recovery of several stolen bikes; arrests in relation to significant offences; good intelligence and excellent partnership working with Gentoo and the local authority ASB team.

Whilst Burglary Dwelling had proved a challenge, figures continued to track below the last three years in relation to offences and as such, the Coalfields area was performing very well. Focused efforts would continue in the area and teams were fully aware of target locations and offenders. There was a very low number of commercial burglary offences.

Vehicle Crime was tracking below the last three years however it was still an issue. It remained a key focus area for teams due to the potential impact on anti-social behaviour and several operations were underway. Several excellent arrests had also been made in the reporting period which had resulted in stolen vehicles being recovered.

Councillor Mason-Gage asked for clarification of Commercial Burglary and whether shop owners reported incidents of shop lifting. Inspector Baker explained that Commercial Burglary did not include shoplifting but that it related to burglary of a commercial property. He went on to say that teams worked with shop owners and action was taken against serial offenders.

Councillor Burrell asked whether those arrested for vehicle crime had received custodial sentences. Inspector Baker was unable to respond as they were currently going through the judicial process.

The Committee having discussed the report, the Chairman thanked Inspector Baker for his attendance and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Tyne and Wear Fire Service Update

Station Manager Scott Wilson, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) submitted a report (copy circulated), providing Performance Monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee area from 4th June 2022 to 22nd August 2023 compared with the same period the previous year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree asked if there was a reason why the incidents of deliberate fires in Hetton had remained the same as last year. Station Manager Wilson replied that Hetton always had had high figures and agreed to forward further information to Councillor Rowntree.

The Committee commended the Phoenix Team and their excellent work to engage young people on the Phoenix Project. Station Manager Wilson thanked the Committee and agreed to forward their comments to John Anderson.

Councillor Herron commented that it was excellent to have the Phoenix Project in the Coalfields Area to support and change lives for young people.

Councillor welcomed the new layout of the report.

Full consideration having been given to the report, the Chairman thanked Mr Wilson for his attendance and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted.

Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network Update

The Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with an update on the work of the Sector to date.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Wendy Cook, Area Network Representative presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

Ms Cook advised that meetings had been held in June, July and September and the report detailed the presentations received at these meetings. An update was also provided on the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance which included recruitment and the launch of the Membership Scheme in October 2023.

The Committee having discussed the report, the Chairman thanked Ms Cook for her attendance, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Gentoo Update

Gentoo submitted a report (copy circulated) providing an update on their work from June 2023 to September 2023.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Vicky Gamblin, Head of Neighbourhoods, briefed the Committee on Neighbourhood Services and the proposed Investment Plan programme for Houghton and Hetton during 2022/23.

Councillor Herron referred to the Sunderland Foodbank at Churchill Square Community Centre and thanked Gentoo and Esh Construction for opening the provision for residents in Fence Houses; providing them with access to vital food resources during the current cost of living crisis.

In response to Councillor Rowntree, Ms Gamblin agreed to order Estate Walks by Ward going forward.

Councillor Scott enquired whether single glazed windows in-situ were still prioritised for replacement as part of the City Wide Window scheme. Ms Gamblin confirmed that all window replacements were almost completed and offered to provide Councillor Scott with numbers should this be of help.

Councillor Snowdon noted the Tenancy Sustainment Fund and wondered whether Gentoo would house individuals on priority of need.

With regard to the Tenant Committee, Ms Gamblin confirmed to Councillor Price that it was City-Wide but also area based. Councillor Price observed it was up to the residents to disclose their area however commented that they could attend if not in a paid role.

The Committee having discussed the report and the Chairman having thanked Ms Gamblin for her attendance it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the above information be received and noted.

Coalfield Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated), providing a financial statement as an updated position on progress in relation to allocating Area Committee Neighbourhood Funding and Community Chest and presented proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead, presented the report, drawing the Committee's attention to the current financial position of the Area Committee Neighbourhood Fund 2023/2024 as set out in paragraph 2.1 and 3.1, the Neighbourhood Fund proposals set out in 2.3 and Annex 1 and the Community Chest approvals supported from 2023/2024, as detailed in Annex 2.

Ms Hopper briefed the Committee on the applications for funding set out in paragraphs 2.3 and explained the budgetary implications set out in paragraph 2.4. She also referred Members to Application No. 3, Coalfield Christmas and explained that the Neighbourhood and Community Board had discussed a comprehensive three-year Christmas programme for the Coalfield Area. Members noted the addition of Newbottle to the programme.

Jill Colbert advised the Committee of the generous donations received at Christmas across Early Help and Together For Children(TFC). Jill suggested the lead Co-ordinators within TFC be notified to ensure maximum support for everyone.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-
 - a) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1, 3.1 and 3.2 be noted;
 - b) the three Neighbourhood Fund proposals set out in 2.3, excluding No. 1 Houghton Feast, be approved; and
 - c) the Community Chest approvals supported from 2022/2023, as detailed in Annex 2, be noted.

Councillors Blackburn, Heron, Price and Mason-Gage left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Councillor Rowntree took the Chair for consideration of Application No. 1, Houghton Feast Community Programme.`

RESOLVED that:-

- d) the Neighbourhood Fund proposal set out in 2.3, No.1 Houghton Feast be approved.

Councillors Blackburn, Heron, Price and Mason-Gage left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Councillor Blackburn resumed the Chair.

Current Planning Applications (Coalfields Area)

A schedule (copy circulated) of current planning applications lodged during the period 1st July and 23rd August, 2023 was submitted for Members' information only.

(For copy schedule – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the schedule be received and noted.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and participation at the meeting.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,
Chairman.