

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at BERNARD GILPIN PRIMARY SCHOOL, on WEDNESDAY, 1st FEBRUARY, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Richardson in the Chair

Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Ellis, Hall, Heron, Rolph, D. Smith, Speding, Tate and Wakefield

Also in Attendance:-

Ron Barrass	Member of the Public	
Lucy Bennett	Member of the Public	
Ian Bower	Heritage Community Development Worker	Sunderland Council
Susan Brown	Area Community Coordinator	Sunderland Council
Melanie Caldwell	Head of Operations	Gentoo
Phil Connolly	Heritage Community Development Worker	Sunderland Council
Dave Ellison	Area Response Manager	Sunderland Council
Victoria French	Assistant Head of Community Services	Sunderland Council
Nicola Hawyes	Community Delivery Support Officer	Sunderland Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Officer	Sunderland Council
Matthew Jackson	Governance Services Officer	Sunderland Council
Amelia Laverick	Member of the Public	
Trina Murphy	Heritage and Resorts Manager	Sunderland Council
Lisa Musgrove	Neighbourhood Inspector	Northumbria Police
Ann Owen	VCS Representative	
Malcolm Page	Area Lead Executive	Sunderland Council
Rachel Putz	Coalfields Operational Manager	Sunderland Council
Claire Smith	Member of the Public	
Liz St. Louis	Head of Customer Service	Sunderland Council
Lee Wardle	VCS Representative	

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Scott along with Juliana Heron, Pam Lee, John Rushworth and James Third.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Community Chest

Councillor A. Hall declared a personal interest as an Employee of Anchor Trust

Councillor Heron declared a personal interest as a Council appointed governor of Gillas Lane Primary School.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 23rd November, 2011

Councillor D. Smith stated that he had said that the Kirklee Field Play Area would be accessible by 2000 children.

Councillor Speding stated that he had read a letter in the Sunderland Echo from Councillor D. Smith in which had stated that he had secured funds for the development of the play area at Kirklee Field. However the minutes only referred to Councillor Scott's motion that funds be allocated subject to a full application. He asked that the minutes be checked to ensure that they were correct. The Chairman confirmed the minutes as correct from his recollection.

Councillor Rolph stated that on page 4 of the minutes that Chilton Moor was incorrectly spelt as Chiltern Moor and asked that this be corrected. She also referred to Ms McEvoy's agreement to look into the wording of the financial assistance policy for the improvement of unadopted streets.

Ms Hopper advised that she would find out whether and progress had been made.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 23rd November, 2011 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the above amendments.

Community Action in Coalfield: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions (2010/11 Work Plan)

Process for the Review of Local Area Plans for 2012

The Chairman moved that this item be deferred to the March meeting of the Committee to allow a more detailed report to be submitted to the Committee.

Members agreed with this motion to defer the item to the next meeting of the Committee.

2. RESOLVED that the item be deferred to the March meeting of the Committee to allow a further, more detailed report to be produced.

Community Action in Coalfield – Progress Review

Heritage Priority

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update on the progress made against the agreed actions in the Work Plan for the Heritage Priority.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Trina Murphy presented the report and advised that the Community Heritage Development Officers (CHDOs) Phil Connolly and Ian Bower were in attendance and would be providing updates on the action plan and work done by the task and result group.

Ian Bower advised that there had been work done around the development of a website which would provide information to support the development of heritage projects. There had been work done with the primary schools in the area to provide them with heritage learning resources and there was collections management training being provided to community groups which would help them to handle and store historic documents and artefacts.

Penshaw and Hetton had been identified as possible areas for the pilot village atlas project to be undertaken. The pilot would then be developed into an ongoing programme. Conservation Officer Mark Taylor was working with the project manager Ken Bradshaw to develop the village atlas.

There was also work being done around the development of Heritage Trails and the Coalfield Community Challenge.

Ms Murphy added that the heritage officers were working with the Council's City Services department and also the VCS Network.

