

At a meeting of the SOUTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 5TH JUNE, 2006 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Tye in the Chair

Councillors E. Gibson, P. Gibson, Oliver, Porthouse, L. Scott and Tansey

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Blyth and P. Smith.

Minutes

Referring to page 6 of the minutes, Councillor Porthouse commented on the underspend in relation to Community Chest Funding.

Mr. Dave Leonard, Policy and Strategy Controller (Health), Development and Regeneration advised that a report reviewing the rules for the use of Strategic Initiatives Budget was being prepared for submission to all the Area Committees.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 5th June, 2006 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

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

(i) Projects previously considered subject to budget approval from the 2006/2007 Budget

Councillor Porthouse declared a personal interest in the application from the Jubilee Centre as a Council representative on the Management Committee of the Centre.

Item 9 - Strategic Initiatives Budget : 2006/2007 Ward Based Community Chest

Councillors Oliver, Porthouse and L. Scott declared personal interests in the application in respect of Herrington Village Show as Ward Councillors on the Organisation Committee.

Councillor E. Gibson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Friends of Doxford Park due to her membership of the organisation and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

Councillor P. Gibson declared a personal interest in the application from the Silksworth Heritage Group as Chairman of the Group.

Item 10 - Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) Update

Councillor Porthouse declared a personal interest as a Council representative on the Management Committee of the Jubilee Centre.

Crime Rates Relating to the South Sunderland Area – Presentation from Northumbria Police

Inspector Michael Smith circulated Sunderland South Wards Crime Comparisons for March to May 2006.

(For copy statistics – see original minutes).

Inspector Smith updated Members on the categories of crime occurring in the Doxford, Silksworth and St. Chad's Wards of the City.

Members referred to the statistics on juvenile disorder and nuisance and enquired about the use of rapid deployment cameras. In response Inspector Smith advised that rapid deployment cameras are best used for a specific purpose where incidences had been reported.

Inspector Smith commented on the need to invest in diversionary activities for juveniles. Members were in agreement with the above comment. Councillor Porthouse advised that through the South Sunderland Forum an increase in the number of Community Police Officers over a period of time would help to prevent juvenile disorder and increase public reassurance.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Smith for his attendance and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the Crime Statistics and information brought out in the discussion be received and noted.

Puma Sunderland Tennis Centre – LTA Satellite Tournament

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) advising the Area Committee of the successful staging of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) \$10,000 Ladies and \$15,000 Men's Satellite Tournament at the Puma Sunderland Tennis Centre over the period 5th-12th March, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members congratulated the Department on attracting the LTA in staging the tournament at the Puma Centre and asked that this be conveyed to the staff involved.

3. RESOLVED that the content of the report and the continued success of the Puma Sunderland Tennis Centre as a venue for high profile events be noted.

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 (BVPI 78a) Best Value Performance Indicator for Housing and Council Tax Benefit for the period 1st April, 2005 to 31st March, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Steve Atkinson, Benefits Manager, Revenues Section, City Treasurer's Department briefed the Committee on the report. He highlighted that the Benefits Section had achieved the target for processing new claims for 2005-2006 set at 28 subject to audit. The section had also exceeded its 92% local target for new claims processed within 14 days of receipt of all necessary information, by achieving 93%. Mr. Atkinson pointed out that a new benefits system was due to be implemented during the summer together with an upgrade to the Document Management Processing (DIP) system. He pointed out that as a result there might be unavoidable 'down time' for a period, however he assured Members that everything would be done to minimise disruption to the service and customers would be informed at all times.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor L. Scott, who had referred to the 360 successful new claims, Mr. Atkinson advised that there were many reasons why people did not claim the Housing and Council Tax Benefit to which they were entitled and that there were varying amounts of benefit claimed. The Benefits Service was continuing to promote Housing and Council Tax Benefits by initiatives such as a free Benefits Hotline, advertising on billboards and Council's Web Site for example and thereby increase take up.

4. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

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

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided information on Sunderland South Youth Strategy, which had previously received funding from the Committee's SIB allocation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Dave Leonard, Policy and Strategy Controller (Health), Development and Regeneration introduced the report and invited Ms. Kath Butchert, Head of Youth Development Group, Children's Services to report to the Committee. Ms. Butchert briefed the Committee on the work being undertaken to further establish youth provision in South Sunderland. She circulated papers providing information on the activities being provided as part of the South SIB Programme which also detailed participation by age and gender.

(For copy papers – see original minutes).

Members were pleased to note the range of youth work going on in the area and expressed their support for the development of the Strategy. They commented that it was important that sufficient funding was available to sustain the work going on.

Ms. Butchert advised Members of the Youth Opportunity Fund, a fund which was to be spent at young people's discretion on activities of their choice over a two year period. She added that young people would be supported to develop bids for grants by Council Officers.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Oliver, Ms. Butchert advised that the activity programme was very successful in attracting young people to take part; sessions were full and their interest was being retained. She added however there was never enough funding and more could always be done. There was also a small minority of young people who simply did not want to be engaged.

Councillor Porthouse commented on the need to provide a purpose made youth club for juvenile activities within the Farringdon area and to ensure funding for youth workers was continued.

Mr. Leonard advised Members that the schedule for feedback reports detailed at Annex 2 of the report was to be determined. He asked Members to submit any suggestions to Mr. Richard Parry, Area Regeneration Officer, Development and Regeneration for inclusion in the timetable.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the feedback report on the Sunderland South Youth Strategy be received and noted; and
- (ii) suggestions for future feedback reports be submitted for inclusion on the schedule as detailed above.

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) to support the following initiatives to benefit the area:-

- (i) Citywide Sit 'n' 'b' Fit Project;
- (ii) Extension of funding to the Farringdon Homing Society;
- (iii) Extension of Funding for the NRF Youth Diversionary Project; and
- (iv) To formally endorse the approval of projects previously considered, subject to budget approval, from the 2006/07 budget.

Mr. Dave Leonard, Policy and Strategy Controller (Health), Development and Regeneration introduced the report and advised that Ms. Lynn Summerside, Director of Sit 'n' 'b' Fit Limited was present should Members have any questions on the project.

Members commented on the delay in the Farringdon Homing Society project and whilst recognising that there had been a series of difficulties in securing funding and planning permission, expressed the need for the project to progress in the next six months.

Full 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 £3,120 from the 2006/07 budget as a contribution to the Citywide Sit 'n' 'b' Fit Project;
- (ii) the extension of the Strategic Initiatives Budget allocation of £13,000 to the Farringdon Homing Society for a further six months to enable completion of the funding package;
- (iii) the extension of the Strategic Initiatives Budget allocation of £40,000 for a further six months to enable completion of the NRF Youth Diversionary Project; and

(iv) the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget to the following projects approved by the Committee during 2005/06 pending confirmation of the 2006/07 budget:-

1. Jubilee Centre, Farringdon - £20,000;
2. Box Youth Project - £30,000;
3. Sunderland South Youth Strategy - £56,008;
4. Construction Challenge - £5,000;
5. Plains Farm and Humbledon Community Initiative - £15,000; and
6. South Forum Development Project - £18,849.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : 2006/07 Ward Based Community Chest

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on 12 projects recommended for support from the 2006/07 Community Chest Scheme in respect of the Doxford, Silksworth and St. Chad's Wards.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 12 projects recommended for support from the 2006/07 budget with a total value of £7,365 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) 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).

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) P.M. TYE,
Chairman.