

**At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in HERRINGTON
BURN WMCA on WEDNESDAY, 5TH JANUARY, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor D. Richardson in the Chair

Councillors F. Anderson, Blackburn, A. Hall, Heron, Rolph, D. Smith, Tate and Wakefield.

Also in Attendance:-

Ron Barrass	Member of the Public	
Susan Brown	Area Community Co-ordinator	Sunderland Council
Les Clark	Head of Street Scene	Sunderland Council
Emma Hindmarsh	Democratic Services Officer	Sunderland Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Officer	Sunderland Council
Phil Conn	Youth Lead Officer	SNCBC
Karen Lightfoot - Gencli	Commissioning and Inspection Officer	Youth Development Group
Graham Finlay	Inspector	Northumbria Police
Liz McEvoy	Area Renewal Coordinator	Sunderland Council
Annette Parr	School Improvement Service	Sunderland Council
John Rushworh	Head of Headways Sixth Form	City of Sunderland College
Helen Paterson	Area Lead Executive	Sunderland Council
Beverley Scanlon	Head of Service	Sunderland Council
Lee Wardle	VCS Network	
Julie Wardle	Empty Property Assistant	Sunderland Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ellis and J. Scott together with Councillor Juliana Heron, Hetton Town Council and John Chapman (Gentoo)

Declarations of Interest

Item 3 – Community Action in Coalfield: Progress Review: (c) Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB), Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and Community Chest – Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources

Councillor Heron declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the applications relating to Friends of Copt Hill Website as Chair of the Friends of Copt Hill and Gillas Lane Primary School as a school governor and withdrew from the meeting prior to consideration of the item.

Councillor Wakefield declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application relating to Hetton Bogs LNR as a friend of the Group and withdrew from the meeting prior to consideration of the item.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 3rd November, 2010

Councillor D. Smith asked for verification with regard to the sentence that read 'householders were "selling" unwanted wares on to scrap collectors for disposal.' Having subsequently referred to the written notes of the meeting, the Democratic Services Officer could confirm that the word "selling" was used by Nicky Rowland, Local Environment Manager.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 3rd November, 2010 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Community Action in Coalfield: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions (2010/2011) Work Plan

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with information on the progress made in relation to its Work Plan and the priorities identified by the Area Committee for 2010/11.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Hopper, Area Officer, introduced the report and advised that new issues had been identified in relation to Sunderland 'The Place' and Review of Byelaws.

In relation to Sunderland 'The Place' Ms Hopper advised that the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee was carrying out a policy review in relation to the topic with the overall aim of understanding the concept of Sunderland as a place and the associated issues around its identity and image, as well as the perceptions people have of Sunderland.

It was proposed that any members wishing to take part in this phase of evidence gathering be offered the opportunity to take part in an informal discussion in order to feed in key messages to the Area Chair who will attend a facilitated discussion group with the other Area Chairs and members of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee. The discussion would be facilitated by the lead officers for the policy review.

Ms. Hopper agreed to send an email around to Members to propose dates for an informal discussion.

In relation to the Review of Byelaws, Ms Hopper informed the Committee that Law and Governance were leading on a review of City Byelaws. A team of Officers from across the Authority have formed a task and finish group which was undertaking a review of sites covered by old and dated byelaws.

Councillor Speding advised that there were a number of sensitive issues regarding some bylaws, such as cemeteries, and it would be useful for Members to know the parameters of the review.

Councillor Rolph agreed that members needed more information on the scope of the review as she would be interested to know whether the bylaws made by the urban district councils were incorporated within those of Sunderland City Council.

Ms Hopper agreed to ascertain the scope of the review.

2. RESOLVED that

i) Members agree to hold an informal discussion for those Coalfield members who wish to participate in 'The Place' review before 20 January 2011.

ii) the Committee receive further information in relation to the parameters of the review into byelaws and agree to receive an update on the outcomes affecting the Coalfield area's cemeteries, beaches, countryside and parks via the ward bulletin service.

