

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at the HETTON CENTRE, WELFARE ROAD, HETTON-LE-HOLE on WEDNESDAY, 29TH OCTOBER, 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor J. Scott in the Chair

Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, A. Hall, Heron, D. Smith, Speding and Wakefield.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors D. Richardson, Ellis, Rolph and Tate.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

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

In response to Councillor Rolph's request for feedback from the Lambton Memorial Group regarding the Lambton Miners Memorial Project, Ms. Nicole Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer advised that unfortunately a representative from the Lambton Memorial Group could not be present. Nonetheless, Pat Simmons, Secretary for the Group had left a message to notify Committee Members that herself and an artist had undertaken visits to Dubmire, Burnside and St. Michael's Primary Schools, and that Shiney Row Primary School was the only remaining school to be visited.

She also updated the Committee that two metal banners were being designed showing the childrens' interpretation of their school and surrounding community, which would be displayed on site. She advised further that the Lambton Minors Project was due to be completed during the early months in 2009.

Coalfield Event Budget

Councillor Anderson enquired whether information in respect of the spending allocation from the Events Budget over the last five years was available. In response, Ms. Trueman advised that no funding had been spent from the Events Budget since the last meeting and that information regarding past expenditure had been emailed to Members. A hard copy of the email was then issued to Councillor Anderson.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd September, 2008 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 9 – Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

Councillors Hall and J. Scott declared personal interests as Council appointed Governors of New Penshaw Primary School.

Councillor Heron declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Director of Houghton Community Access Point.

Item 10 – Executive Summaries of the Meetings of the Coalfield Area Forum

Councillor Hall declared a personal interest as a Council representative on the Coalfield Management Board.

Item 15 – Department of Health Extra Care Housing Fund Application 2008-2010

Councillor Hall declared a personal interest as a Board Member of Gentoo Living.

Northumbria Police Crime Statistics Relating to the Coalfield Area

A copy of the crime statistics produced by Northumbria Police (copy circulated) showing all crime in Sunderland and detailing the figures for the Coalfield Area from March 2007 to September 2008 was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman introduced Sergeant Andy Taylor to the Committee.

Sergeant Taylor advised members that he had been appointed to the role of Neighbourhood Sergeant, covering Hetton and Houghton.

Sergeant Taylor proceeded to provide Members with an overview of the crime statistics in the Houghton area, highlighting that overall there had been a 9.67% reduction in crime. He went on to say that there had been a 10.4% reduction in violent crimes, including common assaults and GBH. Vehicle crime had reduced by 32.9%, and criminal damage had reduced by 16.2%. However, there had been a 10% increase in burglary crime.

Sergeant Taylor stated that he intended to hold community engagement meetings every five weeks in Hetton, Houghton, Eppleton and Easington Lane and encouraged members to spread the word.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Anderson regarding whether there were any particular areas that burglars targeted, Sergeant Taylor explained that patterns tended to form towards Eppleton and Easington Lane areas, however trends could easily change.

Councillor Anderson expressed disappointment that burglary crime was rising. Sergeant Taylor explained that the 10% rise in burglary crime amounted to 8 crimes and that this was a national issue, and that work was underway to target the problem.

2. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) Group held on 2nd September, 2008 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Sergeant Taylor advised that work was currently underway alongside Timothy Ducker at the City Council to erect barriers and railway sleepers to prevent motorcycles crossing the land on a farm around Smith Terrace. This was due to some concerns raised by the public and nearby residents in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Sergeant Taylor advised further that discussions were underway with the parents of children who were regularly in trouble with the Police, in an attempt to prevent them from re-offending. Also to educate children that drinking and hanging around the streets was not acceptable.

The Committee were informed that a dance group had been created to teach young people from Easington Lane and Eppleton to dance, with the hope that this would prevent them hanging around the streets. Should community chest funding be secured this would allow the dance group to continue.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Anderson, Sergeant Taylor advised that the age of those participating in the dance group was between 13-16.

A discussion then took place in relation to which subway featured in paragraph 6.5 of the report as there were two subways in close proximity to one another. Sergeant Taylor agreed to ascertain which subway it was and clarify this at the next meeting.

Councillor Anderson in referring to paragraph 6.2 requested that “target hardening” be defined. Sergeant Taylor responded that ‘target hardening measures’ was a term used by the Police to refer to the level of protection in place, for example an alarm.

