

13 JULY 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on 2011/12 Workplan: Heritage Priority

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

- 1.1 The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2011/12) Work Plan (**Annex 1**).

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that as part of taking forward Heritage as a priority for the Coalfield area, it was agreed to carry out an audit/study which would investigate the heritage offer within the Coalfields area to provide recommendations into the future delivery of the heritage agenda within the Coalfield area.

**3 Progress**

- 3.1 The initial findings of the study were presented to a stakeholder workshop in March 2011. The final report was then produced and circulated to all Members in May 2011.
- 3.2 The Heritage Task and Result Group met on 7 June 2011 to consider the report and its recommendations in order to produce a suggested action plan, included in the Work Plan at Annex 1. The group acknowledged that all of the recommendations contained within the report would provide a valuable programme of Heritage related activity, but that resources would not allow all to be progressed at this point in time.
- 3.3 The Group considered the actions marked with 'High' priority and discussed which of these would be taken forward, and how. It was agreed that the appointment of a 'Community Heritage Worker' would be key to the success of the project and would enable other recommendations to be delivered within existing provision by co-ordinating and supporting partners. Part of the role could also apply for and attract external funding to sustain the post and/or deliver specific projects. If this resource could be provided via SWITCH then the group agreed that on-costs and expenses could be carried by the SIB Heritage budget. Pending a decision regarding staff resources and further estimates, a nominal sum of £10,000 was suggested as the budget. It should be noted that the on costs and expenses will be kept at a minimum and will not outstrip the costs for delivering the operational elements of the project. If resources cannot be secured via SWITCH the group would need to reconvene to explore alternative options and costs.
- 3.4 Other essential elements to the project would be:
- The Gazetteer which should be developed, updated and available on line (with summary hard copies in key locations),
  - Learning materials and resources for schools which could be delivered via a 'call for projects' with a budget of £5,000 – the group will develop a brief
  - Collections management training to be given to local groups and interested parties via a 'call for projects' with a budget of £5,000 – the group will develop a brief
  - A pilot 'village atlas' costing £7,000 using Old Penshaw or Hetton as the subject area. This could then be developed into an ongoing programme, producing documents for each of the 'villages' in the Coalfield area (depending on the success of the pilot and funding available)
  - Heritage trails which could be explored and developed by the Wellness Team

3.5 There is an allocated budget of £35,000 for the Heritage priority, awarded from SIB in 2010/11. If the Development Worker is provided by SWITCH and the projects recommended are taken forward within budget there would be an estimated balance of £8,000. With guidance from the Task and Result group this balance would be used to enable the Development Worker to deliver further recommendations outlined in the report by working in partnership with existing projects and attracting other sources of funding.

**Recommendations:**

- This report, presented on behalf of the Heritage Task and Result group be noted
- A Heritage Community Development Worker be appointed via SWITCH (12 months)
- A maximum budget of £10,000 be available for the Development Worker's on-costs and expenses e.g. equipment, travel
- A 'call for projects' with a £5,000 budget to produce learning materials and resources for schools be developed
- A 'call for projects' with a £5,000 budget to deliver collections management training be developed
- A village atlas project with a budget of £7,000 be developed
- Heritage trails and associated literature be further explored with the Wellness Team
- The remaining budget be utilised by the Development Worker (via the T&R group) to progress further recommendations in the NECT report

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Officer Tel: 0191 561 7912  
Email: [pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk)

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**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW****Progress Report on 2011/12 Workplan: Youth Disorder/Activities for Young People****1 Why has it come to Committee?**

- 1.1 The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2011/12) Work Plan (**Annex 1**).

**2 Background**

- 2.1 At the last Area Committee meeting (1 June 2011) it was reported that £30,000 was available from Children's Services for positive activities including school holiday provision. From this budget, £3,000 has been allocated to holiday provision so far. Committee were asked to agree what provision should continue and/or what alternative activities should be developed.
- Area Committee agreed a programme of holiday activity be developed for the summer break.
  - Committee agreed for the Task and Result Group to make recommendations for future provision including a proportion of SIB be allocated to include activities for under 12s.
  - Following a presentation from the Ear 4U project, the Committee wished to explore the possibility of extending the project for a further 6 months (from September 2011) to allow the project to seek alternative funding.