Councillor Wakefield commented that across the whole area there were only 4 libraries, as such it would be difficult for people without home internet access to access the website. He suggested the implementation of ICT access points throughout the area.

Councillor Rolph advised that Andrea Baxter from Elba Park had received Heritage Lottery funding to do work on the heritage of the park; it was important that there was work done with her to ensure that the different aspects of heritage work were linked. She also stated that there were 2 SWITCH officers who were

working on the development of the Village Atlas for Houghton; the work had recently commenced on the desk top study.

Susan Brown stated that Andrea Baxter had attended meetings of the VCS Network.

Councillor Ellis stated that the Community Forums were a good source of information.

3. RESOLVED that the report be noted and future updates be received.

Activities for Young People Priority

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update on the progress against agreed priorities in the Work Plan for 2011/12.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper presented the report and advised Members that there had been £30,000 of SIB funding allocated to this priority. It had been agreed that out of this funding £10,000 would be allocated to the work around the reduction of antisocial behaviour. There was a pilot in place for activities for 8 – 12 year olds and Herrington Burn YMCA was delivering activities in Herrington and Fence Houses. There had been activities held during the holidays which had been funded by the SIB funds allocated to the priority and a programme of activity had been developed for the remaining school holidays during this academic year. Washington MIND had been awarded SIB funding and it was proposed that they be invited to a future meeting to discuss their work.

Inspector Musgrave advised that there was a map which showed where there were hotspots of youth disorder and what days and times were the most problematic. There was work taking place in the Burnside area to tackle the problems there.

Councillor Anderson expressed her support for this work; historically there had not been sufficient activities in the area. It was good to see that the activities had been divided into age groups. It would not be possible to provide activities for all young people, some would never access youth provision; she felt that there was a need for outreach workers to speak to these young people to find out what they wanted.

Inspector Musgrove agreed that it was important to find out what the young people wanted, it was possible that what providers thought young people wanted might not be correct.

Lee Wardle added that Fridays were a problem as a number of young people wanted to drink on Friday evenings, as such it was important to ensure that the provision on Friday evenings needed to be something special, the XL youth

villages had been popular for this reason. He also queried whether antisocial behaviour on weekdays was still a problem.

Inspector Musgrove advised that antisocial behaviour on weekdays was less of a problem than it had been. Groundworks had been doing work in the area on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and had been going out onto the streets to speak to young people to find out why they did not use the provision.

Councillor Rolph queried whether there was provision for disabled children. She also stated that she was keen to hear what Washington MIND had to say and felt that it would be useful for Ear 4 U to attend as well.

Ms Hopper confirmed that there was provision for disabled children.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The report presented on behalf of the task and result group be noted.
- b. The task and result group continue to develop the wide range of activities for young people aged 8-12 and 13-19.
- c. Members be invited to attend the meetings of the task and result group
- d. Washington MIND and Ear 4U be invited to attend a future meeting to update Members on the range of services delivered in the Coalfield Area.

Support for Older People Priority

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the progress against the agreed actions in the work plan for the Support for Older People priority.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that the report was submitted to the Committee on behalf of the task and result group. The group had been working to find out why some older people found it difficult to access services. The action plan for the group was being reviewed as some of the actions were out of date and no longer relevant. The Coalfield Community Challenge had provided support to 18 groups in the area to enable them to participate in community events. The Home Improvement Agency in partnership with Age UK and Sunderland community Furniture Service had been successful in securing funding from the Warm Homes Healthy People Fund to provide support for older people through winter.

Melanie Caldwell, Gentoo Head of Operations, advised that gentoo were offering free MIDAS training to local residents which would then allow them to drive minibuses for the community transport service. There was a desire for gentoo tenants to become involved however the training was not restricted solely to them.

Councillor Heron commented that this work had definitely been worthwhile given that so many people had become involved in the various aspects of the work.

