

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at HOUGHTON KEPIER SPORTS COLLEGE, DIARY LANE, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING on WEDNESDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor J. Scott in the Chair

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

Also in Attendance:-

Judith Allen	- Family Adult and Community Learning, Sunderland Council
Susan Brown	- Coalfield Forum
Kath Butchert	- Youth Development Group, Sunderland Council
Graham Carr	- Highway Maintenance, Sunderland Council
Steve Dodds	- Nexus
Tim Ducker	- Rights of Way, Sunderland Council
Graham Finlay	- Northumbria Police
Paul Gray	- Sunderland TPCT
Emma Hindmarsh	- Democratic Services, Sunderland Council
Pauline Hopper	- Area Officer, Sunderland Council
Julie Heathcote	- Corporate Communications, Sunderland Council
Jill Laverick	- Corporate Communications, Sunderland Council
Vivienne Metcalf	- Community Development, Sunderland Council
Andrew Perkin	- Business and Investment Team, Sunderland Council
Les Platt	- Diversity Team, Sunderland Council
Mike Poulter	- Project and Service Development, Sunderland Council
Judith Quinn	- Sunderland College
Mike Shepherd	- Houghton Kepier School
Derek Welsh	- Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Team, Sunderland Council
Paul Wilson	- Connexions

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor A. Hall.

Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all those present to introduce themselves.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 9th September, 2009

- i) Referring to page 5, paragraph 9, Councillor Wakefield advised that the Thematic Feedback report (Annex 2) gave a more accurate reflection of the action requested regarding the transplanting of trees from Russell Foster Woods.
- ii) Page 6, paragraph 4, 'taxi car' is amended to read 'taxi card' and the sentence "... Nexus need to be more accountable for public transport" be amended to read "Bus companies needed to be more accountable..."

1. RESOLVED that

- i) the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 9th September, 2009 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the above amendments.
- ii) Members receive a list of all services subsidised (secured) by Nexus.

Questions to Area Committee

There were no questions to the Area Committee received.

Variation in the Order of Business

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed to consider Item 8, Responsive Local Services at Item 5 on the agenda.

Responsive Local Services

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise the Committee of the commencement of the Responsive Local Services (RLS) project which forms part of the Council's Community Programme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Mike Poulter, Head of Project and Service Development, was in attendance and presented the report advising that from the January cycle of meetings a report would be brought to the Committee indicating how neighbourhood services were performing and being delivered with regard to litter, refuse collection, grass cutting, graffiti and dog fouling.

Councillor Wakefield advised that it was important that an accurate baseline was established before performance could be measured.

Mr. Poulter informed the Committee that there would be an agreed generic service standard for everyone across the City with an established baseline.

In response to a question from Councillor Ellis, Mr. Poulter advised that feedback reports would be brought back to each Committee cycle, preferably with a pictorial visual aid that could be easily understood.

Councillor Rolph welcomed the move from a 'one size fits all' approach. However, she questioned the resource capacity of the City Services Directorate to be able to deliver the Project effectively.

Mr. Poulter advised that the resource implications had to be considered carefully in the first instance. Services needed to be tailored and delivered in an area and there was a clear imperative from the Directorate to establish a map of the issues and make headway in terms of tailoring.

Councillor Rolph referred to the Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS) which already looked at anti social behaviour in an area and hoped that other groups would not be duplicating work that was already being done.

Mr. Poulter advised that the Area Committee would look at existing mechanisms in place and if necessary refer any issues to them. Furthermore if they deemed it appropriate, the Committee could agree that a working group is established to discuss a particular issue in more detail.

Councillor Anderson stated that the Coalfields was a large geographical area with differing priorities and preferences in respective neighbourhoods. She queried whether this was recognised within the project and how tailoring would work.

Mr. Poulter advised that the project was in its early stages and would initially focus on high volume neighbourhood services. As the project was developed, the second wave would be more sophisticated, tailoring service standards to match local need.

Councillor Speding referred the issues that could possibly arise when a number of providers were responsible for services in an area, for example, Gentoo and the Council both carry out grass cutting provision in certain neighbourhoods. As Gentoo would have different performance standards Councillor Speding queried how this would be resolved.

Mr. Poulter advised that the Council would work with partners such as Gentoo at a local level to ensure agreement on uniform service standards.

2. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

Coalfield a Learning Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which asked Members to consider and identify their main proposals for further development and action in relation to their Learning Area priority theme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, reminded Members that the Committee had agreed its work programme for the year at its meeting held in June and that the Learning priority was the third to come to the Committee for discussion and consideration.

Ms. Lynda Brown, Head of Standards, took Members through each of the seven priority issues, as detailed below. Each priority was considered in turn and Members were given an update with regard to current activity and actions taken for each.

