

**At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at THE NEW LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTRE, NEWBOTTLE STREET, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING on WEDNESDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2006 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor A. Hall in the Chair

Councillors F. Anderson, Blackburn, J. Heron, R. Heron, Lawson, Richardson, Rolph, J. Scott, Speding and Tate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Carthy.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 8 - Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report

(ii) Sit n 'b' Fit Limited

Councillors F. Anderson and Tate declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application as Members of the Co-operative Party and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

(iv) Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery

Councillor Rolph declared a personal interest in the above application as Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Street Services.

(v) Battle of the Bands 2006 Project

Councillors A. Hall, Lawson, Rolph and Speding declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application as Council appointed Members of the Houghton Feast Steering Group and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

(viii) Endorsement of Projects previously considered

Councillor Tate declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application in relation to the Fence Houses Steering Group and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

Councillors Rolph and Speding declared personal and prejudicial interests in the above application as Council appointed Members to Herrington Burn YMCA and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

Councillors Blackburn, Hall, J. Heron and Richardson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application as Council appointed Members of the Houghton and Hetton Housing Company Limited and withdrew from the meeting before consideration was given to the application.

Item 10 - Strategic Initiatives Budget : 2005/06 Ward Based Community Chest

Councillor R. Heron declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application as a Council appointed Member of the Houghton Racecourse Community Access Point and withdrew from the meeting before consideration was given to the application.

Councillor J. Heron declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application as a Member of the Houghton Racecourse Community Access Point and withdrew from the meeting before consideration was given to the application.

Councillor F. Anderson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above application as Secretary of Hetton Senior Citizens Group and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

**Coalfield Forum – Executive Summary of the Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2006**

The Executive Summary of the meeting of the Coalfield Forum held on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2006 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Bill Blackett, Area Regeneration Officer introduced the report advising that Ms. Tracey Holleran was now in position and would attend the next meeting of the Area Committee.

The Chair welcomed the addition of Ms. Tracy Holleran to the Forum and looked forward to her attending the Area Committee.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Presentation by the Coalfield Regeneration Trust – Current Priorities**

Mr. Bill Blackett, Area Regeneration Officer advised that Ms. Ashley Gibson, who was to give the presentation, was unable to attend due to a bereavement and would attend a future meeting.

Mr. Blackett submitted a report (copy circulated) which gave details of the current funding status.

The Members raised a number of issues and queries which Mr. Blackett agreed to feedback to Ms. Gibson so that responses would be included in her future presentation.

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Housing and Council Tax Benefit Progress Report**

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform Members of the performance of the Benefits Section in the processing of new claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit in the Coalfield Area of Sunderland for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Steve Atkinson, Benefits Manager, presented the report to Members commenting that the Section had met their target of 28 days to process a new claim. He informed the Committee that this year would see the implementation of a new benefits system and an upgrade of the DIP (Document Image Processing) System.

Mr. Atkinson reported that during the installation of the new system the Section would have to suffer unavoidable 'downtime' whereby the systems would need to be shutdown for a period of time. In response to a query he advised that this could be anything from 2-6 weeks but hopefully it would be completed within 4.

Members were keen to ensure Officers did all they could to minimise disruption to the services, keeping customers informed at all times.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Regeneration Issues Report : Feedback on Projects Previously Funded Through Strategic Initiatives Budget**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with information on the Gilpin Woods Review which it had previously funded through its SIB allocation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

### **Gilpin Woods Review**

Mr. Bill Blackett, Area Regeneration Officer introduced Mr. Keith Hamilton who proceeded to brief the Committee on the project. Mr. Hamilton advised that the funding had been used to cover professional fees in relation to a survey of the site. This had resulted in a schedule of works and Bill of Quantities which would assist in the identification of funds to implement works on the site.

Members congratulated Mr. Hamilton on the success of the review and the aspirational plan it had produced.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Hamilton for his attendance and wished him well for a continued success in the future.

5. RESOLVED that the feedback report be received and noted.

### **Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on the proposed allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) funding to support the following initiatives of benefit to the area:-

- (i) Shiney Row Action and Enterprise – ‘Secure the Future’ project;
- (ii) Sit n ‘b’ Fit Limited – Improving the health and independent living of Sunderland’s older people project;
- (iii) Flabagast Arts – ‘Rhyme around the Nursery’ project;
- (iv) Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery – ‘Hillside Cemetery – Lych Gate Restoration’ project;
- (v) City of Sunderland (CCS) – ‘Battle of the Bands 2006’ project;
- (vi) Hetton Town Trust Crèche project; and
- (vii) the Area Committee’s ‘Events Budget’.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Bill Blackett, Area Regeneration Officer, advised Members of the current budgetary position detailed at paragraph 4 of the report.

