

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in HERRINGTON COUNTRY PARK on WEDNESDAY, 1st JUNE, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Richardson in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Ellis, Heron, Rolph, Speding and Wakefield

Also in Attendance:-

Ron Barrass	Member of the Public	
David Ellison	Area Response Manager	Sunderland Council
Hazel Hedley	CEO	Impact Family Services
Cllr Juliana Heron	Member	Hetton Town Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Officer	Sunderland Council
Matthew Jackson	Governance Services Officer	Sunderland Council
Amelia Laverick	Member of the Public	
Ian Richardson	Assistant Head of Street Scene	Sunderland Council
Sue Stanhope	Director of HR & OD and Area Lead Executive	Sunderland Council
A. Taylor	Acting Inspector	Northumbria Police
James Third	Community Relation Officer	Nexus
Pauline Tsentas	Youth Development Group Manager	Sunderland Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anderson, Hall, Scott, D. Smith and Tate along with John Chapman, Susan Brown, Inspector Finlay and Helen Paterson.

Declarations of Interest

Item 04 – Community Chest

Councillors D. Richardson, Rolph and Speding declared personal interests as members of Houghton Feast Steering Group.

Councillor Ellis declared a personal and prejudicial interest as the Chair of Friends of Rectory Park.

Councillors Rolph and Wakefield declared personal interests as members of Friends of Rectory Park.

Councillor Heron declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Council appointed member of the Hetton Centre.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 30th March, 2011

On the progress report on the Regeneration of Rectory Park Councillor Rolph stated that she had actually asked how much was spent annually on maintenance at the park rather than the recorded question of how funds were spent on the park.

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, agreed to provide this information.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 30th March, 2011 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the above amendment.

Coalfield Area Committee – Annual Report 2010/11

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which enabled the Committee to give consideration to the Committee's Annual Report for 2010/11. The report provided Members with a snapshot of the Committee's work over the municipal year.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that there had been work with community groups and partners within the area and there had been significant progress with addressing youth disorder.

Ms Hopper then introduced the Child Poverty priority and advised that this was a difficult priority to address. She introduced Hazel Hedley who would be providing an update on the work of Ear 4 U which had received funding from the Area Committee.

Ms Hedley advised that the funding had allowed the project to expand from going into schools to do group work to being able to hold individual one to one sessions. Bullying was the main focus for the work of the project however a number of the young people referred to the programme had other underlying issues as well. There had been a lot of referrals within the Coalfield area and as a result it had been necessary to introduce a waiting list. There had been good feedback from the schools as the project was helping to get children to return to school; the children involved had also provided good feedback as they felt that the workers understood their issues and were able to help solve them.

In response to a query from the Chairman regarding the waiting list Ms Hedley advised that Hetton School and Houghton Kepier School had been asked to put the project on hold while the waiting list was worked through.

Councillor J. Heron stated that it was a shame that the project had been put on hold at Hetton and Houghton Kepier Schools; these were the major schools in the area. Ms Hedley stated that this showed how many referrals to the programme there had been.

Councillor Rolph commented that while Hetton and Houghton Kepier Schools were the main schools for the area there were children from the area who attended Biddick or St. Robert's Schools. This scheme was open to all children within the area. She queried whether there had been any referrals from either of these schools.

Ms Hedley advised that she was not aware of any referrals from either of these schools however there was an added difficulty for children from the Coalfield who were attending Washington schools as Washington was not participating in the programme. In response to further questions from Councillor Rolph Ms Hedley advised that there had not been any one to one referrals relating to domestic violence however there was work done to ensure that children were aware of the issue.

The project had funding until the end of the school year; when the organisation applied for funding they were often told that the schools or Local Education Authority should be funding the project.

Ms Hopper then introduced the Heritage priority and advised that the task and finish group would be meeting on 7th June and the recommendations would be reported to the July meeting of the Committee.

On the Bulb Planting and Landscaping priority, Ms Hopper advised that the outcome had been far greater than what the Committee had set out to achieve.

Councillor J. Heron stated that the programme had been highly successful and the outcome was excellent.

Councillor Rolph agreed that the work had been a huge success; there was however a need for the correct maintenance to be carried out. There were some points along Sedgely Road where the flower beds had been mown flat by maintenance workers from gentoo.

Ms Hopper then moved onto the Shopping Centres priority; this was a long term priority and had been progressing slowly so far.

On the Play Provision priority Ms Hopper advised that it had been identified that there was a lot of provision for children aged 13 and over however there was not a lot of provision for 8-12 year olds; it was often difficult to address the issue due to the number of services involved.

With regard to Unadopted Roads Ms Hopper advised that the Area Committee would be acting as an influencing and consultative body and there would be a report to the September meeting of the Committee.

Ms Hopper then advised that Responsive Local Services was now a service area within the Council rather than an Area Committee funded project and had been progressing well.

Councillor Rolph stated that in her experience the word 'responsive' was appropriate; whenever she had any issues the response had been extremely quick. The Chairman stated that he had the same experiences.

Dave Ellison, Area Response Manager, thanked the Members for their kind words; he stated that if anyone had any issues they should contact the department immediately. He invited the Members to attend the Ward Walks to help with identifying any issues.

Ms Hopper then introduced the Motor Cycle Disorder priority and advised that there had been a lot of work done through the LMAPS meetings and that this was an issue across all areas of the city.

Ms Hopper then presented the Speeding and Dangerous Traffic update and Councillor Blackburn queried the absence of a R.A.G. colour coding on the Lake Road projects. Ms Hopper advised that the projects had not been intended to be commenced until the 2011/12 municipal year and as such there was no performance target in place.

With regard to the Committee's Finances Ms Hopper advised that the ring fencing of funds to priorities had worked well and all of the funds had been allocated.

Councillor Rolph referred to the pie chart within the report which showed the allocation of SIB funding by priority; she stated that many of the projects would cover more than one priority and as such it must have been difficult to create the chart. She also asked whether it would be possible to ask applicants to ensure that certain percentages of the allocations were spent on specific priorities.

Ms Hopper advised that applicants were asked which priority they intended to address with the application. Previously applicants had been able to identify multiple priorities however this had made it difficult to track the spending on each priority.

Councillor Rolph then stated that it seemed like the chart was an over simplified representation of how the funds had been spent.

