

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at HERRINGTON BURN YMCA on WEDNESDAY, 23rd NOVEMBER, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Richardson in the Chair

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

Also in Attendance:-

Susan Brown	Area Community Co-ordinator	Sunderland Council
Graham Burt	Community Development Manager	Sunderland Council
Melanie Caldwell	Head of Operations	Gentoo
Tom Connor	Police Sergeant	Northumbria Police
Dave Ellison	Area Response Manager	Sunderland Council
Victoria French	Sport, Wellness and Partnership Manager	Sunderland Council
Emma Frew	Project Manager	SHARP
Cllr Juliana Heron	Member	Hetton Town Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Officer	Sunderland Council
Matthew Jackson	Governance Services Officer	Sunderland Council
Amelia Laverick	Member of the Public	
Liz McEvoy	Principal Housing Manager	Sunderland Council
Ann Owen	VCS Representative	
Malcolm Page	Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services and Area Lead Executive	Sunderland Council
Julie Parker	Public Health Practitioner	Sunderland TPCT
Rachael Putz	Coalfields Operational Manager	Sunderland Council
Liz St. Louis	Head of Cultural Services	Sunderland Council
James Third	Community Relation Officer	Nexus
Lee Wardle	VCS Representative	
Julie Wilkie	Empty Property Assistant	Sunderland Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anderson and Ellis along with Mr Ron Barrass and Ms Wendy Cook

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Community Chest and SIB

The Chairman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application for Dubmire School as a Governor of the school. He took no part in the discussion or decision making and the Vice Chairman took the Chair for the determination of this application.

Councillors Blackburn and Tate declared personal and prejudicial interests in the application for Elemore Boys Football Club as they knew Members of the club. They took no part in the discussion or determination of this application.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 21st September, 2011

Councillor Rolph stated that there was a difference between private streets and unadopted streets and the terms were not interchangeable; she asked that the minutes be checked to ensure that the correct terminology had been used throughout the minutes.

Councillor Rolph then referred to page 8 of the minutes and advised that it was the nPower site at Rainton Bridge which had resulted in the increased traffic on the B1284 rather than a new housing estate as was recorded in the minutes. She also stated that Councillor Ellis' comments around near misses on the roads seemed to be worded badly and asked that this be amended.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 21st September, 2011 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the above amendments.

Community Action in Coalfield – Progress Review

Local Shopping Centres (Coalfield Shopping Initiative)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the progress made against the agreed actions on the Committee's work plan for 2011/12.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that the timescales involved had been quite short, there had been leaflets distributed to promote the events. There had already been funds allocated to the priority and

there were suggested projects detailed in the report which would be funded from this ringfenced budget should Members agree.

Councillor J. Heron stated that Hetton Town Council and the Hetton Centre had done a lot of work around the Christmas events.

Councillor Tate commented that a Christmas Market would be taking place and there would be a Santa's grotto.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The Christmas Marketing Campaign detailed at Annex 2 be approved
- b. The proposals and associated costs set out in paragraphs 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the report and the associated costs be approved.

Play Provision (Kirklee Field Development)

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the work done around the potential improvements at Kirklee Field which had been confirmed as a priority during the Play and Urban Games Review which the Committee had been presented with in September 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Victoria French, Sport, Wellness and Partnership Manager, presented the report and advised that there was funding from Section 106 agreements of £83,532 which would not provide a lot of facilities on the site, it was therefore asked that Members give consideration to the allocation of SIB funding to increase the available funds to £115,000 which would allow for a lot more to be provided.

Councillor Heron stated that he had been trying to get a play area in this area for a long time. This was a big housing area and the only other accessible play area was a distance away from the housing. He queried whether any surveys had been carried out in the area.

Ms French advised that the location in relation to the housing developments had been looked into. There was a need to ensure that any facility was good value for money and this was why it was preferred for there to be one large site rather than a number of smaller satellite sites.

Councillor D. Smith welcomed the proposal. This was the only site in the area where children would not be forced to cross a major road to access it. He hoped that the Committee would be minded to agree to provide the funding.