Community Action in Coalfield: Progress Review

(a) Work Plan 2009/10, 2010/11 and Task Group Updates

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated which provided an update on the progress against agreed actions in the current year's 2010/2011 Work Plan.

• Coalfield in Bloom

Ms. Hopper invited Ms. Susan Brown, Area Community Co-ordinator to provide a progress report on the Bulb Planting and Landscaping Priority.

Ms. Brown advised that the project was now ready to move to phase 2 which would encourage and support the local community and voluntary groups involved

to date to further develop their capacity in order to undertake a wider range of partnership projects within their neighbourhoods.

Councillor R. Heron advised that HRCAP community allotment at Seaham Road was having two open days in June and September and he stated that it would be beneficial for other sites to do the same.

Councillor A. Hall requested sight of the findings of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee's review into allotments and enquired how the two allotment sites would be chosen. She suggested that careful consideration needed to be given to which particular sites would be chosen.

Discussion ensued in relation to allotment sites across the coalfield area.

The Chairman advised that the fence height of the allotment behind Dubmire School was a problem as it was difficult to see what activities were taking place.

Inspector Graham Finlay stated that the Police had done a lot of work around the allotments in Easington Lane where dismantled cars and drugs use had been exposed and a long term action plan had been established via LMAPS.

Councillor Rolph agreed with Councillor Hall that all Members should have an input in to which two allotments sites should be chosen and decide which ones could be made the most of, for example Burnside allotments would only require a small amount to clear it.

Ms. Hopper advised that she had previously held a meeting with Ethel Wilson, Allotments Co-ordinator and the Chairman. Six sites had been identified across the city as being problematic, 5 in the Coalfields.

Councillor Anderson commented that as there was a great demand for allotments and the idea of communal gardens which are inclusive, bringing benefits to individuals, neighbourhoods and communities was to be encouraged.

Ms. Susan Brown advised that there had been a lot of interest in smaller gardens and communal spaces and ideas were being developed with the support of Groundworks.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee note the update and agree to Phase 2 of the Project including development of allotment and community garden facilities.

- **Heritage**

Ms. Hopper provided an update in relation to the Heritage theme. She advised that the Task and Result group had recommended that the scoping exercise be carried out before further resources were approved against heritage projects. It was however recognised that funding should be allocated against priorities selected for 2010/11. Therefore it was recommended that the Committee consider allocating a nominal budget of £40,000 to the Heritage theme, as detailed in the finance Item 3b.

In response to a request from Councillor Hall, Ms. Hopper agreed to determine the progress in relation to funding identified for the Alice Well at Cox Green.

4. RESOLVED that the Committee

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

- **Local Shopping Centres**

Ms. Hopper updated the Committee with regard to the Local Shopping Centres theme. She advised that the Task and Result group had recommended that the scoping exercise be carried out before further resources were approved against Shopping Centre projects. It was however recognised that funding should be allocated against priorities selected for 2010/11. Therefore it was recommended that the Committee consider allocating a nominal budget of £80,000 to the Shopping Centres theme, as detailed in the finance Item 3b.

Councillor Rolph requested that ward councillors be invited to the 'walk round' of each area with the Business Investment Team and Street Scene Officers.

5. RESOLVED that the Committee

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

- **Child Poverty**

Ms. Hopper updated the Committee with regard to the child poverty theme. She invited Councillor Anderson, Deputy Leader and Child Poverty Lead to provide feedback.

Councillor Anderson advised that the findings of the Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment 2010 provided the basis of the revised Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy. The review will need to take into account the Strategies Priorities in the reshaping of services following the Comprehensive Spending Review.

6. RESOLVED that the Committee note the update and agree to receive a further report in March/April 2011

- **Review of the Greenspace Strategy**

Ms. Hopper presented the report and advised that a second workshop would be

held during the afternoon of 27 January 2011 and would be used to feedback on queries raised at the first workshop and present new updated maps. The appraisals of the sites were complete and the results would 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 would 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.