On the Lessons Learned Councillor Speding queried what was being done to increase the influencing role of the Committee.

Ms Hopper advised that the Committee would be consulted where necessary and Ms Stanhope advised that it could be possible to link the Forward Plan to the Committee so that upcoming decisions could be identified.

Councillor Rolph stated that there was a need to develop the remit of the Committee. The Scrutiny committees looked at issues before they went to cabinet and she felt that the Area Committees should monitor the forward plan and develop a scrutinising role. Ms Hopper agreed to look into ways of improving the consultation item on the standard agenda for the committee.

2. RESOLVED that the content of the Annual report be received and noted and the lessons learned be progressed during the coming year.

Work Plan for 2011/12

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the priorities which had been carried forward from the previous year along with the newly identified emerging priorities. The report also provided Members with the work plan for the coming year.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that the work plan had been developed following extensive work and the views of the Community and Voluntary sector had been sought in addition to Members being consulted.

On the Activities for Young People priority Ms Hopper introduced Pauline Tsentas, Training and Accreditation Manager, who would be providing an update on youth provision within the area.

Ms Tsentas advised that there had been no change to the core youth offer with at least 3 sessions taking place every week. There had been an additional £30,000 provided for youth provision by the council and the Area Committee had agreed to enhance this using an allocation of SIB funding; this was to replace the Positive Activities for Young People grant and Youth Opportunities Fund which had both ended on 31st March, 2011. These funding sources had provided additional activities during school holidays and had also provided targeted activities for young people who were at risk of exclusion from school or who were Not in Education Employment or Training.

Councillor Speding commented that some groups, such as NEETs needed to have activities available all year rather than just during the holiday periods.

In response to questioning by Councillor Ellis, Ms Tsentas stated that to access the funding from the Committee the providers would have to go to the Committee and request the funds; there had been £3,000 spent so far to provide activities during the Easter Holidays and half term. The provision would not necessarily be the same as the provision which previously existed and would be tailored to meet the needs of the young people in the area.

The XL Youth Village Steering Group would be meeting on 10th June and the outcome could be fed back to the next meeting of the committee.

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Ms Hopper stated that if Members had any ideas for activities then they should inform Ms Tsentas or they could attend the meeting of the group if they so wished.

Ms Hopper then introduced the Support for Older People priority and advised that this was a new priority for the Committee and it was intended that a Task and Finish Group be set up. The Membership of the group had been discussed at the last meeting and it was proposed that Councillors Hall and Heron be appointed to the group.

Councillor Blackburn stated that he felt there should be a representation from each Ward on the Task and Finish Groups and put himself forward as the group Member for Hetton Ward however he was happy for either of his Ward Colleagues to take the position on this group. Local Members would know the issues which affected their local area.

It was also suggested that Councillor J. Heron sit on the group to represent Hetton Town Council.

Councillor Wakefield queried the figures which were set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report. Ms Stanhope stated that it appeared that the figures were referring to 20.5 percent of residents over 65 were receiving care services.

On the Neglected Land Priority it had been proposed at the last Meeting that there would be a task and finish group set up and the Lead Agents for the group would be Dave Ellison, Area Response Manager, and John Chapman from gentoo. It was proposed that Councillors Blackburn, Rolph, Speding and Wakefield be appointed to the group along with Susan Brown.

Ms Hopper advised that on the Empty Properties priority Graeme Wilson, Assistant Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, would be the lead agent and would be bringing a report to a future meeting.

With regard to the Public Transport priority Ms Hopper advised that the Area Committee could not solve the problem however they could consider transport when looking at the other priorities. James Third would be attending the Meetings to represent Nexus.

Councillor J. Heron commented that people over 65 were not satisfied with the bus services. There had been changes to the timetables with no publicity and this had meant that people had not known what time the buses were due to arrive.

Councillor Blackburn stated that many buses had managers on them and these managers were rarely approached by people with concerns over the services.

Councillor Rolph advised that young people used buses regularly however there was no reference to them in the report. She agreed that public transport could be linked in to every priority.

Ms Hopper then referred to the alignment of SIB to the priorities, as detailed in section 3 of the report; it was intended that there would be a call for projects which would see the task and finish groups or the Area Committee devising a project brief defining expected outcomes, budget and timescales and inviting applications for funding from organisations who would be able to carry out the project. It was acknowledged that while the call for projects would be beneficial it may not be suitable for all of the priorities.

Ms Hopper then referred Members to the recommendations set out in the report and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The Work Programme in annex 1 be agreed
 - b. Youth Activities and Play Provision Priority:-
 - i. Consideration be given to the activities delivered to date
 - ii. The use of £3,000 of the funding to provide activities during school holidays be noted
 - iii. A programme of holiday activities be developed
 - iv. The Task and Result group develop a recommendation for allocating a proportion of SIB in line with Children's Services Area funding of £30,000 to deliver positive activities for children and young people living in the area.
 - v. Further reports be received on the programme of activities to be delivered and evaluating the success of the programme.
 - c. Support for Older People Priority:-
 - i. A Task and Result group be set up
 - ii. Councillors Hall, Heron and J. Heron appointed to the group with Councillor Blackburn appointed as a provisional Member subject to none of the other Hetton Ward Councillors wishing to sit on the group
 - d. Empty Properties Priority:-
 - i. Work be done with the lead agent to develop and implement a Coalfield Empty Property Action Plan
 - e. Neglected Land Priority:-
 - i. A Task and Result group be set up
 - ii. Councillors Blackburn Rolph, Speding and Wakefield be appointed to the group
 - iii. Susan Brown be appointed as lead agent
 - f. Public Transport Priority:-
 - i. The priority be removed from the Work Plan and added as an action against each of the other priorities
 - g. The Call for Projects protocol to be used in the allocation of SIB funding be agreed

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

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which requested Members to consider proposals for the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest to support initiatives which would deliver activity against the priorities for 2011/12.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Pauline Hopper, Area Officer, presented the report and informed Members of the 4 proposals for SIB funding, one proposal for SIP funding and 16 Community Chest applications which were detailed in the appendices to the report.

There was SIB funding of £238,257 available and there were 4 projects totalling £26,275 presented to the Committee with a recommendation to approve; there would be £211,982 remaining should these be approved. The projects were detailed in Annex 1 to the report.