Mr. Blackett outlined the applications to the Committee and introduced the representatives of the project who were in attendance to answer Members' questions as follows:-

- |                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Angela Doidge                      | - | Secure the Future project                 |
| Lynn Summerside                    | - | Sit n 'b' Fit                             |
| Scott Hutchinson                   | - | Rhyme around the Nursery project          |
| Paul Lanagan                       | - | Hillside Cemetery – Lych Gate Restoration |
| Michelle Whittle<br>and Val Craggs | - | Battle of the Bands 2006 project          |

He also advised that the application in relation to Hetton Town Trust Crèche project had withdrawn, giving no reason.

The Chairman having declared personal and prejudicial interests in item (v) above, left the meeting during consideration of the item and Councillor J. Heron took the Chair.

Members commented in respect of the 'Secure the Future' project that in the past following SIB funding, the Group had not sufficiently publicised the fact that a project had been supported with SIB monies. Mrs. Doidge advised that the Group's new letterhead stated this so it would be publicised from now on.

In relation to the application from Hillside Cemetery, Members asked how confident they were in receiving further funding to complete the project. Mr. Lanagan advised that they had applied for a further £25,000 in total to other agencies. He outlined the applications in detail and his confidence in receiving some further funding. Members supported the work but raised concerns over the possible vandalism that could take place.

With regard to the Battle of the Bands projects Councillor J. Heron asked if the competition could be extended to include primary school entrants. Ms. Val Craggs advised that unfortunately that due to the nature of the competition it would only be suited to secondary students.

Mr. Blackett reported to the Committee that at a meeting of the Area Committees' Chairs and Vice-Chairs a discussion had ensued regarding a review of how the Events Budget is used and future options. He informed the Committee that they could defer the decision on the application and extend the current project until a report could be submitted at the next meeting.

Detailed consideration having been given to the applications, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that approval be given to:-
- (i) the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £23,644 from the 2006/07 budget as a contribution towards the ShARP led, 'Secure the Future' project;
  - (ii) the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £3,120 from the 2006/07 budget as a contribution towards the City-wide, Sit n 'b' Fit Limited, 'Improving the health and independent living of Sunderland's older people' project;
  - (iii) the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £11,520 from the 2006/07 budget as a contribution towards the Flabagast Arts led 'Rhyme around the Nursery' project;
  - (iv) the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £7,500 from the 2006/07 budget as a contribution towards the Friends of Houghton Hillside Cemetery led 'Hillside Cemetery – Lych Gate Restoration' project;
  - (v) the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £3,000 from the 2006/07 budget as a contribution towards the City of Sunderland (CCS) led 'Battle of the Bands 2006' project;
  - (vi) defer the decision to allocate Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £3,140 from the 2006/07 budget to restore the Area Committee's 'Events Budget' and extend the life of the current project; and
  - (vii) the formal endorsement of approvals to the following organisations from the 2006/07 budget, provisionally granted during 2004/05 and 2005/06 pending confirmation of the 2006/07 budget allocations:-
    - (a) Connecting the Coalfield Environmental ILM Project – Year 3 - £9,851.
    - (b) Fence Houses Community Development Project – Year 2 - £13,751.
    - (c) Coalfield Forum – Sustaining the Standard – Year 2 - £16,067.
    - (d) Construction Challenge Project – Year 2 - £5,000.

(N.B. – Councillor R. Heron took the Chair as both Councillors A. Hall and J. Heron declared personal and prejudicial interests in the application and left the meeting during consideration of the above application).

    - (e) Eco Rangers 2006 – Year 1 - £1,500.
    - (f) Houghton Youth Project – Year 1 - £10,000.

## **Strategic Initiatives Budget Update**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an update on live projects for which the Area Committee had previously approved funding through its Strategic Initiatives Budget.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Following consideration of the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : 2005/06 Ward Based Community Chest**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) bringing forward twenty two recommendations relating to the 2006/07 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that approval be given to the twenty two projects recommended for support from the 2006/07 Community Chest with a total value of £9,214 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report.

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

(Signed) A. HALL,  
Chairman.