

At a Meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in HOUGHTON LIBRARY, 74 NEWBOTTLE STREET, HOUGHTON LE SPRING, DH4 4AF, on WEDNESDAY, 2ND DECEMBER, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Lawson in the Chair

Councillors Allen, Blackburn, Cummings, Ellis, D. Smith, Speding, M. Turton, W. Turton and G. Walker.

Also in Attendance:-

Ron Barrass	Member of the Public	
Wendy Cook	VCS Representative, Youth and Community Co-Ordinator	Sunderland North Community Business Centre
Paul Finch	VCS Representative	Hetton New Dawn
Debbie Hall	Area Response Manager Coalfields	Sunderland City Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Community Officer, Coalfield	Sunderland City Council
Dave McCreedy	VCS Representative	Fence Houses YMCA
Steve Pescod	Inspector	Northumbria Police
Claire Rowntree	Member of the Public	
Lesley Stobbart	Art of Living Manager	Gentoo Ltd.
Christine Tilley	Community Governance Services Team Leader	Sunderland City Council
Gill Wake	Area Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Inspector Steve Pescod who was attending his first meeting of the Committee as Neighbourhood Inspector for the area. The Chairman invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Retirement

The Chairman referred to the impending retirement of Ms. Gill Wake, Area Co-ordinator for the Coalfield Area after 35 years of service at the Council, the last 2 and a half of which she had worked in her present role.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Gill for her contribution to the work of the Area Committee and her support to Members and wished her a happy retirement.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Heron and Turner, Councillor Glenis Wallace, Hetton Town Council, Steve Burdis, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Charlotte Burnham, Sunderland City Council and Melanie Caldwell, Gentoo Ltd.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14th October, 2015 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Place Board Progress Report

The Chair of the Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the current year's 2015/16 Place Board Work Plan and provided an update on performance.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor John Cummings, Chair of the Coalfield Area Place Board briefed the Committee on the report drawing attention to:-

- The imminent installation of the seats at King George V play area, Eppleton from Market Street, Hetton;
- The extended consultation to be held on the review of Demand Responsive Transport to ensure current users of the service are fully involved and informed of the proposals and provided with alternative service information;
- The consultation being undertaken with Members to influence the Highways Maintenance Programme for 2016/17 by making suggestions as to which roads in their ward are in need of repair;

- The review being undertaken by the working Group of Houghton Town Centre traffic and parking restrictions;
- The resurfacing work carried out in Hetton Cemetery and the positive feedback received from Members of the Public;
- The work being carried out at the former Forest Estate, Easington Lane which was to be cleared and levelled in preparation for wild flower planting with the involvement of pupils from Easington Lane Primary School;
- The programme of local events and activity which included the Christmas celebrations, switch on of the Christmas lights and Christmas market at Shiney Row and the heritage related ideas which have resulted in a proposal to design a life-size model of a miner to be displayed at various locations in the area and the Heritage Lottery Fund application to develop a project including a Houghton le Spring Village Atlas.

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

3. RESOLVED that the progress and performance update with regard to the Coalfield Area Place Board's Work Plan for 2015/16 be noted and the proposals for future delivery be approved.

People Board Progress Report

The Chair of the People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the current year's 2015/16 People Board Work Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Billy Turton, Chair of the Coalfield Area People Board briefed the Committee on the report drawing attention to:-

- the scheme to help families who have children in receipt of free school meals to combat holiday hunger during the school summer break;
- the WorkingRite Programme aimed at increasing opportunities for those Not in Education, Employment or Training by providing essential work experience and offering a quality vocational alternative to academic learning to be delivered in the Coalfield Area commencing April 2016;
- the CAN DO Fund applications received and supported at the November meeting of the Board from 'Connect Young Mums' and 'The Underground Project'; and
- the Call for Projects to deliver a Youth Social Action project and the development of a SIB project brief for volunteer and community support.

Councillor Speding referred to the Work Plan for the People Board highlighting the intention for the February meeting to concentrate on emotional and mental wellbeing. He advised that the Youth Parliament had debated the issue of mental health and transport problems and suggested that representatives be invited to the February Board meeting to share their thoughts on the issue.

4. RESOLVED that the progress and performance update with regard to the Coalfield Area People Board's Work Plan for 2015/16 be noted, the proposals for future delivery be approved and representatives from the Youth Parliament be invited to attend the February Board meeting as detailed above.