There had been an underspend on projects in the Shiney Row Ward and as such there was SIP funding of £4,453 remaining and it was proposed that this be spent on the Grangewood Play Site Footpath Lighting project.

The 16 proposals for support from Community Chest totalled £5,900 and there would be £36,980 remaining should they be approved. The projects were set out in Annex 2 of the report. There had been an amendment to the protocols for Community Chest and there was now no requirement to wait 2 years before being able to recoup any unspent funding from projects.

In response to a question from Councillor Speding, Ms Hopper advised that the fault with the lighting at Grangewood had been located and remedial works would be carried out.

Councillor Rolph commented that the Sunderland Festival application was the first citywide application which truly was of benefit to the whole city.

4. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The financial statements be noted
 - b. The SIB and SIP applications set out in Annex 1 be approved
 - c. The Community Chest proposals set out in Annex 2 be approved

(Signed) D. RICHARDSON,
Chairman.

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

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13 JULY 2011

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 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'.

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13 JULY 2011

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.

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13 JULY 2011

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

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Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Heritage	A co-ordinated approach required	Carry out an audit to further investigate the heritage offer	Vicki Medhurst	All research complete. The draft report has been presented to the Steering Group and will be sent to Area Committee for info	Ensuring the Coalfield area is considered by City	Audit produced	G
		Set up Task and Result Group	Pauline Hopper	Group set up and meeting regularly	Development of heritage projects	T&R Group operational	G
	Lack of awareness/interest	Promote heritage within the Coalfield area	T&R Group	This has already begun through the VCS Network and the Coalfield Community Challenge and will be further developed once a Heritage action plan is agreed	Raising the profile of the area	Increase in heritage related enquiries and events	A
	Lots of uncaptured local knowledge and enthusiasm	Engage community groups and residents to work together to deliver heritage activities	Susan Brown	The VCS Network and partners have been involved in a number of heritage related activities. 18 local groups currently engaged	Engagement of VCS and residents	No of groups engaged	G
	Budget required to deliver small scale projects/ implement relevant recommendations	Allocate a proportion of SIB funding to address the heritage priority	Area Committee	A sum of £40,000 was 'ring fenced' for the Heritage priority. £5,000 of this is being utilised to develop the community challenge project. * Report to be presented to July 2011 meeting	Influence budgets (Council/partners/external)	SIB secured	G
	Increase interest/participation of young people	Develop educational and participative heritage projects	T&R Group	This will be developed once a Heritage action plan is agreed * Report to be presented to July 2011 meeting	Engagement of young people	No of schools or youth groups involved	A
	Public transport	Identify venues which are accessible by public transport			Priorities events and services accessible by public transport	Increased community involvement	
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Local Shopping Centres	No comprehensive area information available	Development of baseline information for three selected centres	Andrew Perkin	A report regarding the number, type and tenure of properties will be produced. Research is underway	Engagement of stakeholders. Improvements suggested	Report produced	R
	Improve physical appearance of shopping centres	Target responsive local services to areas most in need	Dave Ellison	Area Response team are ensuring that street scene issues are tackled and queries and issues from residents are followed up. Without the outcome of the audit of the three centres this work has been delayed	Influence targeted service provision	Increase in satisfaction levels	R

	Support local traders	Carry out an audit to further investigate the current situation in local centres	Andrew Perkin	Audit underway. Results to be made available by Task and Result group	Consultation and engagement with local traders	No of local businesses supported	R
	Lack of new shoppers	Carry out a survey with local shoppers/non shoppers	Andrew Perkin	Survey designed and due to be carried out by June 2011	Consultation with residents and visitors	Increase in shoppers	R
		Research best practice	Andrew Perkin	Research complete. Results will be provided as part of the final audit results	Identify new ways of working		A
	Public transport	Promote and use community and public transport			Identify issues and influence service provision		R
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Youth Disorder/ Activities for Young People	Negative perceptions of young people in some areas	celebrate positive achievements	Pauline Tsentas	To be developed with Comms and via the Task and Result group	Promote success	Positive news stories	R
	Hotspots of youth disorder	Provide targeted activity in areas most at risk	Pauline Tsentas	Mini moto training, dance sessions and additional detached work has taken place at Easington Lane. Centre based and detached being developed at Houghton Racecourse Estate * Report to be presented to July 2011 meeting	influence service delivery	Reduction in youth disorder	G
	Relevant and adequate youth activities	Work with Youth Development Group to evaluate provision	Pauline Tsentas	This is done at each meeting of the Task and Result group (now part of XL Steering group)	Identify and review activities and services	Increase in use of contracted youth provision	G
	Allocation of Children's Services budget	Area Committee (via Youth Task and Result Group) to identify areas of need	Pauline Tsentas	Report from Children's Services to ask Area Committee to provide input regarding allocation of funding for youth provision	Influence mainstream budgets	Funding allocated	G
	Public transport	Use local transport, bus stops and bus depots to promote activities to young people	James Third	Nexus have offered to promote youth provision via posters or leaflets	Influence service delivery in accessible venues	Increased engagement	
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Allotments and gardens	Inaccurate or incomplete baseline information	Audit of all sites required	Gerry Roll	SWITCH resources being utilised to carry out an in depth audit of all sites to include occupied, vacant and derelict plots	Review and update of current information	Plan of each allotment site	A
	Derelict plots	Pilot programme on two allotment sites	Gerry Roll	Two sites selected - Burnside and Britannia Terrace		Reduction in vacant/ unkempt plots	R

