

At a Meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at the HETTON CENTRE, HETTON-LE-HOLE on THURSDAY, 4TH MARCH, 2010 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor J. Scott in the Chair

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

Also in Attendance:-

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|--------------------------|---|--|
| Angela Cousins | - | Area Community Co-ordinator |
| Melanie Caldwell | - | Head of Operation, Gentoo |
| Julie Heathcote | - | Communications Officer |
| Councillor Juliana Heron | - | Hetton Town Council |
| Jill Laverick | - | Communications Officer |
| Pam Lee | - | Public Health Specialist, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust |
| Juliette Johnson | - | Area Voluntary Community Sector Representative |
| Tobyn Hughes | - | Director of Strategy, Nexus |
| Rob Mills | - | Bus Project Delivery Manager, Nexus |
| Andrew Perkin | - | Senior Economic Development Officer |
| Paul Power | - | Sports Delivery and Project Manager |
| Judith Quinn | - | Deputy Head, Headways |
| Beverley Scanlon | - | BSF Project, Sunderland Council |
| Dave Richardson | - | Interim Assistant Head of Environment Services, Sunderland Council |
| Lee Wardle | - | Area Voluntary Community Services Representative |
| Jeff Wilkinson | - | Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service |

Members of the Coalfield Area Community

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor F. Anderson.

Welcome and Introductions

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

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February, 2010

- i) Councillor Juliana Heron's name is included in the attendance.
- ii) Councillor D. Smith had asked for further clarification regarding the current 3G camera system. Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, suggested that a further action is added to the safe theme requesting a review of the CCTV system.
- iii) Referring to page 3 of the minutes, the Chairman advised that he had written to Northumbrian Water with regard to the quality of the water supply pertaining to the landfill site at Houghton. The Chairman had received a response from Northumbrian Water and proceeded to read an extract from the letter to the Committee which stated:-

"All water undertakers have a duty of care to protect public health via water supplies and are open to prosecution if this is breached. Northumbrian Water undertakes a rigorous monitoring programme on water supply to meet all regulatory and operational needs, the sampling and analysis from which is reviewed in detail by an independent auditor (the Drinking Water Inspectorate) on behalf of Defra. Stoneygate Water Treatment Works forms part of this monitoring programme and to date, Northumbrian Water can find no evidence to indicate deterioration of the water supplied from this abstraction."

The Chairman advised that he intended to write to the Environment Agency to express ongoing concerns in relation to the landfill site.

- (iv) Pam Lee, Sunderland TPCT, requested that the fifth paragraph on page 4 be amended to read "the obesity issue had been on the health radar for 20-30 years, however, messages around alcohol had only recently been disseminated."
1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4th February, 2010 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the above amendments.

Declarations of Interest

Financial Statements and Funding Requests

Councillor Ellis declared a personal and prejudicial interest with regard to Rectory Park Regeneration Works as the Chair of Friends of Rectory Park and withdrew from the meeting prior to consideration of the Item.

Councillors Scott, Speding and Tate declared a personal interest in the Community Leaders of the Future Project as the applicant was known to them.

Councillor Rolph declared a personal interest in the Community Leaders of the Future Project as a Governor of Houghton Kepier School.

Consultation on Football, Play and Wellness

Councillor Speding declared a personal interest in the report as a member of the Football Association Limited.

Variation in the Order of Business

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed to vary the order of business to consider Item 10 – Accessible Bus Network Design Consultation, at Item 5.

Accessible Bus Network Design Consultation (Local Bus Links)

The Director of Strategy, Nexus, presented a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with details of the proposals for the Bus Network in the Coalfields area and to provide comments and feedback to confirm or improve the proposed design.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman welcomed Toby Hughes, Director of Strategy, Nexus and Rob Mills, Bus Project Delivery Manager, Nexus to the Committee and invited them to present the report.

Messrs. Hughes and Mills provided background detail to the project which was designed to better meet the aspirations of local people, in response to the Integrated Transport Authority's new Bus Strategy.

The key changes proposed for the Coalfield area related to enhancing a number of routes and increasing peak and off-peak services. The proposals as presented could be achieved within existing resources by withdrawing a small number of poorly used early morning services and link up (the Demand Responsive Service) across the district.

The detailed proposals for the network in Coalfield area were provided to the Committee and the main changes were explained. The Committee were informed about the process for wider consultation.

