

**COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE**

5 JANUARY 2011

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW****Workplan 2009/2010, Workplan 2010/11 and Task Group Updates.****Coalfield in Bloom****1. Why has it come to Committee?**

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 1**).

**2 Progress report on 2010/11 priority: Bulb Planting and Landscaping**

The Coalfield in Bloom project has two elements to it – machine planting and community planting. Both elements have been successfully implemented and the project is now ready to move to Phase 2. This next phase will encourage and support the local community and voluntary groups involved to date (over 60 including schools and residents' groups) to further develop their capacity in order to undertake a wider range of partnership projects within their own neighbourhoods. The Coalfield Community Co-ordinator, the VCS Network and Gentoo are providing support and guidance to the VCS groups/residents to prepare joint funding bids with BBC Children in Need, Big Lottery, Play Grant and Aspire to further develop projects that have evolved from the Coalfield in Bloom Community Project. Plans have also been drawn up for a Community Garden at the Hetton Centre which is a partnership project with Groundwork, local residents and the VCS.

Phase 2 of the project will also include joint working with relevant officers and partners to research opportunities to develop community gardens and improve allotment sites. The results and action plan of the allotment review carried out by the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee will be considered as part of this work to avoid duplication and support work already being implemented.

In December 2010 a meeting was held with the Coalfield Area Officer, City Allotments Officer and Parks Development Manager to investigate the options for refurbishment and bringing back into use sites identified in the Allotment Review as unlettable. It was suggested that a pilot (2 allotment sites in the Coalfield area) programme be implemented offering individuals on the relevant waiting list up to two years free rent and a small amount of financial support for items such as equipment hire, fencing etc.. if they take on a plot deemed as unlettable. Officers and partners (Northumbria Police, Gentoo, VCS Network) will help to identify two sites which would most benefit from this initial pilot. The Allotment Watch scheme was also discussed and this will be further explored with Northumbria Police and the Allotment Officer for the City.

**Recommendation**

Members are requested to:

Note the update and agree to Phase 2 of the project including development of allotment and community garden facilities

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Officer 0191 5617912 or  
Susan Brown, Coalfield Community Co-ordinator 0191 5616664

# COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2011

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW Workplan 2009/2010, Workplan 2010/11 and Task Group Updates.

#### Heritage

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

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 1**).

**2. Progress report on 2010/11 Priority: Heritage**

A consultant has now been appointed to carry out an audit and develop an action plan for delivery of projects against the heritage priority. The Task and Result group nominated a small steering group to ensure effective delivery of this work and to monitor performance. The steering group held an inception meeting with the consultants in December to ensure they have the relevant information they need to commence the work. The Task and Result group met in December 2010 to begin to plot heritage sites and groups in order to support the work of the consultants. The consultants will liaise with members of the Task and Result group during January 2011 to ensure that they are aware of all relevant information gathering opportunities across the area. This will form the basis of the first part of their programmed work plan which will include community consultation in each of the four wards of the Coalfield area.

**3. Next Steps**

Due to the extent of the work covered by the Heritage theme, the Task and Result group recommended that the scoping exercise as described above be carried out before any further resources are approved against Heritage projects. However, it is recognised that funding for 2010/11 should be allocated against the priorities selected for 2010/11. Therefore it is recommended that Committee consider allocating a nominal budget of £40,000 to the Heritage theme, as described in the finance Item 3b.

**Recommendation**

Members are requested to:

- Note the update and agree to receiving recommendations from the Task and Result Group with regards to next steps
- Consider allocating £40,000 to the Heritage priority (as set out in Item 3b of this report)

Contact Officer: Vicki Medhurst, Cultural Heritage Manager 0191 5618411  
e-mail [vicki.medhurst@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:vicki.medhurst@sunderland.gov.uk)

# COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2011

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW Workplan 2009/2010, Workplan 2010/11 and Task Group Updates.

#### Local Shopping Centres

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

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 1**).