- i) Provide non academic support and advice for children and young people.
- ii) Adequate youth provision to be available for all wards.
- iii) Prepare young people for adult life through encouragement and building of confidence.
- iv) Raise aspirations of children/young people and their families.
- v) Raise attainment levels and skills of young people.
- vi) More support for 14-19 year olds regarding employability skills.
- vii) Address issues around lack of public transport in some areas.

Kath Butchert, Integrated Youth Officer, Children's Services, provided a further update to the Committee regarding current youth provision in North and South Coalfields commissioned by the Council.

Ms. Brown stated that the information provided by Ms. Butchert related to that retained by the Youth Development Group and information from other Groups also needed to be considered.

Councillor Rolph asked that the Committee's request for funding application for mobile youth provision be included in the actions (taking into consideration that the Committee were given assurances by the Executive Director of Children's Services that Coalfields could be first to receive the provision).

Referring to the Mobile Youth Villages, Councillor Anderson asked whether records were taken of where the youths travelled from within the area.

Ms. Butchert advised that a survey was carried out with young people to determine where they lived. Of the 72 individuals surveyed, 49 provided details of their postcode – these were mainly from DH4/DH5.

Councillor Anderson stated that postcodes were not very helpful to Ward Councillors and the information would be much more meaningful if it was broken down ward by ward.

Ms. Brown advised that the way the information was collected would be revised and in future children would be asked to tick which village they came from.

Councillor Speding stated that the report did not acknowledge that some children crossed ward boundaries to attend schools, for example, Houghton Keping and Biddick. Councillor Rolph agreed that there needed to be consistency between different sets of statistics.

Ms. Brown agreed to carry out a data cleansing exercise to obtain an accurate reflection of statistics.

With regard to anti-bullying programmes, Ms. Brown circulated a DVD for Members regarding the successful project in the Coalfield whereby a student who had previously been bullied was used in a video to promote anti bullying.

Councillor Anderson emphasised the importance of adhering to the Anti Bullying Strategy. Peer support through a 'buddy' system had proved to be an excellent way of enhancing school life experience and helping to ensure bullying was not carried out 'in the dark'.

Referring to Education Business Connections (EBC) which was an organisation formed to support the closer joint working of schools and employers, Councillor Speding queried the extent to which they were able to deliver a cohesive service, especially when engaging with small businesses. Close attention needed to be given to local industrial estates' employment patterns as they were ideal "incubator units" for young people.

Andrew Perkin, Business and Investment Team, stated that the issue would be looked at as part of the economic review. Young people's aspirations needed to be raised through enterprise, for example Shiney Row College business start up opportunities.

Councillor Heron advised that it was important that such opportunities were followed up to gauge their success for the people involved.

Councillor Rolph agreed that it was important to widen participation in higher education. Year 9 pupils were key as that was the year they chose their options. Often options were chosen without any real advice, guidance or knowledge of the importance of choosing the right subjects.

Councillor Rolph referred to the partnership scheme that existed between Durham Sixth Form and Newcastle University. Students identified from areas where few

people progress into higher education were able to receive offers of places that require lower A-level grades than usual. In return they attend a summer school at the University. She suggested that Sunderland would benefit from a similar scheme.

Ms. Brown advised that a similar scheme had previously started in Sunderland.

With reference to raising attainment levels and skills of young people, Councillor Ellis queried how the statistics relating to the levels of residents over 16 with no qualifications, which was higher in Hetton and Houghton than the City average, had been obtained.

Ms. Brown advised that the data had been obtained from Children's Services data collection point and was based on basic skills levels using skills for life data.

Ms. Hopper agreed to request further information on how the data was compiled.

Councillor Anderson queried whether the Council had any links with 'Career Academies UK'.

Ms. Brown asked to be left with the details of the organisation for her to look at in more detail.

Councillor Rolph expressed concerns that some colleges may be preventing borderline students from taking challenging subjects in order to maintain league table positions. Using Bede College as an example, there was a fear that pass rates may be being put before encouraging students to achieve to the best of their ability.

Ms. Brown agreed to follow up the concerns with the college in question.

In addressing issues around lack of public transport in some areas, Members agreed there needed to be identification of areas/times when learners might have problems accessing colleges e.g. on an evening.

Mr. Dodds, Nexus, advised that the City of Sunderland College did have its own free bus service.

Ms. Hopper agreed to speak to Bob Donaldson, Transportation Manager, regarding further information on the current situation for Coalfields.

Councillor Rolph requested that the Committee receive a scattergram showing the correlation between where young people not in employment education or training (NEETS) resided in comparison to good bus services.

Ms. Brown agreed to provide the information.