Councillor Wakefield advised that he was uncomfortable with 2.3 of the report which advised that Taylor Wimpey had expressed an interest in becoming involved and had received electronic maps to comment on. He was concerned that Taylor Wimpey had a financial interest in the strategy and therefore other companies should have been invited to join also.

Councillor Rolph advised that Taylor Wimpey had become involved because they were involved with the regeneration of the former Lambton Coke works in conjunction with English Partnerships and provided funding for a Community Ranger service in Elba Park.

Councillor Rolph questioned whether the second workshop on the afternoon of 27 January would be used to evaluate the sites. Ms Hopper agreed to speak to Clive Greenwood to check if the session of 27 January would be discussing the sites. She also agreed to ascertain if any other companies such as Three Rivers or Shepherds Homes had attended the first workshop.

Councillor Speding enquired whether the Committee were meant to be looking at a Greenspace Strategy or housing land availability.

Ms. Hopper advised that the Greenspace Strategy formed part of the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework (LDF) has to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs, opportunities and limitations including housing availability. Although part of the same policy framework, identifying greenspace was a different exercise to land ownership.

Councillor Tate felt it would be useful for the Committee to be informed which land had been identified as 'Greenfield' (not previously developed) or 'Greenbelt' (specifically defined area of land around and existing developed area).

Mr. Les Clark, Head of Streetscene advised that the exercise was purely to gain an accurate baseline across the city of what greenspace was out there and what was in use. Policy Planning Guidance notes stipulated that information had to be accurate and up to date. The LDF sets out the planning framework within which planning decisions were made.

7. RESOLVED that the Committee note the information regarding the second workshop and receive further updates regarding the outcome of the workshop and future actions.

- **Responsive Local Services**

Mr. Clark provided an update with regard to Responsive Local Services and advised that 4 of the 6 new posts of Area Response Manager for Street scene had been appointed. The Manager for the Coalfield Area would be introduced at the next committee meeting.

Councillor Anderson paid tribute to the Graffiti Service who she had had the misfortune to have to call recently. She was very impressed with the rapid response and extremely grateful for the service provided.

Referring to the Out of Hours Noise Service Pilot, Councillor Anderson was interested to hear more about the services that were provided.

Mr. Clarke advised that the service fell between two stools; the Police and the local authority. The pilot focussed on Friday and Saturday nights when the majority of problems tended to fall. A proposal was being developed to work with the Police and Environmental Health Officers to work during the whole night time period.

Councillor Rolph commented that the report contained too much jargon. She asked for an explanation of 'the transitional arrangements for the new dry recycling scheme.' Mr Clark advised that this related to the change from the black recycling box to the green bins. In response to a request from Councillor Rolph to clarify what 'the gathered data to prepare the GIS information layers that will populate the SLM viewer' meant, Mr Clark explained that GIS stood for Geographical Information System which was a system that captures, stores, analyses, manages, and presents data that are linked to location. The SLM (Strategic Land Management) viewer was the specific web system.

Councillor Rolph suggested that a faster and more efficient service could lead to greater demand for services and she enquired whether requests were increasing.

Mr. Clark advised that the information did not suggest there was any increase but it was early days for the programme. Furthermore, an aim of Responsive Local Services was to try to solve a problem before a call was necessary.

Councillor Hall advised that she had previously asked for the service request data to be broken down into where the request had come from (public, staff or Councillor).

Following an enquiry from Councillor Blackburn, Susan Brown confirmed that Friends of Hetton Bogs had identified an ongoing issue with litter at the entrance to Hetton Lyons Country Park via the VCS Network meetings.

At this juncture Ms. Hopper introduced the dedicated Empty Homes Officer for the Coalfields Area, Julie Wilkie. Ms. Wilkie gave a brief overview of her role and she advised members that she would forward them the details of the empty properties in the area on a monthly basis.

Ms. Hopper would circulate Ms. Wilkie's contact details to all members.