**2. Progress report on 2010/11 priority: Local Shopping Centres**

At the November 2010 meeting of Coalfield Area Committee, it was agreed that £5,000 SIB would be provided to carry out an audit of the three shopping centres identified as the focus of this piece of work (Hetton, Houghton and Shiney Row). The audit will include a 'headcount' of each unit, what each shop provides (what sector it is in), who owns the properties and will also take account of the vacant units. Existing traders will be interviewed. It will also consider access to the centres (walking, driving and public transport) and what brings local shoppers to the area (or prevents them from shopping in the area).

The audit will use a range of methods including face to face interviews with shoppers and a 'walk round' of each area by the Business Investment Team and Street Scene officers. The audit will allow the next steps, including support for existing businesses, attracting new businesses, environmental and public realm improvements and identification of some easily implemented projects to be progressed.

The audit will commence in January 2011 and the initial survey work will be completed by the end of February. This information will then be presented to the Task and Result Group with some suggested actions which will be presented to Area Committee for consideration.

**3. Next Steps**

Due to the extent of the work covered by the Local Shopping Centres priority, the Task and Result group recommended that the scoping exercise as described above be carried out before any further resources are approved against Shopping Centre projects. However, it is recognised that funding for 2010/11 should be allocated against the priorities selected for 2010/11. Therefore it is recommended that Committee consider allocating a nominal budget of £80,000 to the Local Shopping Centres priority, as described in the finance Item 3b.

**Recommendation**

Members are requested to:

- Note the update and agree to receive the results of the audit and a suggested action plan
- Consider allocating £80,000 to the Shopping Centres priority (as set out in Item 3b of this report)

# COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2011

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW Workplan 2009/2010, Workplan 2010/11 and Task Group Updates.

#### Child Poverty

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

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 1**).

**2. Progress report on 2010/11 priority: Child Poverty**

The Sunderland Partnership has agreed to lead on reducing child and family poverty in Sunderland. An important aspect of the partnership working necessary to take this agenda forward is to have an agreed strategy in place which will provide a single focus across the city.

The first phase (2010-11) of Sunderland's strategic approach to reducing child and family poverty has produced the following products:

- A Sunderland three phased model to tackling child and family poverty
- A Governance structure in place with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as lead, supported by the Child Poverty Board.
- Committed 'buy-in' from all strategic partners
- A greater level of understanding of child and family poverty issues in Sunderland
- A Child and Family Poverty Strategy that was developed in partnership, with a wide range of partners actively engaged and then consulted
- Engagement of young people in the planning process (including the development of a DVD)
- An initial high-level Action Plan which covered the scope of the actions across the partnership to tackle child and family poverty
- Senior Management support within Sunderland City Council and partners
- A Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment completed
- A regional profile on an innovative and progressive approach
- A national profile with the Child Poverty Unit (CPU)
- Performance Framework in place with Partners signed up

In order to provide a partnership response to the challenges that child and family poverty present to the city, a comprehensive Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment was carried out.

From this Needs Assessment, Phase 2 of the Child and Family Poverty Strategy has been developed, which will support the Council and its partners to work towards the aim of eradicating child and family poverty in the city and improve the life chances of Sunderland's children and young people.

**3. Next Steps**

The findings of the Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment 2010 provide the basis of the revised Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy. The

Phase 2 Strategy also takes into account the outcome of the consultation process, the national evidence base and a Development Workshop held on 10 November 2010. This timely review will enable Partners to take account of the Strategies Priorities in the re-shaping of services following the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Initial consideration by the Child Poverty Board and Working Group has identified the following priorities for consideration:

- **Employment**: focussing on the long-term unemployed, training opportunities and engaging local businesses in the agenda
- **Children's Services and Education**: focussing on access to childcare and Children's Centres by our poorest families, narrowing the attainment gap and reducing the number of NEETS
- **Health and Quality of Life**: a focus on reducing teenage conceptions, child obesity, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, smoking related disease, improved lifestyles through physical activity and safer communities.
- **Housing**: with a focus on supporting the socially excluded, the provision for homeless families, improvements to unfit housing and tackling fuel poverty
- **Financial Inclusion**: focussing on increasing financial capability, improved advice and reducing indebtedness.