The Chairman in referring to paragraph 2.3 enquired what was meant by the item now being ‘closed’. Sergeant Taylor advised that it would appear from the report that the shop selling alcohol to young people may have been prosecuted. He

confirmed that a 'closed item' would suggest that the Police been successful in taking them to Court.

Councillor Wakefield enquired whether local Police Stations could remain open beyond the usual closing time of 9.00 p.m. for the Houghton Feast. Sergeant Taylor agreed to liaise with Chief Inspector Dave Pryer regarding this issue.

3. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the LMAPS Group held on Tuesday, 2nd September, 2008 be noted.

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

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with information on Working with the Community in Regenerating Hetton Downs, which was awarded £35,970 from SIB.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Keith Hamilton, Deputy Manager for Landscape and Reclamation was present at the meeting and reported back on the project in terms of how the money had been spent and key outcomes achieved.

Councillor Anderson commented that the work undertaken was of great benefit to the Hetton area. Councillor Heron stated that the improvements were good for attracting business to the area.

Councillor Blackburn enquired whether there was any finance available for Christmas decorations. Mr. Hamilton responded advising that Hetton Town Council had earmarked an amount in 2008 to allow for this, however whether monies had been secured for future years was unknown.

4. RESOLVED that the feedback on the Working with the Community to Regenerate Hetton Downs project be received and noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining proposals for the allocation of SIB funding to support initiatives of benefit to the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, outlined the budgetary position to the Committee detailed in paragraph 4 of the report. In doing so, she advised that following the last meeting £96,478 remained to be allocated from the 2008/09 budget and that £4,400 had been returned to the budget from the June 2008 meeting, leaving a budget of £100,878 to be allocated, with a further two meetings remaining.

The Committee proceeded to consider an application for SIB funding.

(i) Houghton Kepier Sports College

Councillor Heron commented that he could not see any difference between the papers submitted to this Committee and the papers submitted to the June meeting of the Committee where the application was deferred.

Ms. Trueman confirmed that discussions had taken place with Legal Services and the City Treasurer in order to clarify some issues, and as a result a series of conditions had been agreed.

Councillor Speding stated that it would have been useful if a representative from Houghton Kepier School could have been in attendance.

Members of the Committee expected to have been provided with copies of the accounts with the report and an opportunity to question the applicants.

Full consideration having been given to the project, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the application from Houghton Kepier Sports College be deferred until a representative from the school could be in attendance.

Strategic Initiatives Budget

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted an update report (copy circulated) on live projects for which the Area Committees had previously approved funding through its Strategic Initiatives Budget.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget : 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) bringing forward 13 recommendations relating to the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 13 proposals recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest with a total value of £11,884 as detailed in Annex 1 and Annex 1A to the report.

Executive Summaries of the Meetings of the Coalfield Area Forum

Members of the Committee referred to the minutes of the Coalfield Forum Meeting held on Tuesday, 29th July, 2008 and the Coalfield Forum Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 24th September, 2008 (copies circulated).

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

Ms. Joan Carthy, Chair of the Coalfield Forum was in attendance to answer any questions arising from the meeting.

Ms. Carthy advised Members that the Forum was going from strength to strength, particularly as it had a very strong Coalfield management Committee, and that presentations provided by the young people from across the Coalfields had been exemplary.

Councillor Heron agreed with Joan Carthy's sentiments around youth and felt sad that their achievements were not publicised.

7. RESOLVED that the Executive Summaries of the Meetings of the Coalfield Area Forum be noted.

The Future of Barnardos in the South West Area Coalfield

Ms. Marion McGuinness, Children's Services Manager and Ms. Audrey Bewick, Deputy Children's Services Manager were in attendance at the meeting.

Ms. McGuinness provided the Committee with a South West Area Update. In doing so she advised that work in the Fence Houses area had been completed and that all targets had been achieved.

A consultation exercise had been undertaken which identified the Moorsley area (including Peat Carr) as the chosen area that would benefit from Barnardo's (The Hive) Community Development approach to working in communities.

Findings from the consultation and recommendations were then outlined.

Councillor Wakefield enquired whether Barnardo's had secured any accommodation at Moorsley. Ms. McGuinness responded advising that nothing had been confirmed, however work was underway with partners to try to find somewhere.

Councillor Anderson expressed delight that Moorsley had been selected as the area for Barnardo's to focus their work. Councillor Anderson felt that the area would benefit from Barnardo's help and the creation of a community meeting place.

