

21 June 2012

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Determining the Area Committee's Priorities for 2012/13

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To determine the Area Committee's key areas of priority for the year ahead, which will form the basis of the Committee's Local Area Plan for 2012/13.

2 Background

- 2.1 In 2011 the City Council agreed to refresh the Sunderland Strategy and identify ways in which to strengthen the strategy, both in its delivery and measurement of performance. One of the agreed improvements is the introduction of the City Council's Corporate Outcomes Framework. The Framework identifies how the City Council intends to support the delivery of the city outcomes and specifically focuses on the City Council's unique contribution to delivering those outcomes.

- 2.2 The review of the Local Area Plans and the Area Committees' priorities for 2012/13 is integral to ensuring the delivery of those outcomes at a local level.

- 2.3 At the workshop held in May 2012, Members of the Area Committee considered data relevant to the area circumstances in the context of those emerging Corporate Outcomes. Members also brought to the discussions their own unique understanding of their communities which focused around:-

(a) Where the Area Committee could influence how services are delivered at a local level;

(b) How the Area Committee could impact upon the delivery of Corporate Outcomes at a local level; and

(c) To review the current activity delivered by the Area Committee and to determine whether it remained an area of priority to continue.

- 2.4 The priorities that began to emerge from the workshop were shared with residents and partners at the State of the Area Debate and with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners through the VCS network, the results of the consultation are outlined later within this report.

3 Emerging Priorities

- 3.1 **Annex 1** identifies the proposed Local Area Plan and Area Priorities for the Area Committee's consideration identifying where the Area Committee proposed it could both influence and have impact on and as such what its priorities for funding might be for the year ahead.

- 3.2 In summary, proposed priorities for direct local action for 2012/13 are:-

(1) Healthy life choices for children and young people (*focusing on sexual and mental health, and supporting children and young people to maintain a healthy weight*)

- (2) Positive activities for young people focusing on holiday and under 13 provision
- (3) Support for older people, vulnerable adults and their carers
- (4) Improvement of areas of neglected land
- (5) Improvement of allotments and community gardens
- (6) Support for local shopping centres

4 Consultation Outcomes

4.1 At the State of the Area Debate on 30 May 2012 residents were asked to identify their main priorities for action in the forthcoming year, considering the emerging priorities or whether there were more important issues mattered to them at a local level. Additionally the VCS networks were asked for their views in helping the Area Committee to set their priorities for the coming year. The outcome of this consultation is provided below.

4.2 The State of the Area event was an opportunity for residents to engage in discussion with officers, Members and partners about the issues facing them and their area, it was attended by over 100 people and was well received. Evaluation of the event showed that a number of people welcomed the opportunity to speak with Councillors and Officers directly and had long waited the chance to take part in such an event. The question and answer session was the most popular feature of the event with all those filling out the evaluation finding it informative. Residents raised a number of key issues as below:

- Concerns were raised with regards to the main shopping centre in Houghton. The individual issues such as the number of fast food outlets, lack of toilet facilities, vacant properties and traffic problems were addressed individually and are also subject to further discussion by the Task and Result group for Shopping Centres.
- The old colliery site at Houghton le Spring and the Houghton landfill site were areas of concern. Again, the issues were responded to by relevant elected members and officers and are ongoing issues which are being dealt with by the Council.
- Services for older people (and carers) and the reliance on local voluntary and community organisations was discussed. There is a Task and Result group for Support for Older people. The issues raised will be taken to this group.
- Activities for young people, XL youth villages and investment in places for young people to meet were discussed. There are a number of initiatives being delivered and these were outlined at the meeting.
- Improvements to allotments and general outdoor space, including protection of wildlife and habitat, was discussed. It was acknowledged that lots of good work has been carried out and individual issues raised were responded to by relevant officers.
- Various questions regarding health of local people were asked, including childhood obesity and what could be done to stop the increase. It was acknowledged that this is an issue and in addition to identifying the problem we need to develop solutions including encouraging families and children to access exercise and sporting opportunities.

4.3 In addition to the question and answer session at the State of the Area Event, residents and stakeholders were asked to identify their priorities for 2012/13, based on the information presented. The top two priorities proposed by delegates attending the event were 'support for older people and carers' and 'activities for young people'. Other issues raised were traffic and road safety and empty properties, both were raised as a priority in last year's work

plan and are subject to ongoing actions which will be fed back to Area Committee via the Place Board.

4.4 The Coalfield Area Network was asked to consider and comment on the emerging priorities. The main issues and comments raised were;

- Better use of local intelligence in order to make best use of the VCS and partners to inform, influence and impact on local service delivery
- Support for organisations providing local services for older people is required. For most older people their first contact for help is through the voluntary and community sector
- Need to recognise the need for early interventions at a local level particularly for health services and with a focus on children and young people
- More services and activities for young people, especially the younger age group
- Young people requested more information and support on sexual and mental health

4.5 The Area Committee is asked to note the information outlined in paragraph 4.2, 4,3 and 4,4 above, and consider those issues raised, when determining the priorities for the year ahead and the Local Area Plan

5 Next steps

5.1 Following agreement of the priorities at tonight's meeting, Area Committee will then be requested to determine the detail of the Local Area Plan, the work plan for 2012/13. It is anticipated a further workshop will be held with all Members of the Committee to confirm activity and actions to be referred to the relevant Place and People Boards as part of the strengthened area governance arrangements. Area Committee will also consider whether the Committee wishes to ring fence funding to support agreed priorities, actions and activity.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is requested to:-

- (a) Consider the issues raised by residents at the State of the Area Debate and the VCS Network and agree the priorities for 2012/13 year ahead, which will form the basis of their Local Area Plan; and
- (b) Agree to hold a further workshop to determine the detailed Coalfield Area Committee LAP work plan for 2012/13, as referred to in paragraph 5.1.

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