The overarching priority for the child and family poverty strategy in Sunderland would therefore be to focus on the five priorities and:

- **Make child and family poverty everybody's business through adopting an approach to 'child and family poverty proof' Strategic Plans of all Partners as routine practice.**
- **To develop integrated neighbourhood models of service to retarget and deliver Early Years and Early Intervention.**

The strategy was approved by Cabinet on 1 December 2010.

#### **Recommendation**

Members are requested to:

- Note the update and agree to receive a further report in March/April 2011

Contact Officer: Raj Singh, Children's Services  
e-mail [raj.singh@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:raj.singh@sunderland.gov.uk)

# COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2011

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

#### Review of Greenspace Strategy

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

1.1 The report provides of one of the 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. Report on the CoalfieldArea Workshop:**

2.1 Elected members, partners, residents and officers attended the workshop, held at The Hetton Centre in October 2010. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- 1) Help identify greenspace sites missing from the register
- 2) Scrutinise existing sites on the register and check their suitability for inclusion
- 3) Consider whether the primary purpose identified for each site was correct and suggest alternatives where necessary.

2.2 During the workshop ward maps were examined by participants, with over 50 comments received on land usage and proposed future projects, all of which are all being investigated by lead Officers within the Council. These include:

- Consideration of the vast amounts of farm land and woodland in the area
- The condition of some of the allotment sites
- Potential play and sports site development

2.3 In addition partners from The Woodland Trust, Durham Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Gentoo, University of Sunderland and Taylor Wimpey expressed an interest in becoming involved and have all received electronic copies of the maps to comment on.

2.4 In December 2010, the Area Co-ordination Team and Planning Policy met up to discuss the next workshop. The second workshop will be held during the afternoon of 27 January 2011 and will be used to feedback on queries raised at the first workshop and present new updated maps. The appraisals of the sites are complete and the results will be shared asking delegates key questions, for instance: What would you like to see more of in your area? How far would you be prepared to travel for specific amenities? The findings of the workshop will then inform a survey which will be posted on the Council's website for residents to complete. The results will shape the Greenspace Topic Paper which will be presented to Cabinet.

**Recommendation:**

Area Committee are requested to

- Note the information regarding the second workshop and receive further updates regarding the outcome of the workshop and future actions

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Office of the Chief Executive, Tel: 0191 561 7912  
Email: [pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk)

# COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2011

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

#### Responsive Local Services (RLS)

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

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 1**).

##### 2 Progress report on 2010/11 priority RLS

RLS is a method of area working designed to:

- Increase levels of resident satisfaction through providing services that are responsive to community needs and effectively communicating improvements
- Tailor services in recognition of differing area/locality circumstances either through local problem solving or adapting service standards
- Recognise and enhance the community leadership role of elected members.

The current scope of RLS covers the service areas of Litter, Graffiti, Refuse, Grass Cutting, Dumping of Waste and Dog Fouling. It also provides the opportunity for a wider range of issues to be considered within a context of local problem solving.

The Street Lighting service requests – as noted within the November committee report are to be addressed via the Intelligence Group. The PFI Contract Monitoring Officer receives the Street Lighting issues and addresses them as required.

The Noise service requests – as noted within the November committee report are to be addressed via an Out of Hours Noise Service pilot. Details of which can be found within the body of this report.

#### Service Requests

The tables below provide a view of the volume of service requests for the services in scope for October and November 2010.