Councillor A. Hall was pleased to note that the 202 service, Shiney Row to Doxford International, was in place as this service had not been reliable previously. Route 79 would now pass the Health Centre at Houghton which would also be of great benefit.

Councillor Juliana Heron, Hetton Town Council, raised concerns that Hetton Downs was not covered as was presently by the 35.

Councillor Rolph applauded the service that would link Fence Houses with Dairy Lane Estate to Houghton Town Centre.

Councillor Rolph queried whether the link up service would still run until it was replaced and how early and late buses would run as timing could seriously affect young people travelling to Headway College from Fence Houses.

Rainton Bridge was a key site of employment and Councillor Rolph hoped that the service would be running as and when needed.

Councillor Rolph questioned whether consideration would be given to commuting areas across the boundary, for example links to the Park and Ride facility at Belmont, Durham. She also suggested that consultation events take place in an easily accessible public building in Fence Houses.

Councillor Richardson advised of an incident he had been made aware of where a disabled person had waited 2 hours for a bus in Houghton because none of the ramps on the bus were working. At no point was a taxi called for the individual.

Councillor Heron queried whether the link services for the City were being looked into as a whole including where people travelled to and from. A significant number of people in the Coalfields area worked in Washington.

Councillor Speding agreed that widespread public consultation should take place in venues that members of the public could easily visit, for example, health centres and libraries.

Mr. Hughes responded to the questions.

With regard to Rainton Bridge, Mr. Hughes advised that the site had been problematic from the outset as planning consent had not included the requirement for a bus service. Commercial bus operators were interested in servicing the area and were eager to work with Nexus and the Council to provide a solution.

In response to a question from Councillor Speding, Mr. Hughes advised that Sunderland's contribution to the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) was £18 million and 60% was passed on directly for provision of concessionary travel. Mr. Hughes accepted that the 16-19 age group was a gap. A small contribution was made to the Metro, but the vast majority (95%) was government grant. £12 million in gross spend terms was used on secured bus services across Tyne and Wear and it would be difficult to provide the breakdown on an area basis, however, approximately £1.8 million was spent in Sunderland on secured services. Of that amount 50% was spent on subsidising evening and weekend services.

With regard to the incident to which Councillor Richardson referred, Mr. Hughes advised that under the revised service all vehicles in operation would be low floor and the contract would stipulate that the ramp would need to be working. Failures of service were taken every seriously and all drivers would be aware of the actions they needed to follow in the event of malfunction.

Mr. Hughes agreed to take comments on board with regard to the 35 service operating in Hetton Downs and agreed to speak to Go North East.

Mr. Hughes confirmed that the taxi bus services in Fence Houses would not be withdrawn until the replacement service was delivered.

Mr. Hughes stated that the bus link to Belmont would be looked at by commercial operators as part of the wider strategy to evaluate demand.

Referring to Councillor Heron's query regarding the need to ensure the whole City and passengers' needs were taken into consideration, Mr. Hughes stated that demand throughout the City and beyond would be taken into account.

Having thanked Mr. Hughes and Mr. Mills for their report it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-
 - i) the Committee cascade the information about public events to organisations and individuals;
 - ii) the comments and feedback above are fed into the final recommendations.

Questions to Area Committee

The Democratic Services officer, having advised Members that no questions had been submitted for consideration by the Area Committee it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

Coalfield: A Prosperous Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which highlighted the following 'Prosperous Area' priorities previously identified by the Committee, key issues and their background, current activity delivered day to day by services, identified gaps in services together with options and proposals:-

- i) Note the action identified in Annex 1
 - o Business and Investment Team to provide results of the Visible Workspace Survey
- ii) Agree the proposals identified in Annex 1
 - o Explore the potential of SAFC Foundation delivering Family Learning
 - o Review FACL (Family, Adult and Community Learning) programme
 - o Review the apprenticeship opportunities available in the public sector
- iii) Note the Economic Masterplan update in Annex 2

The Chairman introduced Andrew Perkin, Senior Partnership and Policy Officer, who complimented the report with a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation detailing work being undertaken by the Council and partners to support the Committee's priorities with regard to its prosperous theme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In response to an enquiry from Councillor A. Hall regarding what mechanisms were in place to ensure businesses have the best support given the known failure rate, Mr. Perkin advised that a team of business advisors were in place to offer guidance. After 6 months a business would be introduced to someone from business link and assigned a business mentor.