	Waiting lists	Correspond with those on waiting list to confirm still interested	Ethel Wilson	All on waiting list have been contacted. Waiting lists have been revised	Review and revise current waiting lists	Reduction in waiting lists	A
	Community gardens	Develop community allotment plots within existing sites	Ethel Wilson/ Susan Brown	To be developed once audit is complete	Support development of community use	Community spaces created	R
	Budgets and funding	Identify ring fenced and mainstream budgets	Gerry Roll		Influencing mainstream budgets		R
		External funding and partnership working	Pauline Hopper/ Susan Brown	Gentoo and Groundwork are part of Task and Result group	Attracting funding to area	External funding secured	A
		Allocation of area budgets to support work	Pauline Hopper	An initial amount of £5,665 SIB allocated. * Report to July 2011 meeting. A request to the July 2011 meeting to 'ring fence' £30,000 for future improvements	Targeting of resources	SIB allocated	G
	Public transport						
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Child Poverty	Development of Child and Family Poverty Strategy	Neighbourhood model of service delivery	Raj Singh	Phase 2 of the Strategy has now been developed	Consultation and involvement during development	Strategy produced	G
	Child Poverty needs assessment	Neighbourhood model of service delivery	Raj Singh	Results of pilot will be reported to Area Committee	Initiatives delivered to meet local need	Development of local services	G
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Unadopted Roads	Policy regarding unadopted roads	Information and issues provided to Lead Agent	Stephen Pickering	A significant amount of work has been carried out to determine a baseline position in regard to private streets. An extensive desktop study together with on site photography exercise to identifying all the unadopted streets in the Coalfield Area and across the city has been undertaken	Requested review of current arrangements	Report to Area Committee	R
	Poor road surfaces	Carry out minor repairs as part of area or mainstream budgets	Area Committee		Ensure planned road and building works consider ways to improve roads	No of improved road surfaces	R

Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Play provision	Lack of out of school activity for 8-12 year olds	Map provision of existing services	Jane Wheeler		Identification of gaps in service	Audit of local provision	R
	Holiday provision	Evaluate current provision to identify what should continue	Sandra Mitchell	Report from Children's Services to ask Area Committee to provide input regarding allocation of funding for holiday activities	Influencing mainstream budgets	No of holiday activities provided	R
	Development of services for 8-12s required	Work with Youth Development Group to evaluate provision and target resources	Pauline Tsentes	* Report is provided to the July 2011 Area Committee to outline the need to allocate SIB funding and instigate a 'call for projects'	Target mainstream and area resources		A
	No identified lead on this issue	Work with Children's Services to identify lead agent	Area Committee	The Executive Director of Children's Services has been invited to provide information to the September 2011 Area Committee meeting	Review current arrangements	Identified lead	R
	Public transport						R
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Dangerous and speeding traffic	Co-ordinated or stratetgic approach required	Identification of road safety issues and development of an overall plan	Les Clark	The interim Assistant Head of Traffic will provide information regarding a strategic approach to traffic related issues. Information on accident hotspots will form part of the information gathering exercise to inform next steps	Ensure services meet local requirements	Area action plan or strategy	A
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Support for Older People	Content and quality of current services	Audit of local services provided for older people	Steph Downey/ Victoria Brown	The first meeting of the Task and Result Group is arranged for 18 July and will identify actions to progress this priority. Membership of the T&R Group is: Stephanie Downey, Lead Agent Victoria Brown, Age UK Sunderland Councillor Anne Hall Councillor Bob Heron	Highlight areas of concern to HHAS	Improved service provision	
	Accessibility to services	Audit of where local services are delivered/accessible					
	Mobility and 'getting around' - including public transport						

	Money and debt advice – mobile and outreach services	Promote on line or telephone support. Develop outreach services - *A verbal report will be presented to the July 2011 meeting		Juliana Heron Cllr James Blackburn Susan Brown Pauline Hopper	Partnership working e.g. DWP	More outreach and accessible advice	
	Promote support available – market and advertise			*A verbal report regarding information, advice and guidance including welfare rights will be presented to the July 2011 Committee meeting.	Promote services to local people		
	Volunteers for services available e.g. allotments	Encourage and develop local communities to become volunteers	Area Network Volunteer Centre		Identify volunteering opportunities and training available	Number of volunteers engaged	
	Social interaction (especially those in residential care)						
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG
Empty properties	Planned approach	Development of an area based Empty Properties Action Plan	Graeme Wilson	A draft has been prepared - *Report to July 2011. Area Committee by lead agent	Input into development of plan	Area Plan with targets agreed	A
	Enforcement	Identify nuisance properties	Liz McEvoy	nuisance properties identified using a matrix	part of matrix includes referrals from ward members	Number of notices issued	G
	Private landlords	Develop landlord forum	Liz McEvoy	Intend to use the next Landlord Forum to promote the Empty Property Action Plan with a particular focus on landlords with empty properties	Encourage local landlords to participate	Number of accredited landlords	A
	Learn from best practice (e.g. square root group)		Area Committee		Encourage partnership working and community ownership		A
	Identify 1 or 2 hotspots for improvement		Graeme Wilson	Statistics have shown which wards are above the City average for empty properties and these will be targetted. Additionally, areas that are displaying a number and range of problems with reagrds to the provate rented sector will be targetted as "hot spots" such as "The Racecourse" are. These are agreed by SMT.	Develop improvements to meet local need	Properties brought back into use	A

	HCA funding - explore further and consider match		Graeme Wilson	An application for funding has been submitted to the HCA. Feedback will be given by lead agent at the next meeting	To help identify empty properties which are refurbished through the project.	Funding secured/ funding allocated	A	
Priority	Issue	Local Action to Influence Services	Lead Agent	Progress Report	Area Committee's Influencing Role	Outcome Measure	RAG	
Neglected land	Identify neglected land	Carry out audit of relevant sites	Dave Ellison	The first meeting of the Task and Result Group is arranged for 28 July and will identify actions to progress this priority. Membership of the T&R Group is: Dave Ellison, Lead Agent John Chapman, Gentoo Councillor Mel Speding Councillor Colin Wakefield Councillor Kath Rolph Councillor James Blackburn Susan Brown Pauline Hopper	Development of land use to meet resident need	Audit produced		
	Industrial sites/fly tipping		Dave Ellison					
	Ownership (SLM large and small plots)		Craig Logue/Ian Crosby			Development of land use	SLM system updated	
	Investigate adverse possession of appropriate sites		Property Services					
	Involve Property Services in addressing issues		Colin Clark					
	Work with landowners - eg Lambton Estates		Colin Clark					
	Link with other priorities - greenspace, unadopted roads, empty properties etc..		Pauline Hopper/ Dave Ellison					
	Unfinished developments		Building Control					

LOCAL AREA PRIORITIES

Priority: An Attractive and Cared for Environment							
Issue	Date	Lead	Actions	Progress	Outcomes	Outcome Measure	RAG
Dog Fouling	Jan-11	aa	Respond to requests quickly within agreed timescales		Reduction in dog fouling.	Service requests. Complaints.	
			Audit of dog bins to ensure in correct locations		Reduction in complaints regarding dog	Compliments. Enforcement activity	
			Target areas of high reporting				
Graffiti							
Litter							
Fly tipping							
Shopping Ctrs							
Road and Footpath maintenance							

A separate sheet could be held for each priority or in one sheet.