Service Area – Oct 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Animal Fouling	22	13	16	17	15
Grass Cutting	2	0	2	4	10
Graffiti	1	14	3	7	12
Rubbish and Litter	107	92	94	93	91
Refuse and recycling	201	218	247	223	208
Dumping of Waste	211	281	154	124	96

Service Area – Nov 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Animal Fouling	24	12	14	4	7
Grass Cutting	0	0	0	0	0
Graffiti	5	14	6	3	5
Rubbish and Litter	51	75	70	77	47
Refuse and recycling	189	233	265	257	262
Dumping of Waste	220	264	142	146	81

### **3 What does the analysis tell us and what action are we taking?**

- 3.1 **Refuse and Recycling** - In relation to the number of refuse and recycling service requests – analysis has highlighted that the increase in service requests is linked to the transitional arrangements for the new dry recycling scheme
- 3.2 **Grass Cutting** - service requests have increased within the Coalfield Area – in relation to the cutting of bank sides. Currently health and safety concerns prevented the service from being able to fully undertake this task until safer working practices were implemented.
- 3.3 **Animal fouling** – Borrowdale Street, Peat Carr – link path between Station Avenue and Rose Avenue at Fence Houses and Meadow Street East Rainton. Street Cleansing Staff are working with the Environmental Enforcement Officers to alert them to dog fouling issues in these areas.
- 3.4 **Graffiti** - The Graffiti Service is addressing service requests more efficiently due to the introduction of mobile technology. Calls from residents asking the Council to carry out clean-ups have fallen over the last year since Sunderland City Council issued 250 frontline staff with mobile telephones and some with handheld computers.

This new way of working means that in many cases staff are able to nip problems in the bud, resulting in quicker and more efficient service for residents. In some cases graffiti is being removed within minutes of being identified.

- 3.5 **Dumping of Waste** - Some specific examples of enforcement activity in the Coalfield area to address the dumping of waste are detailed below:

**Thrunton Court – Complaints re household waste dumped.** No evidence available – area being monitored.

**Front Street, Fencehouses** – rubbish and litter in lane. – Area being monitored.

#### **Ongoing dog fouling complaints – monitoring activity**

Buckland Close, Lumley Street – Grasswell, Dorset Road - Easington Lane, South View Terrace, South Hetton Road – Hetton, Herrington Country Park, East Herrington Park, Hetton Lyons Park, Elemore Playing fields, Elemore Golf Club, Houghton Cemetery, Newbottle Street, Penshaw, Durham Road playing field.

**Shiney Row Shops** – unlawful waste deposit. Advice given by Environmental Enforcement Officer - area being monitored.

**Gillas Lane** – Cars advertised for sale on highway. Environmental Enforcement Officer currently working with the Police. A working group is being established to consider wider approach to nuisance vehicles and nuisance parking.

**Hazard Lane –fly-tip** – Household waste fly-tipped on private land. Investigations ongoing.

**Hetton Lyons Park – fly-tip** – bulky household items. Witness statements are currently being compiled. Evidence is available from 3 fly-tip incidents. Fly-tip prosecution pending.

### **4 Intelligence Group**



The Intelligence Group which meets on a monthly basis – attended by Sunderland City Council, Gentoo and the Police, discussed local issues using various information tools including service requests, staff reporting line, estate walkabouts and councillor and community group enquiries. Voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups in the area have welcomed this opportunity to share information and intelligence.

- 4.1 **Allotments** – the service requests relating to Allotments continues to rise, as local people aspire to grow their own. Environment Scrutiny Committee is currently reviewing the Allotments Service and the potential to expand the service offered across the City. The committee are also looking at alternative ways to fund allotments. A pilot is currently running within the North Area, working with Groundworks to deliver new community allotments and community gardens. The Sunderland.gov.uk website has been updated, enabling residents to request an allotment online as well as post general enquiries.
- 4.2 **Traffic and Highways** – Large number of service requests have been received in relation to traffic and highway issues. Streetscene are currently restructuring and improving processes to ensure a more timely response to service requests. The service is also developing a system to prioritise service requests, which will be of increased importance in light of anticipated further reductions in LTP funding.
- 4.3 **Issues identified by the VCS** – Friends of Hetton Bogs have identified an ongoing issue with litter at the entrance to Hetton Lyons Country Park, which will be monitored. A local residents group has identified the need for bins in the Burnside School area in order to minimise dog fouling along the footpath. The Coalfield Area Community Coordinator has been working with the Sunderland Volunteer Centre to organise a Team Challenge to address the issue of graffiti at Flatts Youth Centre and the issue of litter around the Penshaw Community Centre. (A Team Challenge involves a team of employees working together to achieve a specific project for a community group, usually, although not always, within one working day).

