

**At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held at the BUNNY HILL CENTRE, NORTH HYLTON ROAD, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Bell in the Chair

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

**Also in Attendance:-**

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Ms. Estelle Brown    | - Youth and Community Lead, SNCBC   |
| Ms. Lynda Brown      | - Head of Standards, Sunderland City Council                                      |
| Ms. Amanda Cantle    | - Centre Manager, Bunny Hill, Sunderland City Council                             |
| Ms. Verity Dodd      | - Senior Corporate Communications Officer, Sunderland City Council                |
| Ms. Colleen Doneathy | - Corporate Communications Team, Sunderland City Council                          |
| Ms. Helen Ford       | - Extended Services Coordinator, Sunderland City Council                          |
| Mr. Bill Forster     | - Manager, Sunderland North, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service                |
| Ms. Vicky Happer     | - Corporate Communications Officer, Sunderland City Council                       |
| Ms. Pauline Hopper   | - Area Officer, Sunderland City Council   |
| Mr. Dave Leonard     | - Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council                                      |
| Ms. Elizabeth McEvoy | - Area Renewal Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council                              |
| Insp. Lisa Musgrove  | - Northumbria Police  |
| Mr. Andy Neal        | - Youth Development Group Manager, Sunderland Council                             |
| Mr. Ron Odunaiya     | - Executive Director City Services, (Area Lead Executive) Sunderland City Council |
| Ms. Julie Raine      | - Director, City of Sunderland Colleges   |
| Ms. Joanne Stewart   | - Senior Democratic Services Officer, Sunderland City Council                     |
| Mr. Mike Poulter     | - Head of Project and Service Development, Sunderland City Council                |
| Mr. Richard Reading  | - Principal Trading Standards Officer, Sunderland City Council                    |
| Ms. Dawn Rugman      | - Policy Officer (Diversity), Sunderland City Council                             |
| Ms. Patricia Stoker  | - Headteacher, Southwick Primary School   |
| Ms. Pauline Walmsley | - Extended Services, Southwick Primary School                                     |

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Bell, Leadbitter and N. Wright.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2009**

Councillor Walton referred to the pilot for the Questions to Area Committees, and asked fellow Members if any of them had been approached for a form, which they informed him they had not. Ms. Hopper advised that the scheme had been ran as a pilot and Members had been sent forms to distribute to any of their constituents who may wish to ask a question at the Area Committee. She explained that they had not wanted to openly advertise the scheme as they did not want to be inundated with responses whilst the scheme was in its early stages.

With regard to page 4 of the minutes and Southwick Sports Hall, Mr. Odunaiya advised that he was aware that their had been concerns raised over losing the facilities at Southwick Sports Hall and on further investigation it had been found that the cost of running the centre for 12 months was not huge. He explained that he had spoken with the Portfolio Holder Councillor Gofton who had asked that the issue be looked at in greater detail to find a solution to maintaining the facility long term.

A lot of good work was being undertaken at the Hall and City Services would look to fund the next 12 months, then giving Officers time to look at alternative ways to be support the operation and delivery of the services provided at the Hall over a longer term.

Members asked if they would receive regular updates and were advised that regular progress reports would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

1. RESOLVED that
  - (i) the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Inspector Lisa Musgrove in the attendance; and
  - (ii) that regular progress reports on Southwick Sports Hall be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Questions to Area Committee**

There were no questions to the Area Committee received.

## **Priority Theme: North Sunderland a Learning Area Summary**

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 Learning Area 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 Learning priority was the third to come to the committee for discussion and consideration.

Ms. Lynda Brown, Head of Standards, took Members through each of the four priority issues, as detailed below. Each priority was considered in turn and Members were given an update with regard to current activity and actions taken for each.

- i) Provide non-academic support and advice for children and young people;
- ii) Specialist and generalist youth provision to be available in all wards in the North area;
- iii) Raise aspirations of children/young people and their families; and
- iv) Raise attainment levels and skills of young people.

With regard to the anti-bullying programmes, Ms. Stoker of Southwick Primary School commented that she would welcome the extending of programmes to primary schools and that it would be interesting to see how the programme was implemented in schools in the North Area to ensure there was some consistency in their approach.

Ms. Brown advised that the Children's Services were currently carrying out a review of the anti-bullying programme across the city and that it would be an ideal opportunity for examples of good practice to be shared and replicated. She referred to a successful project in the Coalfields area whereby a student who had previously been bullied was used in a video to promote anti-bullying.

Councillor Shattock asked if there was evidence to support whether bullying affected boys or girls more, and if there were more incidents at primary or secondary levels. She also asked if there had been an increase in children using mobile phones and the internet to bully, i.e. 'cyber bullying'. Ms. Brown explained that it affected both boys and girls at all ages and that bullying techniques were far more sophisticated and complicated than they used to be with the introduction of social network sites and young people having mobiles phones, which was of a concern.