Councillor D. Smith referred to the increasing problem of corporate identity theft where companies hide behind the Companies Act to hijack other businesses and questioned whether this problem had been experienced in Sunderland.

Mr Perkin advised that work was carried out with local businesses to ensure they were not exposed to such activity.

Councillor Speding stated that over the last 20 years thousands of jobs had been lost in the area and the attitude at the time was to replace with transient jobs. There needed to be a focus on increasing business unit development to encourage new enterprise.

Mr Perkin stated that the issue centred on demand from the private sector. The Coalfields contained a diverse range of industrial and commercial properties yet there was a gap in the provision of small business premises

and a project was being set up to look into accommodation for small businesses.

Councillor Rolph advised that a priority appeared to be missing from the Prosperous theme which related to support for local shopping areas.

Ms. Hopper apologised for the oversight and agreed to reinstate the priority and address the actions within it.

Councillor Rolph welcomed the Markets Feasibility Study, the research project looking at the potential to hold markets, including Houghton, Shiney Row and Hetton which had been suggested some time ago.

Councillor Rolph commented that the proposal for FACL to identify and support the development of new providers of family learning was for 'review' and therefore not an identifiable action.

Ms. Hopper stated that a number of the actions required a whole system review from which specific actions would follow and would subsequently be fed into the action plan.

Councillor Heron reiterated the comments made by Councillor Speding that there was a need for cheap starter units particularly in the Sedgeleth area. He stated that colleges and universities needed to be involved in entrepreneurship and encourage young people to remain in the area.

Councillor Heron also stated that retailers should be encouraged to trade in the area through council tax and business tax relief.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Perkin for his report it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received and noted and that the following actions as identified in the report and its annexes be endorsed:-

- Business and Investment Team to provide the results of the Visible Workspace survey
- Explore the potential of SAFC Foundation delivering Family Learning in the Coalfield area. This may involve providing funding to tailor provision to the needs of the area.
- Review (also addressed in the Learning theme) - FACL to identify and support the development of new providers of family learning
- Escalate to LSP - review 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.

- Support for local shopping areas be included as a priority.

Thematic Feedback Report – Coalfield Area Action Plans

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an opportunity to discuss feedback on actions taken to date with regard to its priorities in relation to its Safe, Attractive and Inclusive Healthy and Learning Action Plans.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Pauline Hopper, Area Co-ordinator, presented the report and advised that she would endeavour to answer any comments or questions that Members may have.

In relation to the Safe theme, Ms. Hopper informed Members that she had received two potential area for consideration for the Youth Offending Service to establish a Community Payback Scheme. She advised that the suggestion of fence painting at the Kirk Lee Playing Field was not feasible due to health and safety considerations. The second suggestion related to a clean up of the rubbish in Herrington Burn.

Councillor Rolph advised that she had also suggested a clean up of the tree belt running along the B1284 at Fence Houses.

Members agreed to select the Herrington Burn location for litter removal.

Ms. Hopper advised that an Action Plan was being formulated under the Healthy theme.

Councillor Rolph requested that the Committee receive an update at the next Committee in relation to unadopted roads as this had been promised on a regular basis.

Ms. Hopper agreed to try to provide Members with an update.

5. RESOLVED that the updates, activities and actions in respect of the Safe, Attractive and Inclusive, Healthy and Learning Area Action Plans as detailed in the report be received and noted.

Financial Statement and Funding Requests

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter which sought Committee approval for the following recommendations:-

- i) to approve 5 proposals for funding from the Community Chest;

- ii) to approve the following proposal for SIB funding:-
 - Monument View Workshop/Classroom
 - Herrington Burn YMCA Feasibility
 - Rectory Park Regeneration Works
 - Community Leaders of the Future
 - Hetton Town Community Festival
 - River Wear Trail

- iii) to approve the following proposal for SIP funding:-
 - (Hetton) Pedestrian Guardrail
 - (Shiney Row) McLaren Way Lighting
 - (Shiney Row) South View
 - (Houghton) Gilpin Wood

- iv) to note the financial statement for Area Committee funding for 2009/10;

- (v) that consideration be given to Citywide Community Chest applications at the final meeting of each municipal year;

- (vi) the use of SIB funding to meet the infrastructure costs of managing events and processions on the highway at an area level, in view of the statutory changes made in the safety management of such events.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the financial statement for 2009/10 be received and noted;

- ii) approval be given to all 5 Community Chest proposals recommended for support from the 2009/10 budget as detailed in Annex 1 of the report;

- iii) consideration be given to Citywide Community Chest applications at the final meeting of each year; and

- iv) approval be given to the use of SIB funding to meet the infrastructure costs of managing events and processions on the highway at an area level, in view of the statutory changes made in the safety management of such events.