**3 Progress**

- 3.1 Through the Responsive Youth Provision project, mini moto sessions have been arranged for young people in Easington Lane and will be delivered as a 6 week programme beginning in June 2011. A 10 week dance session project is underway at Easington Lane Flatts. The Task and Result group agreed to fund updating and repair of the decks at the Flatts to enable dance and DJing sessions to be held. Locations for mobile provision at Houghton Racecourse being assessed.
- 3.2 The Task and Result group met on 7 June to discuss progress and future provision. The police provided an update on hotspots of youth disorder. Easington Lane reported 9 incidents in last 5 weeks and Houghton Racecourse 16. Both of these locations showed improvement on previous figures. Houghton Town Centre reported 16 incidents – the police have dealt with the issues and 8 people arrested. Fencehouses reported 8 incidents. The police will continue to monitor but it was felt that the provision is targeted in the correct locations. The group expressed a wish to extend the Responsive Youth Provision project for a further 6 months using £10,000 from the Children's Services budget as outlined in 2.1 above.
- 3.3 After considering current and future provision the Task and Result group agreed that due to time pressures the current provider (SNCBC) would be asked to develop a programme of summer holiday activity for a) 11-19 year olds, and b) under 11s. This will be part funded from the £30,000 identified as in 2.1 above, and part funded from SIB funding which will be utilised mainly for under 13 provision. The future structure of the Youth Development Group, and associated funding for out of school and holiday provision, was discussed. Due to lack of information/clarity regarding the future service, it was agreed that the Executive Director of Children's Services would be invited to the September Area Committee meeting.

3.4 The Task and Result group discussed the allocation of SIB funding to provide activities for all age groups. There was uncertainty about who was responsible for providing and co-ordinating activity for under 13s as it was not the remit of the Youth Development Group. The group agreed that a sum of £30,000 should be provided by SIB to ensure provision for all age groups. A call for projects would be developed following Area Committee's agreement to providing funding. It was felt that it was important to co-ordinate activity for all ages and that the Task and Result Group be updated on other providers in the area. SNCBC would liaise with local providers to ensure a joined up approach. The Area Network would also provide a valuable source of information and a mechanism to engage providers from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

**Recommendations:**

- This report, presented on behalf of the Youth Disorder Task & Result group be noted
- £10,000 of the Children's Services budget be used to increase the Responsive Youth Provision (RYP) project
- A programme of summer holiday activity a) for 11-19, and b) for under 11, be developed by SNCBC
- £30,000 SIB be allocated to youth provision to ensure junior provision is available
- A 'call for projects' process be implemented for 'junior youth provision'
- Continue to fund the Ear 4 U project for a further 6 months
- Request that the Executive Director of Children's Services attend the September 2011 Area Committee meeting to update on the future provision/restructure of the service and what this means for area working
- Consider merging the 'Youth' priority (currently covers 13-19 year olds) and the 'Play' priority (currently covers under 13s) to form 'Activities for Young People'.

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Officer Tel: 0191 561 7912  
Email: [pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk)

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## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

#### Progress Report on 2011/12 Workplan: Allotments and Community Gardens

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

- 1.1 The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2011/12) Work Plan (**Annex 1**).

#### 2 Background

- 2.1 Information from the Scrutiny Policy Review and allotments and parks officers was been collected and reviewed and has formed the basis of developing improvement of allotments in the Coalfield area. Discussions have taken place with the Head of Street Scene and City Services officers and it was agreed that the Operations Manager responsible for allotments would lead a Task and Result group to develop and implement improvements.

#### 3 Progress

- 3.1 The Task and Result Group met on 20 April to prepare an Action Plan. The immediate issues were a) that the information required as a baseline on which to plan future work needed to be updated and accurate, b) breach of tenancy agreements should be enforced. This was included in the Action Plan as an immediate action.
- 3.2 The Group also agreed to select two sites which would form the basis of the first programme of improvements and agreed Burnside and Britannia Terrace allotments as the two sites to focus the initial work on. Burnside would be a less problematic site with some visible improvements being more easily implemented. Britannia terrace has some complex and long standing issues and would take more of a long term problem solving approach to make any improvements. The group agreed that a long term (possibly 5 year) action plan should be developed for Britannia terrace once we have a site plan and have paid a visit to the site.
- 3.3 The meeting agreed that the key outcomes for this piece of work were:
- To reduce the number of derelict plots by bringing back into use
  - To reduce the waiting lists
  - To ensure sites are not used illegally or inappropriately
  - To improve the appearance of neighbourhoods
  - To provide community facilities
  - To influence and inform core service delivery/budget allocation
  - To engage with local community and voluntary sector organisations
  - To further develop partnership working
  - To contribute to other priorities identified by Coalfield Area Committee (e.g. neglected land, support for older people)
  - To consider the results of the Scrutiny Policy Review on allotments
- 3.4 SWITCH resources are being utilised in order to carry out an audit of all sites and produce accurate plans showing occupied, unkempt, vacant and derelict plots. The audit will also provide information regarding keeping of livestock and inappropriate use of plots which will be addressed by allotment officers on an ongoing basis.
- 3.5 Some smaller scale environmental improvements such as litter picking and strimming perimeter paths has taken place at Burnside and a programme of works will be developed once further site meetings have taken place.