The New Homes Bonus Relating to Empty Properties

This information aims to provide the Coalfield Area Committee with an overview of the New Homes Bonus and how it will impact on the Council's empty property work:

- How the New Homes Bonus Works.
- The definition of empty properties.
- Government funding earmarked for returning empty properties back into use.
- The impact of the New Homes Bonus on empty property work.
- The way forward

How the New Homes Bonus Works

- The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) introduced the New Homes Bonus (NHB) in February 2011.
- 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.

Worked Example for Sunderland

Sunderland City Council 2009 - 2011

Net increase of stock is 515 of which 134 is for empty properties returned to use.

= payment for year one of £576,967 (515 x 1,120.32) or £3,461,804 over six years.

Empty properties have contributed to 134 x £1,120.32 = £150,123

The New Homes Bonus Definition of Empty Properties

- Property has been vacant for more than six months.
- The property is unfurnished.
- Includes private and social properties.
- Excludes empty property with stated exemptions e.g. dwelling left empty by a person needing personal care, dwellings classed as second homes.

Additional Government Funding for Empty Properties

- The Government will invest £100m to enable housing associations to support local authorities to bring over 3,000 empty homes back into use.
- Funding will be distributed through the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Funding available from 2012 – 2015 but funding available for some pilot projects in 2011/12.
- The £100m could be used for the refurbishment of empty properties but the grant could be recyclable by splitting the rental income between the owner and the HCA .

Proposed Gentoo/Council/HCA Project

- Council to identify 10 long term problematic empty properties in the Coalfield, Hendon, Millfield and Castletown areas.
- Gentoo staff to train long term unemployed young people to refurbish empty properties.
- The young people to either move into the refurbished property or get a Gentoo tenancy.
- Gentoo to manage the property under a five year lease and set rent at an affordable level.
- Proposal submitted to HCA – results known in June/July

Impact of the New Homes Bonus on Empty Property Work

- Financial incentive for returning empty properties back into use – more emphasis on this work.
- However, preventing properties from becoming empty (at 6 months) is equally as important.
- Working in partnership is essential to help bring additional funding into the Council.
- New Homes Bonus definition does not cover all empty properties. Council service will cover all empty properties but will the emphasis be on the properties that attract funding rather than properties that are problematic to the community?
- Everyone involved with empty properties should feed accurate information to Council Tax to ensure returns are accurate.
- Everyone involved in empty properties should be aware of what properties fall under the NHB definition.
- Demolition programmes to be carefully programmed. (Properties empty for less than 6 months).
- If additional funding is available through the NHB, may be funding for Empty Dwelling Management Orders.

The Way Forward and Conclusion

- Need to monitor and review the number of empty properties monthly and track trends.
- Need to secure NHB funding to help with the work of empty properties.
- All partners to work together to secure the most funding for Sunderland and its communities.
- If successful, use the Gentoo/Council/HCA project as a pilot to return more empty properties back into use.

Report of the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services

Empty Property Action Plan 2011-12

1. Empty Property Strategy

- 1.1 There are six overarching strategic priorities for Sunderland identified within the Sunderland Housing Priorities Plan SHPP; two of which are directly related to bringing empty properties back into residential use, which is:
- to improve the existing housing stock by accelerating housing market renewal including block improvement schemes, demolitions, reducing the numbers of empty properties and effective licensing of landlords
 - working with owners to invest in empty properties and bring them back into use and to consider different models of investment in the private rented sector

The success of the Empty Property Strategy can be measured as follows:

Date	Reoccupied	Demolished	Total	Target
2007-2008	240	8	248	200
2008 - 2009	329	77	406	369
2009 - 2010	291	49	340	375
2010 - 2011	348	28	376	355

- 1.2 As part of the Government's Affordable Housing Programme £100m has been set aside for tackling empty properties. We are currently looking at involving Registered Providers across the city, which would include bringing back into use a range of properties.
- 1.3 The Government's New Homes Bonus also proposes that it will match fund the additional council tax raised by councils for bringing long term empty properties back into use. The number of empty properties (according to Government and Council Tax definitions) will be measured in October of each year. Any decreases in empty properties from one year to the next will be rewarded through the New Homes Bonus. The definition also includes empty Social Housing Registered Social Landlord properties in the City.
- 1.4 It was announced in January 2011, that the Government will use secondary legislation to introduce new constraints relating to Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs). The constraints allow local authorities to utilise EDMOs only if a property has been empty for two years and is attracting vandalism and anti social behaviour. This will be closely monitored as part of this project.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The Empty Property Service aims to:

'Provide a proactive and innovative approach to the reduction in the number of empty properties in Sunderland to assist in the creation of sustainable communities in all neighbourhoods'.

This will be achieved by:

1. Developing a comprehensive and locality based empty property service which raises awareness of empty homes issues.

2. Using a preventative and innovative approach to reoccupy empty properties.
3. Ensuring reoccupied properties are sustainable within their neighbourhoods.
4. Responding to the needs and requirements of property owners, partners and neighbourhoods.
5. Involving a range of partners and individuals to encourage action and make best use of limited resources.

2.2 Throughout 2011-2012, the Empty Property Service will prioritise the following across Sunderland:

1. Strive to reduce the number of empty properties across Sunderland to the city average of 2.47% as at the end of April 2011.
2. Reoccupy 360 empty properties across Sunderland with internal and external partners, focusing on 200 empty properties within wards where empty properties are higher than the city average as at the end of April 2011 and working within the context of the New Homes Bonus.
3. Reduce homelessness across the City.
4. Promote the Landlord accreditation scheme.
5. Look to target the worst hot spot areas as a first priority, especially in wards where empty properties are higher than the city average as at the end of April 2011.
6. To work closely with Officers in Environmental Services to explore the most effective way of bringing empty commercial premises back into use.
7. To work closely with partners to explore the effect and impact of the New Homes Bonus on empty properties.

2.3 Benefits of introducing the Empty Property Action Plan are:

Customer/Community Benefits	Council Benefit
Empty properties returned into occupation	Increase in income to the Council through payment of full Council Tax Attract payment of New Homes Bonus.
Reduction in empty properties being targeted	Reduction in number of requests for service regarding empty properties.
More homes available for homeless people	Reduction in costs of works in default.
More sustainable communities	Reduction in homelessness.