With regard to a query from Councillor Stewart around the option to expand the role of the Council's Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, Ms. Brown advised that through the Children's Fund they had developed a lot of anti-bullying work and the aim was to improve on this and make it more strategic before rolling it out

across the city. At present the work of anti-bullying currently sat in the remit of the Safeguarding strand, within the Children's Services Directorate.

Ms. Stoker also commented that there was a need to work with local community's and parents to help them get a level of understanding of the ongoing work around bullying and how it was in everyone's best interests to help in identifying and reporting any incidents they came across.

She advised that the authority had a lot of experience and some good anti-bullying packages which it would be invaluable to build upon but the biggest current issue around bullying was the use of technology as it was such a massive unknown area which needed to be explored.

In response to a question from Councillor Howe regarding the complaints procedure around a school's bullying policy, Ms. Brown advised that every school in the city has an anti-bullying policy which is agreed by the Governing Body. Within it it sets out the route a parent needs to take if they have not been satisfied, which currently means writing to the Secretary of State. On the occasions letters of complaint have been received by the Director of Children's Services, she has responded to parents advising them of the correct procedure and approached the school to make them aware of the complaint.

Ms. Stoker also advised Councillor Howe that every reported incident of bullying was recorded, regardless of the level of severity.

Mr. Andy Neal, Interim Youth Development Group Manager, updated the Committee on the commissioning of the youth services process and advised that contracts would be ward based in the future so that all areas of the city had some access to youth provision. Members were informed that regular updates would be provided to future meetings of the Committee as the commissioning process developed.

In response to a query from Councillor Hall regarding the tender process, Mr. Neal advised that the tender goes out through the tender portal and is advertised in the press. A lot of local organisations know the standard process and would be made aware when the tender was due to start. Officers also keep a log of any interested parties to advise them of the tender dates but once the tender process has actually begun no further communications are made.

Councillor Hall continued to ask when Councillors had their input to the process and was advised that Councillors had been invited to consultation events, some in their area, and that they would also be able to give their views in a further consultation process over the next 3 weeks.

Councillor Wilson referred to the list of youth provision for the North area that Mr. Neal had provided and asked why certain activities finished at 8:00pm as he felt this was too early. Mr. Neal informed him that they were looking to increase the facilities provided on a Friday and Saturday, explaining that there was a greater need on the Friday night. Start and finish times would be

negotiated with the organisation providing the service but overall they tried to fit the service around the needs and wants of the young people involved.

With regards to the third priority, to raise aspirations of young people and their families, Julie Raine commented that the college worked closely with partners to support young people between the ages of 14-19 and that boundaries needed to be stretched in areas to ensure support for a child did not stop at the school leaving age of 16. Councillor Shattock agreed with the Officer and stressed that there needed to be stronger links between schools and the University and from an early age.

Ms. Raine advised the Members of the Aim Higher Project which has undertaken a lot of work to help the transition between school moves and it has built into the programme the ethos of how University can be an obvious next step in education. Councillor Shattock suggested that a ex-students of the university could come back and speak in schools to help give their views over attending which could be use to encourage and influence young people's decisions.

Ms. Stoker, Head teacher Southwick Primary School, advised that she dealt with both Connexions and the Aim Higher Project to help her aspire her young pupils. The School currently worked with the University by having visits around their sites and having a mentor system in place. She felt that these and other examples were already signs of good partner working practices that could be built upon.

Ms. Brown suggested that an action be included for the Committee to receive a further report on the priority of raising aspirations across the city, presenting suggestions to help address the issues.

Ms. Brown whilst discussing the actions taken with regard to raising attainment levels and skills advised that new programmes were being brought in to ensure that large employment providers in the city were offering positions to their fair share of apprentices. She explained that in order to get young people off the NEET register they were asking employers to employ young people for a 6 month period.

In response to a query from the Chairman regarding young people being put off accepting a 6 month post as they may lose any benefits they received, Ms. Brown commented that for the older ones that may be a problem but that at 16 years old that wouldn't be an issue to consider. The first 6 months after leaving school was the most difficult to keep an eye on young people as quite often they were in and out of different categories of learning or working and then leaving.

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

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the report and actions within it be received and noted; and
- ii) the following proposals be developed:-

- Review of the anti-bullying provision in schools and explore extending anti-bullying programmes in primary schools in the North;
- Review current policy for community use of school facilities outside of school hours;
- Review the use of underutilised youth and sports facilities, e.g. North Community Sports Centre;
- Review current FACL provision including contracting arrangement, learning providers, types of courses available, times and venues;
- Escalate to the LSP a review of apprenticeship opportunities and greater public sector commitment to the creation of more full apprenticeships being required.

### **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 and September 2009 the Area Committee had agreed a number of actions and proposals relating to the Attractive and Inclusive and Safe 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.