Councillor Rolph stated that it seemed that there was a gap in the outreach financial advice services; she felt that there was a need for there to be provision in Houghton. She welcomed the work by gentoo around the development of community transport.

Ms Hopper advised that the East Sunderland Area Committee had been looking into welfare rights and had received an update on the tendering process for the 1st tier welfare advice in the area from Alison Aisbett, she suggested that Ms Aisbett could be invited to a future meeting to discuss the provision of advice services in the Coalfield.

Councillor Hall stated that there was real concern for those people who could not access services as these people were often very isolated. Ms Caldwell advised that gentoo were carrying out work to encourage more people to become involved in the community.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The report submitted on behalf of the task and result group be noted.
- b. The task and result group continue to discuss and develop the actions against this priority and provide a report to the March meeting of the Committee.

Neglected Land Priority

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the progress against the Neglected Land priority and agreed actions in the current years work plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Dave Ellison, Area Response Manager, presented the report which had been submitted on behalf of the task and result group. He advised that a document had been produced using information from the land registry detailing the ownership of problematic sites; this report had been circulated to Members. It had been decided that the initial focus should be on addressing council owned land. Four sites across the area, one in each ward, had been identified as being potentially suitable sites for the efforts to be focused on; these sites were detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report; these sites were currently a cause for concern with them being targeted by fly tippers and being hotspots for anti social behaviour. Work was being done with the Councils legal department to ensure that there were no restrictions on what could be done on the sites.

Mr Ellison also advised of the work that had been done around the Local Development Framework and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Councillor D. Smith suggested that the old council depot at Houghton could be a candidate for the cleaning works. Mr Ellison advised that the Eppleton Primary School site had been proposed as there had been a large number of residents'

complaints about the condition of the site. The group would give consideration to Cllr Smiths' suggestion.

Councillor Heron stated that Eppleton Primary School had been an issue for a number of years; there was a continual problem with fly tipping and the site was an eyesore which needed to be addressed.

Councillor Wakefield expressed concern that it was still unknown what would be done with regard to the area plan.

Councillor Hall stated that everyone had concerns over the neglected land in the area. There was a need to address the problems on private land however she accepted that it would be easier to address the issues with council owned land. In Shiney Row there was a lot of problem land throughout the ward and the land at Collingwood Drive could be a nice space if it was tidied up. Mr Ellison advised that the work would be ongoing and stated that it might be possible that absent land owners did not realise that their property was in such a poor condition.

Councillor Ellis stated that the council needed to lead by example. If people saw that the council was tackling the problem then land owners may be more willing to tackle the problems on their land.

Councillor Rolph stated that it had been difficult for the task and result group to develop a course of action. If there had been a concentration on private land then there could have been problems with there being a lack of progress. The addressing of problems on council land would allow for there to be a series of quick wins which would result in visible differences being made. The focus of residents' complaints had been looked at and it had been identified that there were some sites which were regularly mentioned. It was hoped that community groups might get involved with the works; there were some plots of land which community groups had expressed an interest in using should they be brought into a usable condition. She congratulated everyone involved for their hard work.

Ms Hopper drew Members attention to paragraph 4.4 of the report which requested that the Committee agree to ring fence £30,000 of SIB funding to the priority to allow works to be done on the sites. Members unanimously agreed with this proposal.

Mr Ellison then presented an update on the work done around Responsive Local Services. He advised that as part of the Love Where You Live campaign there would be a 'spring clean' carried out which would support the work done around the programmes for the Northumbria In Bloom awards. Communities would be encouraged to be involved in this work. For the spring clean week it was proposed that officers liaise with the Chairman to identify a site which would be the focus of the work for that week.

Councillor Blackburn asked that Members be kept informed of the work that was being undertaken. Mr Ellison advised that a portfolio was being developed detailing the work. Since the last campaign there had been a lot of intensive work carried out.

Councillor Anderson stated that the Coalfield was the largest area in Sunderland and it was not possible to pick one place within the area which would represent the whole area.