The Chairman having thanked the Officers for the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:

i) the report and actions within it and above be received and noted; and

ii) the following proposals be developed:-

- As part of the Youth Development Group's mobile youth provision ensure information, advice and guidance is available in all parts of the Coalfield (e.g. Shiney Row, Penshaw, Moorsley/Peat Carr and Fencehouses areas).
- Review anti bullying provision in schools and explore the need to extend anti-bullying programmes in primary schools in the Coalfield area.
- Review future delivery of GO4IT positive activities work with young people. Connexions and Youth Development Group.
- Review by FACL to identify and support the development of new providers of family learning
- Escalate to LSP a review of apprenticeship opportunities. Greater public sector commitment to the creation of more full apprenticeships is required - either by providing apprenticeships within statutory sector organisations or providing financial incentives to other employers.

Thematic Feedback Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with feedback from the established working groups for each of the five thematic priorities the Area Committee had agreed and considered as set out in the work plan for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper took Members through the report highlighting any progress against the actions and identifying proposals which had come from them for Members consideration.

Councillor Speding referred to the security camera in Shiney Row and stated that it appeared to have been removed.

Inspector Finlay advised that the camera had been moved to Houghton. Currently there were 2 cameras in Fence Houses, 1 in Houghton and 1 in Easington Lane. He stated that movement of CCTV cameras was a protocol agreed through the Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS).

Councillor Speding advised that it was important that Members were kept up to date with regard to camera movement.

Ms. Hopper agreed to send a notice of any changes agreed through LMAPS to Members in future. She also agreed to ascertain the feasibility of linking additional cameras into the current 3G system and any cost implications.

Councillor Rolph believed that 6 spare cameras were in existence and had been taken out of service for refurbishment. It was unclear where they were at the present time, however it was her understanding that they were intended to be shared by all areas throughout the City.

Ms. Hopper agreed to contact Steve Barnes, CCTV Liaison Officer, to find out further information.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Hopper for her report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-
 - i) the attached Annex 1 and Annex 2, 2a and 2b of the report be agreed; and
 - ii) the Committee note the initiatives already taking place to tackle Anti Social Behaviour; and
 - iii) the Committee note the work to be carried out by the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee Review;
 - iv) the Committee agree to receive a further report in April 2010.

Review of Local Area Plans

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated), which provided Members with the details of the review of the Local Area Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper presented the report advising that Members would be receiving a survey and self-assessment form to complete, to ensure that all Councillors would have an opportunity to influence and shape the Sunderland Way of Working.

Councillor Ellis stated that in relation to the Attractive and Inclusive Theme, 'Built Heritage' should have been included as a priority for consideration. Ms Hopper advised that the priority would be included in the Review.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Hopper for her report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be noted and Members take part in the self-assessments and Members' surveys.

Financial Statements and Funding Request

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with the current expenditure from the SIB, SIP and Community Chest and applications for funding from these budgets in order to support new initiatives.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper presented the report, advising that there were 15 projects for support from the 2009/2010 Community Chest budget and one project for support from the 2009/2010 SIB budget. Members were also advised of the financial statement for 2009/2010 and the SIB project update report.

Ms. Hopper took the Committee through each of the applications for funding as set out in the report.

Referring to the SIB project update report, Councillor Rolph queried whether the Hetton Lyons/Philadelphia Cricket development programme would be likely to request an extension given that the work was scheduled to be completed later than anticipated due to the contractors being unable to complete the majority of work until after the cricket season.

Ms. Hopper agreed to find out further information.

In response to Members' queries regarding why the ECO Schools in Sunderland had not spent any money. Ms. Hopper advised that three Area Committees had each provided funding for the project and as the project progressed, the money was drilled down from each Committee allocation in turn.

Councillors Rolph and Ellis also queried an aspect of the mature moves project. The update asserted, "during this quarter 133 one to one sessions were delivered and 15 of these were delivered in the Coalfield". Members felt that 15 appeared to fall short of the amount of sessions that should have been delivered in the area.

Ms. Hopper agreed to find out more information.

6. RESOLVED that:-

- i) approval is given to the 15 projects recommended for support from the 2009/2010 Community Chest budget with a total value of £7,396, as detailed in Annex 1 to the report;
- ii) approval is given to the Phoenix Project;
- iii) the financial statement for 2009/2010 as detailed in Annex 3 to the report be noted;
- iv) the Coalfield SIB project update be noted as detailed in annex 4.

Area Committee Handbook

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) seeking Members approval and adoption of the Area Committee Handbook 2009/2010, which had been developed by the Area Arrangements Project Board.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper presented the report advising that the Handbook had been developed to provide guidance for everyone involved in the Area Committee. The guidance in the Handbook should be read alongside the Council's Constitution.

Ms. Hopper requested that Members forward any comments regarding the Handbook to her by the end of November.

7. RESOLVED that Members forward any comments regarding the Area Committee Handbook to Ms. Hopper by the end of November.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) J. Scott,
Chairman.