Councillor Rolph stated that it was difficult to visualise how much of a difference the extra £36,000 would make; she asked what would be provided in comparison with other sites which had been refurbished.

Ms French stated that it was difficult to say what would be able to be done until work commenced on site. Pictures of other parks showing what was provided

there for different costs could be provided however it would not be possible to provide mock up images of this site or detail of what it would cost exactly.

Councillor Scott moved that SIB funding of £16,468 be allocated to the works to provide a total amount of available funds of £100,000. Councillor Blackburn seconded this motion.

Ms Hopper advised that the grant of funding would still be subject to consultation and full application and approval.

Councillor Rolph then referred to the table at paragraph 2.1 and advised that priority 45 should be referring to Fence Houses rather than Chiltern Moor.

It was then:-

3. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The development at Kirklee Field be agreed,
 - b. An SIB application for £16,468 to support the Kirklee Field development be received.

Empty and Problematic Properties

The Director of Health Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on the agreed actions in the work plan for 2011/12 on the Empty and Problematic Properties priority.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Liz McEvoy, Principal Housing Manager, and Julie Wilkie, Empty Property Assistant, presented the report. Ms McEvoy advised that Alan Caddick had attended a previous meeting and this report was a follow up to that. The Empty Properties Action Plan had now been agreed by Cabinet and the target was to bring 100 empty properties back into use; to date there had been 73 properties brought back into use. The Council had received £577,000 from the Government New Homes Bonus. There had been £250,000 made available by the Council to provide loans to enable owners to refurbish 50 properties across the city which must then be either tenanted or occupied by the owner.

There would also be £327,000 made available to registered social landlords to buy the most problematic properties on the estates then provide the houses to homeless people, this was expected to cover 5 to 10 properties. The council would be working closely with gentoo who had been awarded government funding of £200,000 to refurbish 10 properties across the city; these properties would be refurbished by unemployed young people who would then be given the opportunity to move into the houses.

Councillor Blackburn stated that he thought that the proposals had been solely for houses in the rental sector not owner occupied properties. Ms McEvoy advised that the proposals had been amended to improve flexibility.

Councillor J. Heron then referred to Maudlin Street and was informed by Ms McEvoy that 12 sales had been completed with a further 2 agreed with the solicitors. These empty properties would be demolished.

Councillor Rolph commented that terraced houses in the area were often difficult to let due to them being on unadopted streets. She suggested that there could be loans awarded to allow the streets to be improved as this would then increase the desirability of all houses on the street. Ms McEvoy stated that the focus would be on the refurbishment of houses, she agreed to look into the wording of the financial assistance policy.

Councillor Rolph then stated that she had asked a similar question at a Scrutiny Committee Meeting and had been informed by Alan Caddick that this would not be ruled out.

Councillor Heron then queried whether the funding awarded to gentoo would be available only for improvements to gentoo properties. Ms McEvoy advised that gentoo would be looking at their estates but not just at the houses they owned.

Councillor Heron then commented that some houses were unfit for habitation. He also pondered where the people who had lived in now empty houses had gone.

Councillor Hall stated that this was welcome news and commented that the funding that would be available for each property was only a very small amount. She queried how it would be ensured that properties were brought back into use following the works. There had been excellent work done in Shiney Row with a number of houses having been occupied or improved.

Ms McEvoy stated that there would be a requirement to sign a legal agreement which would require the property to be occupied and not sit empty after the works had been carried out.

Sergeant Connor suggested that landlords could be required to join the Council's Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Ms McEvoy stated that it would be desirable if landlords joined the scheme as it would enable them to use the Council's tenant vetting service.

4. RESOLVED that the update be noted and that regular updates be received.

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 the actions where there had been updates had been addressed in the separate update reports.

5. RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) Interim Performance Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed the Committee of how the money allocated through SIB and SIP had been used during April – September 2011, how successful the projects had been in achieving their original objectives and how the projects would continue to perform.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that this update was up until the end of September and since then there had been further progress made on the projects.

Susan Brown advised that there had been a large number of events held for the Coalfield Community Challenge. As part of this a calendar had been produced, copies of which were available for £5 with the money being used to buy more bulbs to be planted for spring.