Susan Brown stated that it had been expected that there would be problems if only one location was chosen. It was planned that the community transport service would be used to transport people from across the area to the location to allow residents from the whole area to be involved.

Mr Ellison advised that it was hoped that a lot of bulbs and seeds would be provided for planting in the area.

Ms Caldwell stated that last year gentoo had held activities across the area, it was intended that gentoo would be heavily involved again this year.

6. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The report presented on behalf of the task and result group be noted.
- b. The four sites for improvement identified in paragraph 3.3 be agreed.
- c. Proposals for improvement works at the sites be received.
- d. SIB funding of £30,000 be allocated to the improvement of Council owned neglected land, subject to detailed proposals being agreed by the Committee.

Work Plan

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with the Committee's Work Plan for 2011/12 which identified all of the actions against the priorities and the progress made on them.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the work plan and informed Members that all of the actions were progressing; none of the actions had been marked as red on the progress indicators. Ms Hopper also introduced Susan Brown who would be providing an update on the Christmas shopping campaign in the area.

Ms Brown stated that the work had been very successful; photos were available for Members to view. There had been surveys carried out to find out what residents liked and disliked about the local shops; this information had been collated into a report which detailed the comments made and would be emailed to Members. Residents had felt that in Houghton there were too many takeaways.

Lee Wardle stated that the residents in Shiney Row had found the event to be an excellent experience.

7. RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest – Financial Update and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which requested the Members to consider proposals for the allocation of SIB and Community Chest funding to support initiatives that would deliver activity against the priorities for 2011/12.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and advised of the 4 proposals for SIB funding and the 10 Community Chest requests.

The 4 SIB proposals totalled £49,468 and should all of the applications be approved there would be £30,082 remaining in the budget. £30,000 of this remainder had been assigned to the Neglected Land priority for improvements problematic sites.

The 10 Community Chest applications totalled £8,828 which would leave £14,882 to be allocated across all four wards.

With regard to the application for Kirklee Field Play Area Councillor Rolph referred to a letter which had been sent to the Sunderland Echo by Councillor D. Smith which stated that he had obtained £13,000 for this project. She queried whether the Committee still needed to be providing £16,000 if £13,000 had already been provided.

Councillor Speding stated that the letter had stated that Councillor D. Smith had been successful in getting £13,000 for the project which did not reflect the content of the minutes of the last meeting. He was concerned that there was an accusation that officers had lost £13,000 and asked where this money had gone.

Councillor D. Smith explained that the money he had referred to was the SIB funding that the Committee was being asked to approve at this meeting.

The Chairman then moved that Members agree to approve the SIB applications. Members unanimously agreed to approve the applications.

For the Community Chest application for Hetton Premier Homing Society Councillor Wakefield advised that he was aware of some old polling stations which were in the Councils' ownership which could be used, this would reduce the costs involved.

Mr Ellison confirmed that there were some old polling stations and that one could be made available to the society at no cost other than the delivery. He would need to find out how much cost would be involved however he did not believe it would be over £1,000.

Councillor Wakefield suggested that each Ward provide £250 to cover the cost of delivery.

Councillor Rolph stated that as there were different amounts requested from different Wards she felt that it would be better if the proportions were kept the same. The Committee agreed with this proposal.

The revised figures for the application were as follows:-

Copt Hill: £270

Hetton: £330

Houghton: £200

Shiney Row: £200

The total for the 10 Community Chest applications would now be £6,078 which would leave £17,632 remaining to be allocated across all four Wards.

8. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The financial information set out in sections 2.1 and 2.2 and Annex 2 be noted
- b. The SIB applications detailed in Annex 3 be agreed.
- c. The allocation of £30,000 to the neglected land priority be approved.
- d. The 10 proposals for support from the 2011/12 Community Chest as set out in Annex 4 be approved.

(Signed) D. RICHARDSON,
Chairman.