Councillor Hall referred to the £100,000 awarded for sea front improvements and advised that Fulwell and St Peter's wards were proposing to offer another £8,000 each towards the maintenance of speeding signs, etc at the seafront. Ms. Hopper advised that costs had been presented to the last meeting of the Committee and an application for funding would be submitted to a future meeting.

In response to comments from Councillor Copeland regarding the potential of having organised bonfire celebrations at Hylton Castle, Ms. Estelle Brown updated Members that they had met with the events teams at Newcastle and had visited a similar kind of event. A meeting was being held on 11 November to start planning for an event for 2010 and Hylton Castle had been the best site located. The event had the backing and support of the Councillors, Northumbria Police and Tyne and Wear Fire Rescue Services.

Councillor Hall referred to an illegal bonfire that had been planned and arranged using the Facebook website and asked that thanks be passed to

Northumbria Police who had managed to step in and stop the event going ahead.

In response to a question from Councillor Wilson regarding the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, Ms. McEvoy confirmed that the service was reactionary at the moment and that a further post had been recruited, totalling four officers across the city.

Councillor Copeland referred to the Area Officer developing a Community Payback Scheme and was keen to see it being put in place and used well. Ms. Hopper advised that she had a meeting that week to see what more could be done with regards to the scheme and she would feed back to the Committee what came from it.

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

3. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the attached Annex 1 and 2 of the report be agreed; and
- ii) the following proposal be agreed:-
  - To receive a SIP/SIB funding application to improve access to Thompson Park.

### **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 16 proposals for support from the 2009/2010 Community Chest budget and four proposals for support from the 2009/2010 SIB budget. Members were also advised of the financial statement for 2009/2010 and the SIB project update report.

Ms. Hopper took the Committee through each of the applications for funding as set out in the report. Mr. Odunaiya, referred to the application from City Services for the Provision of Seafront Toilets over the Winter Months. It had become apparent to him how important an issue it was to Councillors, and how they had been waiting to have the provision for some time. As Director of the Service he advised Members he would go away and look at reprioritising provisions to deliver the service from the mainstream budget and asked that the application be withdrawn.

Members having thanked Mr. Odunaiya for his suggestion, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- i) approval be given to the 16 projects recommended for support from the 2009/2010 Community Chest budget with a total value of £7,757 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report;
- ii) the financial statement for 2009/2010 as detailed in Annex 2 to the report be noted;
- iii) approval be given to the Castletown Gating Order Project recommended for support from the 2009/2010 SIB budget with a total value of £3,500;
- iv) approval be given to the Community Neighbourhood Support Initiative recommended for support, subject to the conditions as set out in the report, from the 2009/2010 SIB budget with a total value of £46,320;
- v) approval be given to the Sunderland Phoenix Project recommended for support with a total value of £15,274 (£7,637 from the 2009/2010 SIB budget and £7,637 from the 2010/2011 SIB budget subject to budget approval);
- vi) the Seafront Toilet Provision Winter Months application be withdrew, subject to alternative mainstream funding being identified; and
- vii) the North Live Project Update be noted as detailed in Annex 7 to the report.

### **Responsive Local Services**

The Executive Director City Services and Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) which advised Member of the commencement of the Responsive Local Services (RLS) Project which forms part of the Council's Community Leadership Programme.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Mike Poulter, Head of Project and Service Development presented the report advising that from the January cycle of meetings they would be bringing a report to the Committee indicating how neighbourhood services were performing and being delivered with regard to litter, refuse collection, grass cutting, graffiti and dog fouling.

Members raised areas of concern around the issues identified and Mr. Poulter advised that as concerns came forward the report back to the Area Committee would be able to focus on addressing those issues. It was planned to identify service issues before receiving customer feedback from them and services out in the city, such as bin men, road sweepers, etc were asked to report in any areas of concern so the Council were self generating issues.

Councillor Hall commented that it was imperative that Ward Councillors were consulted and involved in discussions as many times they were the best way for information to be passed to and from local residents. Mr. Poulter agreed



and explained that that was exactly what the initiative was based around, local Members, influencing local issues.

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

6. RESOLVED that the report be noted for information.

### **Review of Local Area Plans**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with the details of the review of the Local Area Plan.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Hopper presented the report advising that Members would be receiving a survey and self assessment form to complete, to ensure that all Councillors would have an opportunity to influence and shape the Sunderland Way of Working.

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

7. RESOLVED that the report be noted and Members take part in the self assessments and Members' surveys.

### **Area Committee Handbook**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought the Members approval and adoption of the Area Committee Handbook 2009/2010 which had been developed by the Area Arrangements Project Board.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Hopper presented the report advising that the handbook had been developed to provide guidance for everyone involved in the Area Committee. The guidance in the handbook should be read alongside the Council's constitution.

8. RESOLVED that the Area Committee Handbook for 2009/10 be adopted.

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

(Signed) R. COPELAND,  
Chairman.