Members thanked Ms. McGuinness and Ms. Bewick for their informative reports.

8. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

16-19 Provision Progress Reports

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) informing Members of the formal partnership arrangements that were now in place in the Coalfield Area. The report also updated Members on the plans for a "Headways Sixth Form Centre" located in the Hetton-Houghton area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Lynda Brown, Head of Standards outlined the report.

Councillor Speding commented that there seemed to be no involvement of Houghton Kepier School in approving proposals for a joint committee of three institutions in the Summer Term 2007. In response, Ms. Brown advised that a study undertaken involving Hetton School and Houghton Kepier School identified a difference in opinion between the two schools and that Houghton Kepier School hoped to establish a 16-19 Trust.

Councillor Hall enquired where the name "Headways Sixth Form" had been derived from. In response, Ms. Brown advised that it was a mining term, the name was seen to be aspirational which was why it was chosen.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Brown for her attendance.

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Update on Sunderland Community Network

Item to be deferred to the next meeting.

Demolition and Disposal of Moor House (Council Home for Older Persons), Site at Hetton

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) updating Members on the extra care development proposed at the site of Moor House, Hetton.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members were advised that the Moor House site in Hetton would be the third development in the approved Extra Care Housing programme as agreed by Cabinet in January 2005 and the reprovision of services as agreed by Cabinet in June 2008.

A series of architects drawings of Moor House were demonstrated to members, and they were informed that the scheme would cost approximately £7.2 million.

It was anticipated that Frank Haslam Milan would lead on sales and marketing of the fifty x two-bedroom apartments, and a consultation exercise would be undertaken during 2009, however pre-application work had already been undertaken in the surrounding area.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Blackburn regarding whether the criteria for nomination rights had changed, he was advised that the landlord would always have the final say and that the Council was working closely with Housing 21.

Councillor Anderson expressed slight concerns that residents who had vacated Moor House were upset to leave, and enquired whether total assurance was given to those that they would be offered alternative housing. In response, it was confirmed to Councillor Anderson that they had indeed been offered housing, and were guaranteed a place in the fully renovated Moor House should they wish to move back.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Speding, he was assured that the Council were taking up 100% nomination rights for the rented and shared ownership properties.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their attendance and welcomed further reports on the matter.

10. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Department of Health Extra Care Housing Fund Application 2008-2010

Mr. David Smith, Housing Strategy Manager was in attendance to provide Members with a verbal update on the Department of Health Extra Care Housing Fund Application 2008-2010.

Members were informed that the Council, in partnership with Gentoo and Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust had been successful in their application for funding from the Extra Care Housing Fund for 2008-2010, and were allocated the sum of £1,482,000 to develop a forty apartment mixed tenure extra care scheme and seven two-bedroom bungalows with communal facilities. This was linked to the wider regeneration of the Racecourse Estate, Houghton-le-Spring. A full financial profile was currently being worked up for the scheme which would be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

Mr. Smith went on to advise that work was scheduled to start on the Racecourse Estate during June 2009, however negotiations were taking place with the Department of Health to try to start earlier. It was then expected that the scheme would take up to one year to build.

Mr. Smith agreed to report back to the Committee after a report had been taken to Cabinet.

Councillor Heron enquired was it true that the housing within the scheme would be of an eco-friendly specification. In response, Mr. Smith confirmed that the development of the housing scheme would be of the latest innovative design. Initial drawings had been produced and residents would be consulted.

Councillor Speding enquired whether this would become a shared management scheme. Mr. Smith advised that Gentoo would manage the scheme, whilst Housing Services would provide care and support.

Councillor Anderson enquired whether shared ownership schemes were popular, and whether there was any information on this. Mr. Smith explained that the Government were encouraging shared ownership schemes to assist people get on to the property ladder.

Councillor Anderson went on to enquire about eligibility and was there any assessment criteria that had to be met to secure a home for someone that wanted to live there. Mr. Smith advised that over the age of 55 was the basic criteria and that rented units would require a full needs assessment.

Members were informed that it was hoped that the Extra Care Scheme would hopefully avoid older people going into care homes.

Councillor Wakefield welcomed the scheme, as did Councillor Heron.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Smith for his attendance.

11. RESOLVED that the information on the Extra Care Housing Scheme be noted.

(Signed) J. SCOTT,
Chairman.