

## SUNDERLAND NORTH AREA COMMITTEE

6<sup>th</sup> January 2011

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### COMMUNITY ACTION IN SUNDERLAND NORTH – PROGRESS REVIEW Work Plan 2010/11: The Greening of the North Area

##### 1. Why has it come to Committee?

- 1.1 The report provides an update of outstanding issues from the 2009/10 work plan and shows progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan, **Annex 1a**.

##### 2. Work plan 2010/11: The Greening of the North Area

###### 2.1 Community Allotments

The Community Allotment sites were agreed within the last Committee and the following funding applications have been made to support the development of the sites:

1. Community Spaces	£45,000
2. Reaching Communities	£40,000
3. SIB	£57,050

- 2.2 The SIB application will be presented to the Committee later as part of the financial information and applications.

###### 2.2 Council Allotments

In October 2010 the Police launched the Allotment Watch scheme on Summerbell allotments, this scheme would see plot holders, the Police and the Council work together to make allotment sites even safer. This scheme has raised a number of issues regarding the allotment site and potential problems witnessed and reported to the police during the launch of the scheme.

- 2.3 In addition to this an Allotment Review was undertaken as part of the Attractive and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee and an action plan developed to address the findings of the review, some of which overlapped with some of the concerns and issues highlighted by the Police.

- 2.4 The Sunderland North LMAPS have agreed a plan of action to address the issues and concerns raised as a result of the Allotment Watch Scheme working with the Allotment Officer and the Council's enforcement team.

- 2.5 In order for Area Committee to support the work being undertaken as part of LMAPS and the action plan developed to address the Allotment Review the following actions have been identified to be considered as part of a phased approach:

- Write out to all tenants to arrange to meet and validate the tenancy and confirm there are no subletting arrangements in place.
- Inspect all sites with high and inaccessible fencing to ensure sites are being used appropriately.
- Where tenants are unable to validate the tenancy agreement, these will be terminated.
- Where access is not given to sites or it is discovered the site is being used inappropriately the tenancy agreement will be terminated.
- The current tenancy agreement will be reviewed with Legal advice.
- All unlettable sites will be identified.
- Letters will be issued to individuals waiting for an allotment site to offer them an unlettable site with an agreement that they would not pay rent for an agreed number of years and potentially be provided with a financial subsidy up to an agreed amount to assist the refurbishment of the site (skips/equipment/fencing).
- The VCS network to be engaged to allow them the same opportunity or to support the refurbishment as a volunteer and commitment to improving their local area.
- The private sector will be engaged to undertake "Team Challenges" to clear sites and support bringing them back into use.
- The Probation Service and Youth Offending Service will be engaged to assist the clearance of sites and support bringing them back into use.

### 3. Cleansing of Sites

3.1 Contact has been made with private landlords regarding a joint approach to cleaning up sites identified.

3.2 A proposal was made to investigate the community use of the old Southwick School, while the site is currently unused. This would look at consideration being given to opening up the grassed area, adding signage and dog bins and incorporating the site onto the enforcement round. The site would need to be fully investigated for risk and health and safety issues but could potentially have good outcomes.

### 4 Specific Projects

#### 4.1 River Rubbish Relay

The River Rubbish Relay has been arranged to take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2011. The event will be an organised litter pick with educational heritage elements along the way.

4.2 The Community and Voluntary Sector have been engaged and will provide support, including walk leaders, community transport, information and education on heritage as part of the walk.

- 4.3 City Services are providing the equipment to litter pick.
- 4.4 At the end of the walk a mini event will be held indoors with some activities for children and adults.
- 4.5 As the event is being held on a Sunday volunteers are being asked to support the event it enables the walk to become self managed and reduce any issues regarding Health and Safety.
- 4.6 Fulwell Quarry  
This area was identified as part of the Greenspace Topic Paper as an area that could be developed to be of benefit to local communities. This area has also experienced anti social behaviour and motor cycle disorder so any developments considered need to address or reduce the behaviours.
- 4.7 The area includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance which restricts the development and use of these areas and buffer areas, meaning that restricting motorcycle activity could not be formally put into place.
- 4.8 Maps of the Fulwell Quarry site will be reviewed to identify areas where development is prevented or restricted and draft improvement proposals identified to encourage Community use.
- 4.6 Sunderland North Community Sports Complex  
CEED have been engaged to review and assess the pond area at Sunderland North Community Sports Complex to establish the area as a natural wildlife area and natural play area of benefit to local communities.
- 4.7 An Expression of Interest for SIB funding has been received from CEED in order to progress this work.

**Recommendation**

- Note the content of the report.
- Agree the recommendations regarding the works to improve Council allotment sites.
- Agree the work to progress a natural wildlife and play area at Sunderland North Community Sports Complex pending a full funding application.
- Agree the River Rubbish Relay pending full application to Community Chest budgets for funding.