- v) The following proposals for SIB funding are approved:-
 - Monument View Workshop/Classroom, £25,000
 - Herrington Burn YMCA Feasibility, £20,000
 - Rectory Park Regeneration Works, £50,000

- Community Leaders of the Future, £11,543
- Hetton Town Community Festival, £6,000
- River Wear Trail, £19,500

vi) The following proposal for SIP funding are approved:-

- (Hetton) Pedestrian Guardrail, £11,200
- (Shiney Row) McLaren Way Lighting, £10,000
- (Shiney Row) South View, £3,500
- (Houghton) Gilpin Wood, £30,000

Consultation on Football, Play & Wellness

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to consult with the Area Committee on the Football Investment Strategy (FIS) and the proposed priorities for investment, the Play and Urban Games Strategy for identification of priorities for future investment and also to provide an overview of Wellness programmes.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Paul Power, Sports Development Delivery Manager was in attendance to present the report and answer Members' questions.

Mr Power requested Members comments in relation to the Football Investment Strategy, to provide feedback on locations that would benefit from future investment in play provision and possible locations for the Active Bus to visit.

Councillor Rolph referred to Members suggestions in relation to possible next steps for play development and she advised that the suggestion of Chilton Moor was inaccurate as the proposal had been to include the whole of Fence Houses.

Councillor A. Hall also commented that play development at Barnwell was underway and she was unsure whether the report should be referring to a different area.

Mr Power requested that Members forward to him any additional venues for the Walking Programme.

Councillor Rolph stated that she did not feel the Coalfields area had been treated equitably during Phase 1 of the 'Walk in the Park' programme as the Coalfield was a large geographical area with only 2 identified routes.

In considering suitable locations for the Active Bus, Councillor Rolph advised that it was important to access different areas as opposed to visiting the same main sites.

The Chairman having thanked Mr Powers for his report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted and Members comments on the proposals outlined in the report be fed back into the consultation process.

Responsive Local Services

The Executive Director of City Services and Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Area Committee with the 'Responsive Local Services' project update for the period of November 2009 to January 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Dave Richardson, Interim Assistant Head of Environmental Services, presented the report and advised that the level of detailed information coming from the system would build up over time and extend to cover other services which would help to tailor services to meet the demands of the Area Committee.

Mr. Richardson provided Members with highlights of the work that was being undertaken in relation to service performance analysis and presented a snapshot of performance information focussed on litter for the area using the GIS mapping tool.

Members agreed that the GIS map should include a new colour for Member referrals.

Councillor A. Hall advised that a characteristic of the Coalfield area was that pockets of unsightly land existed and it was uncertain who owned them.

Mr. Richardson advised that the Council did have powers regarding enforcement but the problem was finding people who owned the land.

Councillor Smith advised that determining who owned land boundaries was exacerbated by the problem that they were not marked on the Land Registry.

Norma Johnston, Assistant Head of Environmental Services, advised that the Council were exploring a new range of powers under Section 92 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which gives local authorities the power to serve a litter abatement notice. As the Council now had the available resources this piece of legislation could now be enforced.

Mr. Richardson advised that there was the facility to drill down to ward level with a team in each area; hopefully this would result in smaller teams in each ward. The system would target problem areas for response.

Councillor Rolph stated that fly tipping on allotment sites was a huge issue and needed a strategic approach.

Mr. Richardson advised that a number of allotments had been inherited from the Coal Board and the budget of £35,000 was not enough to cover the amount of maintenance required for the upkeep given the increasing demand.

Members stated that fly tipping on unadopted highways was also an issue.

In response to a question from Councillor Blackburn, Helen Patterson, Area Lead Executive advised that the GIS system would be available for Members to view, although the date for this was unclear at present.

Having thanked Mr. Richardson for his report, it was:-

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

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

(Signed) J. Scott,
Chairman.