8. RESOLVED that

- a. the contents of the report be received and noted;
- b. the Committee receive further updates regarding any issues arising from the intelligence group including the learning points from winter maintenance issues

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB), Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and Community Chest – Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to request the Committee's consideration of proposals for the allocation of the Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB), the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and Community Chest to support initiatives that will benefit the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hopper presented the report and outlined the funding balance. With regard to SIB, Ms. Hopper advised that following the November 2010 Committee meeting £175,986 remained to be allocated during 2010/11. This amount includes £27,000 brought back to the budget with regard to the Hetton Memorial Garden Project and £58 with regard to the New Herrington study.

As identified in Report 3a, the priorities of 'Local Shopping Centres' and Heritage' were still in the scoping stage and therefore had not had SIB allocated to specific projects to address these priorities. Initial discussions at the Task and Result groups and updates to Area Committee suggested that the outcome of the scoping/audit exercises would identify a range of costed projects which could be implemented at the next stage. It was therefore recommended that Committee allocate a proportion of the remaining SIB to each priority in order to ensure that 2010/11 funding is targeted on selected 2010/11 area priorities.

Based on indicative costs identified at Task and Result group meetings it was recommended that an amount of £80,000 be 'earmarked' from this year's budget for the Local Shopping Centres priority, and £40,000 be 'earmarked' for the Heritage priority. This would leave a balance of £12,592 with one meeting remaining.

The Chairman stated that the Committee may wish to consider allocating remaining £12,000 to put towards allotments and community gardens.

Councillor Rolph advised that a previous allocation to Herrington Burn YMCA had been missed off the statement. Ms. Hopper agreed to amend the statement and adjust the final balance accordingly.

9. RESOLVED that:-

- i) The Committee note the financial statement set out in Section 2 of the report;

- ii) the application for SIB funding of £32,394 as a contribution towards The Underground Project be approved;
- iii) the application for SIB funding of £10,000 as a contribution towards the Kepier Hall Car Park Project be approved;
- iv) the application for SIB/SIP funding of £1,000 and £5,100 respectively as a contribution towards South View Phase 3 be approved;
- v) the application for SIP funding of £1,185 as a contribution towards Lake Road Underpass Steps be approved;
- vi) the application for SIP funding of £11,500 as a contribution towards Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)
- vii) The Committee agree to allocate a nominal budget of £80,000 to the Local Shopping Centres priority
- viii) The committee agree to allocate a nominal budget of £40,000 to the Heritage priority;
- ix) The committee approve the 12 proposals for support 2010/11 Community Chest set out in Annex 1b, and
- x) the update be received and noted.

Influencing Practice, Policy and Strategy

- **Refreshing the Coalfield Local Area Plan (LAP)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider refreshing the LAP. To support the Committee throughout the process, information had been provided on four main elements; what people are telling us, developments to be considered, proposed framework for managing the refresh and recommendations including terms of reference.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Ms. Hopper presented the report and took Members through the proposed consultation framework.

Councillor Rolph commented that the new area arrangements were supposed to give more scope and influence to elected members. However the proposal set out in the report was too top down not bottom up and effectively put a 'straight jacket' on member input. She advised that a lot of the desktop studies that had been carried out related to citywide issues not area ones.

Councillor Rolph advised that the Committee had looked at environmental projects in 2010/11 however this was not reflected in the proposals contained within the report and felt the Committee should be looking at their existing plan and refining it as appropriate. She therefore entirely disagreed with the process.

Ms. Hopper advised that the priorities selected by the Committee at the workshop may not reflect the initial findings. Ms. Hopper advised that the process could be flexible in the way it was carried out. If it was felt appropriate, Members could look at the current plan as a starting point at the first meeting.

10. RESOLVED that the Committee agree to:-

- i) Establish a LAP Task and Finish Group and note the terms of reference for the group, outlined in Annex 1;
- ii) Agree membership of the group;
- iii) Agree the proposed consultation framework outlined in Section 4;
- iv) Note the findings of the report and agree to receive a further report in March 2011;
- v) Consider the list attached at Annex 2 and suggest other groups to be included;

The Chairman thanked Members, Officers and Partners for their attendance.

(Signed) D. RICHARDSON,
Chairman.