Councillor Rolph commented that she hoped that the success of this year would be able to be carried forward to next year. Next year was not only the Olympics but also the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; there were a lot of people who wanted to be able to hold events for this.

Councillor Speding then referred to the River Wear Trail and the concerns around the lack of progress made with this and with the works at Alice Well. Alice Well was a registered national site and as such needed to be preserved; there had been efforts to get Northumbrian Water to reinstate some form of water supply to the well, even if it was not drinking water, he asked whether any progress had been made with this.

Councillor Hall added that Northumbrian Water had concerns that the drinking water supply could be contaminated; she thought that they would have been able to ensure that this would not happen.

Ms Hopper advised that there had been a meeting of the Heritage Task and Result group which Mark Taylor, Senior Conservation Officer, had attended. Mr Taylor had advised that there would be works undertaken to improve Alice Well. There was to be a meeting with Tim Ducker and it could be arranged for the Ward Members to attend this meeting.

Councillor Scott expressed concerns over how long it has taken for very little work to take place. There was a lot of money given a long time ago. There had been a

lot of delay with the installation of the ramp for the footbridge. He had spoken to Tim Ducker to try to get the work done more quickly.

6. RESOLVED that the performance update be given consideration.

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 14 Community Chest requests.

The 4 SIB proposals totalled £47,641 and should all of the applications be approved there would be £79,550 remaining in the budget.

It was suggested that £5,000 previously allocated to the Allotments Priority be moved to the Community Challenge project.

The Community Chest applications totalled £9,033 which would leave £23,710 to be allocated across all four wards.

There had been an exercise undertaken to reclaim any Community Chest funding which had not been spent and this had resulted in a total of £6,599 being returned to the budget.

Ms Hopper also informed the Committee that Councillor Ellis had raised some concerns regarding the Community Chest Application for Dubmire Primary School which she wanted the Committee to be aware of. Councillor Ellis had not felt that it was appropriate for three people to be flown to the other side of the world in the name of sustainability given that this would create massive amounts of carbon emissions; also she did not see how this would benefit the residents of the wider community.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The financial information set out in sections 2.1 and 2.2 and Annex 4 be noted
- b. The SIB applications detailed in Annex 5 be agreed.
- c. £5,000 previously approved SIB funding be moved from the Allotments Priority to the Community Challenge Project.
- d. The 14 proposals for support from the 2011/12 Community Chest as set out in Annex 6 be approved.

Influencing Practice Policy and Strategy

Sunderland in 2012

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed the Committee of the work around the proposed Sunderland in 2012 programme and which sought Members views on the proposals.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Victoria French, Sport, Wellness and Partnership Manager, and Graham Burt, Community Development Manager, presented the report. There was to be a workshop held for Members to enable them to inform and shape the content of the programme to ensure that the opportunities and activities were relevant to the area. It was important that the activities were decided on soon as it was intended that there would be events taking place from January right through until the Olympics. There were a number of outcomes which it was hoped would be achieved through the delivery of the programme and some of the aims linked into the Committee's priorities; the outcomes were detailed in the report at paragraph 3.4.

The Chairman queried when the nominations for Torch Bearers would be taking place. Ms French advised that the nominations were done on a national basis and anyone could make nominations. There was a focus on 12-24 year olds. The route would not be finalised until a short time before the Torch Relay took place. It was known that when the torch was passing through Sunderland that torch bearers from Sunderland would be used.

Councillor J. Heron expressed her pleasure that it would be local people who would be carrying the Olympic Torch as it passed through the city.

Ms French then stated that it was exciting that Penshaw had been chosen to be a key location for the events in Sunderland.

The Chairman commented that it was pleasing that the route was passing through Sunderland. It was not an overnight stop like some cities but that was a good thing as it allowed more flexibility in the events which were held to commemorate this.

Councillor Rolph stated that there was a lack of BME representation in the publications for the Sunderland in 2012 programme; there was a need to ensure that all parts of the community were represented. Ms French advised that there were not a lot of strong images available for some of the communities; there was work being done with these communities to get strong images.