3. Empty Property Action Plan

- 3.1 The action plan, see Annex 1, will help contribute towards the Council's values: proud, decent and together in the way we treat our customers and work in partnership to achieve the community's needs. It is also part of a series of Directorate projects and has been monitored by the Directorate Change Team. Currently, the project does not include empty commercial properties but the most effective way to bring commercial empty properties back to use will be explored within the Council and with external partners.
- 3.2 Officers will work together with owners of empty properties and external agencies to ensure the property is brought back into occupation or to prevent them from becoming empty in the first place. The solution to empty properties lies often in a partnership approach. Officers will also undertake inspections as necessary to ensure that the property meets the Decent Homes Standard. The primary focus will be prevention and early intervention.
- 3.3 At April 2011 the numbers of empty properties across each of the local areas and across the City as a whole are set out in Annex 2. The statistics and analysis below are based

on the figures from April 2011. The proportion of Private Sector Stock empty is as a percentage in each ward area.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Empty properties are a priority in each of the local areas and this is reflected in the local work plans. The attached action plan provides a more local examination of the issues and provides an innovative local action plan aimed at specifically addressing those local issues in relation to bringing empty properties back into use and creating a greater housing resource for the City.
- 4.2 Project work is proving to be successful in various areas and it is hoped that this work will be continued and expanded to other wards, particularly those wards that do not meet the city average as at April 2011. This involves officers tackling empty properties, anti social behaviour, landlord accreditation and issues of disrepair in partnership with Housing Providers the police and other local partners. This is in response to concerns from local residents and ward members.
- 4.3 This action plan will be monitored quarterly and reviewed after one year by the Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Senior Management Team and Area Committee. The information will also be made available to all local partners and the public should they request it.

5. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- Note the content of the report and draft action plan
- Consider and provide feedback on the locality aims and actions in Coalfields Action Plan (draft)
- Identify and feedback information regarding empty properties
- Agree to review the action plan after one year

Background papers

- The Housing Act 2004
- Empty Property Strategy (2007-2011)
- Local Area Plans (LAPS) (2009-2011)
- The following websites were used as reference and for benchmarking:
 - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/newhomesbonusquestions/>
 - <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk>
 - <http://www.camden.gov.uk>
 - <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/>

Contact Officer:

Graeme Wilson, Assistant Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Manager,
Tel 0191 561 2034, email: Graeme.wilson1@sunderland.gov.uk

Coalfield

Background information:

The Coalfield area covers the wards of Copt Hill, Hetton, Houghton and Shiney Row.

Empty Properties at April 2011:

Total		Empty for or between 1-2 years		Empty for five years or more	
No.	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty (H18)	No.	% Area	No.	% Area
379	2.39%	234	61.7%	64	16%

Top 3 Types of empty properties in the Coalfield:

Type	No.	% Area
Semi detached	65	17%
Flats or maisonettes	73	19%
Terraced properties	102	26%

Copthill and Hetton wards have a higher percentage of empty properties than the City Average. Coalfield ranks the second highest among the five areas. Examining the age of empty properties, by far the highest proportion is in pre 1919 properties 166 (41%).

Empty Properties per ward:

Ward	No.	% Area	City %
Copt Hill	132	35	3.44
Hetton	101	27	2.89
Houghton	62	16	1.91
Shiney Row	84	22	2.05

Hetton Downs, within the Copt Hill ward, is a renewal area and as part of the Council's renewal strategy, 161 pre 1919 terraced properties have been demolished by the Council to assemble a site for future housing. A Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment is currently being undertaken in Maudlin Street to determine the future of the street. There are currently 7 empty properties out of 28 in the street, with 5 being owned by the Council.

It should be noted that Gentoo is continuing to demolish its properties at the Eppleton and Broomhill Estates in the Copt Hill ward and Homelands and Race Course Estates in Houghton, with 177 left to demolish including 5 owned under the right to buy scheme. The demolition of 55 properties at Broomhill, 2 at Holmlands and possibility of 33 at Racecourse should be completed in 2011/12. Gentoo has already demolished 509 properties in the last 8 years at Chilton Moor, Homelands, Central Hetton, Race Course Estate and Eppleton Estate to make way for new houses.

Project work is currently being undertaken on the Race Course Estate within the Houghton ward with officers tackling empty properties, anti social behaviour, landlord accreditation and issues of disrepair in partnership with Gentoo and the police. This is in response to concerns from local residents and ward members. The targeted co-ordinated approach has proved to be successful in other areas of the city and is currently ongoing. It is estimated that the project will cease in January 2012.

Population

Coalfield has 47,001 residents, 16.7% of the City's population. According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, the area has a predominantly White Ethnic Group.

Coalfields Empty Property Action Plan 2011/12

LOCALITY AIM	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMESCALES	RESPONSIBILITY
Reduce the number of empty properties in the Coalfield to the city average of 2.47 (As at April 2011)	Investigate the cause of empty properties in Hetton, Copt Hill and Shiney Row wards and tackle these issues with local partners.	Reduce empty properties by 30%	March 2012	EPA, Voluntary Sector, Landlords, owners, residents and ward members.
	Match empty properties with residents on the homeless register.	Reduce Homelessness by 5% citywide	March 2012	EPA and HOT
Return 100 empty properties in Coalfields back into use of which 35 will be in the Copt Hill and 11 in Hetton wards.	Ensure new builds in the Hetton Ward do not remain empty for longer than six months by actively engaging with Gentoo to promote affordable housing.	50% of new builds in the Hetton Ward not seen as a long term empty property 177 houses demolished	March 2012	Gentoo, and EPA
	To inspect and liaise with all empty property owners in the Racecourse Estate area to return back into use with local partners.	20% of Empty Properties at the Houghton Racecourse re-occupied	February 2012	EPA, ASB officer, ARC, Police, Gentoo, residents, voluntary sector and owners.
	Undertake proactive visits and external inspections to all properties empty for over one year, with particular focus on the Copt Hill and Hetton wards.	Daily/monthly inspections completed by officer. All wards reduced to the city average.	March 2012	EPA and Planning enforcement Section
	Develop a tool to risk assess, identify and prioritise problematic empty properties.	Tool established and implemented Problematic empty properties identified	June 2011	EPO and EPA
	Prioritise identified problematic empty properties to ensure re-occupation, and where appropriate use the additional tools provided by the Housing Act 2004 to tackle problems within the private sector, with particular focus on the Copt Hill and Hetton wards.	50% of empty problematic properties brought back to use	March 2012	EPO, EPA, Adult Services (Care).
	Get breakdown of empty properties by New Homes Bonus definition and identify location and any trends. Prioritise which properties to focus resources on.	Monthly locality report Increased New Homes Bonus returns	June 2011	HAO and EPO.