#### **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 In March 2011 the Committee approved the sum of £5,665 SIB (the remaining balance for 2010/11) for use to improve allotments. The Task and Result Group have identified that this amount would be best utilised for improvements at the Burnside allotment site.
- 4.2 There are a number of long term and complex issues at the Britannia Terrace site which make the effective management of the site difficult. Issues such as absence of walkways or roads, fly tipping, inappropriate use of plots and anti social behaviour cause problems for both tenants and residents. It was agreed that a comprehensive audit and options analysis was required before any improvement works were planned. Members were keen for a site visit to take place to assess the scale of the problems.
- 4.3 To accelerate further improvements across the Coalfield Area, it has been identified that the development of a programme of small scale works (including community challenges) should be delivered at a range of locations in addition to the work at the two sites selected as above (Burnside and Britannia Tce). It is recommended that Committee approve a sum of £30,000 to be allocated to the improvement of allotment sites across the Coalfield area. The detail will be developed by the Task and Result Group and brought back to Committee for approval at the September meeting.
- 4.4 The Task and Result Group will meet in August to review progress of the audit and associated works and provide a further report to the September meeting.

#### **Recommendations:**

- That this update provided on behalf of the Task and Result group is noted
- That Committee agree to the £5,665 approved at the March 2011 meeting be utilised for improvements at the Burnside allotment site
- That Committee agree to a comprehensive audit of the Britannia Tce site taking place before any programme of work is planned
- That Committee approve a sum of £30,000 be allocated to the improvement of allotment sites across the Coalfield area.

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Area Officer Tel: 0191 561 7912  
Email: [pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk)

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**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW****Progress Report on 2011/12 Priority: Empty and Problematic Properties****1 Why has it come to Committee?**

The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan (**Annex 1**).

**2 Background**

- 2.1 During the development of new priorities for the 2011/12 Work Plan, members, partners and officers held workshops and meetings to discuss the issues surrounding empty properties. It was acknowledged that some problematic properties are often not empty and that some empty properties do not necessarily cause problems. Therefore the priority heading has been amended to 'Empty and Problematic Properties'.
- 2.2 In February 2011 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) introduced the New Homes Bonus. It will reward local authorities for increases in its housing stock, including empty properties that have been brought back into use. This is calculated by subtracting the stock of empty homes in October 2010 from October 2009 to give the net change. The data is taken from the Local Authority Council Tax Base 2009/10 statistical releases. The payment is made for a six year period. Further information is provided at **Annex 2**.
- 2.3 Sunderland City Council in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency developed the Sunderland Housing Priority Plan (SHPP) which included 6 overarching strategic priorities. One of the strategic priorities was related to bringing empty properties back into use. The SHPP was supported by the Empty Property Strategy (2007-2011) which covered the city. This strategy has now ended and a decision taken to develop an Empty Property Action Plan (2011-2012) on an area basis to support the SHPP see **Annex 3**.

**3 Progress**

- 3.1 It was agreed by Area Committee during the development of the 2011/12 Work Plan that the Lead Agent and the Empty Properties Officer would continue to work with the Area Committee to progress actions in the Work Plan including the development of an area based Empty Properties Action Plan. The Action Plan, as described above in 2.3, is attached as Annex 3 for members of the Committee to consider and comment upon.

**Recommendation:**

- To note the information regarding New Homes Bonus
- To consider the action plan for the Coalfield area and send any comments or suggestions through the appropriate consultation channels.
- To agree the empty property targets for the Coalfield area.
- Receive regular updates from the Lead Agent via Work Plan progress reports

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Area Officer Tel: 0191 561 7912  
Email: [pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.hopper@sunderland.gov.uk)