Councillor Rolph then referred to the proposal for SIB funding of £10,000, she queried how it would be ensured that good value for money would be achieved. Ms French advised that there would be a workshop held and at this workshop there would be the opportunity to look at how the money could be used to support events.

In relation to the allocation of an Olympic ring to each area Councillor Rolph suggested that the Coalfield have the green ring given that this was the greenest area of the city.

Councillor Heron stated that as next year was also the Queen's Diamond Jubilee there was a need to look at how the celebrations for both could be linked.

Susan Brown stated that there was a lot of work being done with the Area Networks and in January the events for the year would be planned.

8. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The committee inform and contribute to the development of the Sunderland in 2012 programme
 - b. SIB funding of £10,000 be approved, subject to full application, consultation and appraisal to support the delivery of the Sunderland in 2012 programme
 - c. Members be invited to the workshop session to contribute towards the development of the Sunderland in 2012 programme.

City Village Concept

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which offered Members the opportunity to be consulted on the City Village Concept and its relevance to the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Karon Purvis, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that the City Village concept was a part of the wider Economic Masterplan for the city. There had been work done in 2009 to identify the 'natural neighbourhoods' in the city; 65 of these natural neighbourhoods had been identified and this information formed the starting point for the development of the City Village boundaries.

Councillor Blackburn stated that when he had originally seen the information three years ago he could not understand how the neighbourhoods had been identified; it seemed nothing had changed. Easington Lane and Moorsley were two separate villages however they had been lumped together into one neighbourhood.

Ms Purvis advised that the neighbourhoods had been identified by asking residents what they called the area they lived in. during the further development of the concept there would be investigation to a much lower level. The neighbourhoods identified were not the City Villages.

Councillor Scott commented that he felt that the boundaries shown on the map were wrong, he queried whether they were the final boundaries. He also commented that he had not been consulted on this and queried what consultation had taken place.

Ms Purvis advised that the boundaries were not final; the neighbourhoods identified were not the City Villages. The neighbourhoods were the make up of the area today and would inform the City Villages which would have communities integrated with each other. Within the City Villages there needed to be a mix of housing types to allow choice and encourage aspirations.

Councillor Wakefield stated that he felt that this was a solution to a problem that did not exist. This area was made up of long established villages and the money that would be spent on this project would be better spent elsewhere.

Ms Purvis stated that this project was about the development of improved support for neighbourhoods, not the renaming of neighbourhoods.

Councillor Rolph commented that the Leamside Line divided Fence Houses in half; half of the village was in Sunderland while the other was in County Durham; there was a need to ensure that both halves of the community benefited from this work. She then expressed concern over the amount of jargon that had been used in the report; if there was a desire to engage with residents there the information needed to be in plain English. She queried what place-shielding and place-shaping were.

Ms Purvis advised that place-shielding was short term work while place-shaping was long term. The online questionnaire for residents had been written in plain English.

In response to Councillor J. Heron, Ms Purvis advised that there would be five pilot areas identified; there was a need to ensure that a mix of different types of area were selected for the pilots and there was a need to look at the differing methodology which would have to be used in each area.

In response to queries from Councillor Speding, Ms Purvis stated that the work would allow better integration of services provided by the Council and its partners and would improve services for residents. Multiple neighbourhoods would be focused around one major local shopping centre.

Councillor Heron commented that the character of the whole city was constantly changing. He also suggested that the areas where there were pockets of deprivation be identified rather than identifying the whole, wider area as being deprived.

Councillor Speding referred to New Herrington which was recognised as being a village with its own distinct community. He also stated that there had been a lot of employment lost in the area and due to this the demographics of the area had changed.

Ms Purvis stated that the work was a practical tool to show what needed to be done to reduce the levels of deprivation and improve areas. There would be a report to Cabinet which would be looking at the identification of the pilot areas across the city and there would be a report presented to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

9. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The report be noted
- b. The Committee be engaged and consulted further with regard to the development of the City Village pilot areas and the benefits it could bring to area arrangements.

(Signed) D. RICHARDSON,
Chairman.