Conclusion

Empty properties are a high priority in each of the local areas and this is reflected in local action plans. The above action plan provides a more local examination of the issues and provides an innovative local action plan aimed at specifically addressing those local issues in relation to bringing empty properties back into use and creating a greater housing resource for the City.

Project work is proving to be successful in various areas and it is hoped that this work will be continued and expanded to other wards, particularly those wards that do not meet the city average as at April 2011. This involves officers tackling empty properties, anti social behaviour, landlord accreditation and issues of disrepair in partnership with Housing Providers the police and other local partners. This is in response to concerns from local residents and a ward members.

This action plan will be monitored quarterly and reviewed after one year by the Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Senior Management Team and Area Committee. The information will also be made available to all local partners and the public should they request it.

Appendix 1: April 2011

Long Term Empty Properties by Period Empty

ARF	Ward	Period Empty							Grand Total	Proportion of Private Sector Stock Empty
		6 Months - under 1 yr	1 Year - under 2 years	2 Years - under 3 years	3 Years - under 4 years	4 Years - under 5 years	Over 5 years			
Sunderland North	Castle	12	15	7	3	1	7	45	1.53%	
	Fulwell	23	23	13	7	6	14	86	1.77%	
	Redhill	13	19	4	1	3	5	45	1.67%	
	Southwick	35	20	11	8	7	14	95	2.90%	
	St Peter's	61	41	17	9	6	22	156	3.45%	
Sunderland North Total		144	118	52	28	23	62	427	2.33%	
Sunderland East	Doxford	16	12	7	3	2	7	47	1.43%	
	Hendon	86	79	67	19	14	23	288	6.74%	
	Millfield	64	47	21	12	9	28	181	4.25%	
	Ryhope	22	22	13	10	3	12	82	2.40%	
	St Michael's	46	45	13	25	7	30	166	3.47%	
Sunderland East Total		234	205	121	69	35	100	764	3.82%	
Sunderland West	Barnes	32	27	4	9	3	14	89	2.02%	
	Pallion	27	30	14	4	4	9	88	2.97%	
	Sandhill	22	16	7	8		6	59	2.12%	
	Silksworth	20	33	7	3	2	5	70	2.01%	
	St Anne's	16	12	4	2	2	8	44	1.50%	
	St Chad's	27	18	9	2	2	7	65	2.11%	
Sunderland West Total		144	136	45	28	13	49	415	2.11%	
Coalfield	Copt Hill	27	40	24	14	8	19	132	3.37%	
	Hetton	25	31	10	8	7	20	101	2.78%	
	Houghton	14	23	9	6	3	7	62	1.56%	
	Shiney Row	23	21	12	4	6	18	84	1.94%	
Coalfield Total		89	115	55	32	24	64	379	2.39%	
Washington	Washington Central	22	17	8	2	1	3	53	1.46%	
	Washington North	28	24	8	13	4	17	94	2.75%	
	Washington East	12	8	6	2	1	2	31	0.93%	
	Washington South	12	12	1	2	2	4	33	0.96%	
	Washington West	19	17	8	5	4	6	59	1.60%	
Washington Total		93	78	31	24	12	32	270	1.54%	
Grand Total		704	652	304	181	107	307	2,255	2.47%	

Appendix 2: Reference

The HCA Homes and Communities Agency are developing an Empty Property toolkit which will be available from June 2011. This will be incorporated into the Empty Property Strategy Area Approach.

The following websites were used as reference and for benchmarking:

- <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/newhomesbonusquestions/>
- <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk>
- <http://www.camden.gov.uk>
- <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/>

- The Housing Act 2004
- Empty Property Strategy (2007-2011)
- Local Area Plans (LAPS) (2009-2011)

COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE
13th JULY 2011
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Community Chest, Strategic Initiative Budget (SIB) and Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) - Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources	
Author(s): Chief Executive	
Purpose of Report: This report requests Area Committee to consider proposals for the allocation of the Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest to support initiatives that will deliver activity against priorities for 2011/12.	
Description of Decision: The Committee is requested to approve the following from the 2011/12 budget: Annex 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve 3 SIB proposals from the 2011/12 budget as outlined in 2.1. of Item 2e Annex 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve 13 Community Chest requests from the 2011/12 budget as outlined in 2.2 of Item 2e 	
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes	
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: SIB is a budget delegated to Area Committee in order to commission activity that delivers actions against the key strategic priorities identified in the Coalfield Work Plan. Its main purpose is to benefit the local community and to attract other funding into the area. The Area Committee has a total SIB budget of £238,257 for 2011/12, which includes £1,564 returned to budget from a previously funded project. The Community Chest forms part of SIB, of which £250,000 is available for the scheme in 2011/2012 across all wards. £10,000 is available for each ward (Copt Hill, Hetton, Houghton and Shiny Row) in addition, £2,880 was carried over from previous years, making this years total balance £42,880.	
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: The circumstances are such that there are no realistic alternatives that could be considered.	
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? No Is it included in the Forward Plan? No	Relevant Scrutiny Committees:

13 JULY 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Initiative Budget (SIB) and Community Chest – Financial Update and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources

1. Why has it come to Committee

1.1 Area Committee has delegated budgets to allocate to specific strategic priorities identified in the Work Plan, with the overall aim to benefit the wider community and to attract other funding into the area. This report provides an update position on progress in relation to allocating SIB and Community Chest.