Partner Agency Reports – Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network Progress Update

Ms. Wendy Cook, Mr Dave McCreedy and Mr Paul Finch, Area Network Representatives submitted a report (copy circulated), providing an update with regard to the Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Network.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Dave McCreedy, Area Network Representative briefed the Committee on the report highlighting that the November meeting of the Coalfield Area VCSN had been dedicated to consultation on the Council Budget when a number of Council officers had attended to inform the network of the difficult decisions to be taken during the budget setting process and had gathered the views of Network members.

Mr McCreedy referred to the information leaflet which had been produced to promote the purpose and value of the Coalfield Area VCSN and circulated a copy at the meeting for Members' information. He advised that the three Network representatives would use the leaflet to engage new groups and encourage them to attend the meetings, which continued to be well attended and regarded as a way for local organisations to receive and share information with the Council, statutory and voluntary partners and each other.

The Chairman conveyed her thanks for all the work the VCS groups did in the Coalfield Area.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be received and noted; and
- (ii) the Area Committee continue to support the Sector when developing and implementing actions against local priorities.

Partner Agency Reports – Northumbria Police

Inspector Steve Pescod submitted a report (copy circulated) setting out the priorities for the Northumbria Police Force and providing details of Crime overall as well as the number of offences committed by crime type in the Coalfield area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Inspector Steve Pescod advised that there had been a rise of 24% in crime overall in the Coalfield. The Force's overall crime had risen by 20%. He advised that

there were various explanations for this, one being that there were new national recording standards being used which might be contributing to the increase.

Inspector Pescod explained the detail of the crime statistics to Members of the Committee and added that whilst the new recoding mechanism was having an effect, it was his view that the number of burglary offences had increased. The Police had made targeted arrests recently who had been operating locally.

Full consideration having being given to the information presented, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Partner Agency Reports – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Station Manager Steve Burdis, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Performance Monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee area from 1st September, 2015 to 31st October, 2015 compared with the same period in 2014.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman referred Members to the report and advised that Mr Burdis was not able to be present at the meeting as he was attending another Council Area Committee meeting at that time. Any questions Members might have on the report would be forwarded to Mr Burdis who would provide a written reply.

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

Area Budgets Report

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated) providing a financial statement as an update position on progress in relation to allocating Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest funding and presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Community Officer, Coalfield presented the report drawing the Committee's attention to the financial position as set out in paragraph 2.1 advising that the SIB balance was at that time standing at £139,792.

Ms. Hopper highlighted two recommendations for SIB funding from the previously approved £115,000 allocated at the Committee's December meeting in respect of the Community and Volunteer Support Project – Increasing Capacity in the Coalfield as set out at Annex I to the report and the Youth Social Action Project – Youth Social Action in Coalfield as set out at Annex 2.

Ms. Hopper also drew attention to the two applications for SIB funding being presented to the Committee from Houghton Village Atlas and Underground Project.

In response to Councillor Speding's enquiry in relation to the Rock School, Ms. Hopper advised she would check the status of the organisation and whether it was eligible to apply for SIB funding and if not look at other ways in which it could be looked at, possibly through the youth group.

Ms. Hopper referred Members to the approvals for Community Chest funding from October to November 2015 at paragraph 3 of the report.

The Chairman encouraged Members and the representatives from the VCS to promote the Community Chest Fund to local groups in the area.

Consideration having been given to the report it was:-

8. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1 and 3.1 of the report be noted;
 - b) the following recommendations from the People Board from the previously approved total of £115,000 SIB funding as set out in paragraph 2.2 and Annexes 1 and 2 of the report, be approved:-
 - Increasing Capacity in the Coalfield - SNCBC - £100,000;
 - Youth and Social Action in Coalfield - SNCBC - £15,000;
 - c) approval be given to SIB funding being allocated to the following:-
 - Houghton le Spring Village Atlas - £4,000
 - Underground Project - £8,798
- and
- d) the 8 Community Chest approvals supported from the 2015/16 budget as set out in Annex 4 be noted.

Current Planning Applications (Coalfields Area)

A schedule (copy circulated) of current planning applications lodged during the period 1st October and 19th November 2015 was submitted for Members' information only.

(For copy schedule – see original minutes).

9. RESOLVED that the schedule be received and noted.

The Chairman, having thanked everyone for their attendance and wished them a Happy Christmas, closed the meeting.

(Signed) A. LAWSON,

Chairman.