## **5 City Services – Area Response Managers**

- 5.1 All of the new Area Response Managers for Streetscene should be appointed by the date of the Area Committee.
- 5.2 The Area Response Manager for the Coalfield Area will attend each Area Committee.
- 5.3 The Area Response Manager will introduce him/her self known to each of the Committee members and will also promote their role within each ward, holding drop-in sessions for local residents to talk to them about any issues they may have. The Area Response Manager will ensure local councillors are aware of any issues raised and address issues as appropriate, directing resources and coordinating activity, as required within the local area.

## **6 Locally Targeted Communication Messages: Recognition for Action**

- 6.1 It is important that feedback is given to residents to ensure they understand what services have been delivered within their area and how Sunderland Council is developing its service offer to ensure value for money.
- 6.2 The Area Response Manager and Area Officer, alongside the area Communications Team representative, who attend each Area Committee, will work together to ensure local news stories, relating to services delivered, are shared with the media and within the Area Newsletters – which will have a dedicated Responsive Local Services page within each issue.

6.3 This approach will be supported by a targeted campaign to promote the appointment of the Area Response Manager and the local response team. Postcards will also be used to promote local activity, encouraging residents to get involved in the improvement of their city.

6.4 Due to the number of service requests relating to the dumping of waste, it is proposed to develop a campaign to promote the services available from the council to remove white goods for free throughout the year, the bulky collection service as well as the recycling sites across the city.

## **7 Out Of Hours Noise Service – Pilot Approach**

7.1 Evidence suggests that noise nuisance affects all areas of the city to some degree and as such it is proposed to provide a pilot Out of Hours Noise Response Team to all areas of the City.

7.2 The pilot involves collaborative working with Northumbria Police in support of the Noisy Party Pilot Scheme. The scheme was in place from 25<sup>th</sup> October and continued until December 19<sup>th</sup>, across the City as an initial response to noise complaints.

7.3 The results of the pilot are being used to consider how the noise services should operate in future in terms of the most effective means to deliver the service and improve customer satisfaction.

## **8 Working Together With Gentoo**

8.1 The Area Response Managers are now meeting with their counterpart within Gentoo on a bi-monthly basis to share information and to ensure close working arrangements. The purpose of the meeting is to address day-to-day service issues and to work together to support service delivery alignment where possible – sharing work programmes in particular. Training has been delivered to Gentoo front line staff explaining Sunderland City Council's service delivery methodology and to communicate staffing structures.

8.2 The Customer Services section from Sunderland City Council is also working together with their counterparts at Gentoo to share customer intelligence to support service delivery – particularly sharing messages and improving response times to address service requests.

## **9 Strategic Land Management (SLM)**

9.1 Phase 2 of the Strategic Land Management Project is well underway. All council owned land has been inspected and work has begun with Land & Property Services to carry out the data cleansing with help of 2 Officers from the SWITCH Team.

9.2 The next step is to use the gathered data to prepare the GIS information layers that will populate the initial SLM viewer. This will include layers showing land maintenance costs, Gentoo land ownership, leasehold and Customer Service data. The completed SLM viewer will be tested and then presented to area committees in March 2011.

### **Recommendation**

Members are requested to:

- Note the report and receive further updates regarding any issues arising from the intelligence group.

**Contact Officer:** Helen Peverley  
Tel: 0191 5617532 e-mail: [helen.peverley@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:helen.peverley@sunderland.gov.uk)