2. Funding streams 2011/2012 as at 13 July 2011

2.1 SIB – Financial Statement (projects approved to date)

	Committee Date	Main SIB Fund Approvals	Opportunities Approvals	Total 100%
	-	-	-	£238,257
Project Name	-	-	-	-
Easington Lane Lighting	01.06.2011	£3,500		£234,757
Elemore Vale Steelworks	01.06.2011	£6,000		£228,757
Sunderland Festival	01.06.2011		£3,000	£225,757
Grangewood Play Site Footpath Lighting	01.06.2011	£13,775		£211,982
Total allocated		£23,275	£3,000	
Balance	-	-	-	£211,982

Following the June 2011 Committee meeting there was a remaining balance of £211,982. Funding requests presented to this meeting are as follows:

1	Houghton Feast	£ 5,000 (detailed in Annex 4)
2	Allotment Improvements	£30,000 (detailed previously in Item 3c)
3	Activities for young people	£30,000 (detailed previously in Item 3b)

Projects presented total £65,000. Should all of the proposals be approved the remaining balance for the 2011/2012 allocation would be £146,982.

2.2 Community Chest

The table below details balances remaining to be allocated following the last meeting in June, project proposals received as detailed in **Annex 5**, and balance remaining should those proposals be approved.

Ward	Available following June 2011 meeting	Project Proposals to this meeting	Balance
Copt Hill	£9,275	£1,020	£8,255

Hetton	£9,600	£3,196	£6,404
Houghton	£9,356	£20	£9,336
Shiney Row	£9,249	£1,020	£8,229
Total	£37,480	£5,256	£32,224

3 Recommendations

Committee is requested to:

- Note the financial information set out in sections 2.1 and 2.2
- Approve the recommendations set out in Annex 4 (SIB application)
- Approve the proposals for support from 2011/2012 Community Chest set out in Annex 5

Contact Officer: Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Officer
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Annex 4 Summary of SIB/SIP project applications

Annex 5 Community Chest proposals

Summary of SIB Funding Application - Houghton Feast

Total cost of Project	Total SIB	Total match funding
£41,000	£5,000 Coalfield area £17,000 Total all areas	£24,000
Project Duration	Start Date	End Date
5 months	July 2011	November 2011

The Project

The Houghton Feast opening weekend will commence with an opening ceremony on Friday 7th October 2011. Taking inspiration from the Saxon stone carvings of Wyverns which can be found in St Michael's Church, the ceremony will be based on the theme of myths and legends with particular focus on the Lambton Worm. Community workshops will take place across the city in the run up to the event. These workshops will be led by a key writer in residence who will use the legend of the Lambton Worm as a foundation to create a new story with community members. This story will then be brought to life by professional artists and community participants during workshops in schools and community venues. These workshops will result in a short, high quality performance using sound and light during the Friday night ceremony. Friday's performance will link directly to the Saturday parade and will feature children from the Coalfields area who have taken part in the preparation workshops. Saturday's parade will also carry the theme of Myths and Legends and will include community members from throughout all five areas

The whole Coalfields community will be encouraged to participate including local retailers who will be invited to display window dressings and children's artwork in support of the event.

In addition, workshops will take place in each of the other 4 Areas across Sunderland in an effort to build audiences for and raise the profile of Houghton Feast. Participants will have the opportunity of being involved in the Saturday Parade.

Need for the Project

The theme of Myths and Legends was selected through consultation with local school and community groups. The Houghton Feast Steering Group have also been involved in the development of this concept. In previous years several schools have expressed an interest to be involved with the Houghton Feast Workshops, this new approach will allow more schools to participate in the process.

Outputs of the Project

S5	Young people benefiting from youth inclusion projects	50
A3	Community and voluntary groups supported	3
A6	Community or educational events held	20

Key Milestones for the Project

Procurement of Writer in residence	August 2011
Workshops with schools and community groups	September 2011
Promotion of events	September 2011
Successful delivery of events	October 2011
Evaluation/Debrief	November 2011

Recommendation: Approve

The project contributes to the Heritage priority of the Work Plan and supports Coalfield Area Committee's ethos of community involvement. Houghton Feast is an important part of the history of the Coalfield area and the wider Sunderland and North East diary of events. Raising the profile of the event through schools and community groups across the City will increase interest and engagement from a wider section of the community.

COMMUNITY CHEST 2011/2012 COALFIELD AREA - PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR APPROVAL

Ward	Project	Amount	Allocation 2011/2012	Project Proposals	Previous Approvals	Balance Remaining
Copt Hill	Sunderland Armed Forces Network – funds to carry out administration and publicity to engage and identify veterans and families.	20				
	Hetton Methodist Church – funds to purchase approximately 70 chairs to replace the old discarded one's, this will benefit community groups using the facility.	1,000				
	Totals	1,020	10,900	1,020	1,625	8,255
Hetton	Hetton & Eppleton Community Hall – to pay for Thursday's Bingo Club Christmas Party Lunch for 35 plus members.	150				
	Hetton and Lyons Mother's Union – Catering Costs for Christmas Lunch for members and friends (70 people).	700				
	Easington Lane Senior Citizens Club – to provide catering and entertainment for Christmas party for 45 members.	851				
	Easington Lane & Hetton Club for Disabled – a day trip to Wainstones Hotel, for lunch, afternoon tea and entertainment. Community Chest will pay for hire of bus.	475				
	Sunderland Armed Forces Network – funds to carry out administration and publicity to engage and identify veterans and families.	20				
	Hetton Methodist Church – funds to purchase approximately 70 chairs to replace the old discarded one's, this will benefit community groups using the facility.	1,000				
	Totals	3,196	10,305	3,196	705	6,404
Houghton	Grasswell House, Children's Home – trips to Lightwater Valley, Beamish, Ten Pin Bowling, GO Ape and Windsurfing.	500*				
	Sunderland Armed Forces Network – funds to carry out administration and publicity to engage and identify veterans and families.	20				
	Totals	20	10,731	20	1,375	9,336
Shiney Row	Penshaw Women's Guild, Penshaw Catholic Club – catering costs for Christmas Lunch for 40 members plus costs to hire tables and cloths.	500				
	Sunderland Armed Forces Network – funds to carry out	20				

	administration and publicity to engage and identify veterans and families.					
	Penshaw Community Association - Contribution towards the costs for Penshaw School Trail. For the music for the Ceilidh, refreshments, insurance and brochure.	500				
	Total	1,020	10,944	1,020	1,695	8,229
TOTALS		5,256	42,880	5,256	5,400	32,224

*To note this relates to a project that was approved on 8/9/2010 and the £500 has already been deducted from the Community chest balance.