

Item 2b  
**NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**COMMUNITY ACTION IN SUNDERLAND NORTH – PROGRESS REVIEW  
Work Plan 2011/12: Attractive and Cared for Environment**

**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. Membership of the Group**

2.1 As the Task and Finish Group has now been extended beyond the Greening of the North to Attractive and Cared for Environment it was felt that it was the right time to review the membership of the group. Given the priorities within the workplan the group proposed membership include Groundwork's, CEED, Gentoo, a member of the Business Investment Team, a Property Services Representative, the Empty Property Assistant for the North area and the Planning Service.

**2. Responsive Local Services**

2.1 The local workplan for the North area identified that responsive local services would be targeted in order to ensure maximum impact in the area and resident satisfaction.

2.2 Management information was gathered for customer service requests made in 2010/2011 for responsive local services attached at **Annex 2**. This management information identified where the customer service requests were made per ward and which wards experienced the highest number of requests. The group discussed how this information could inform the delivery of services in the area to address particular hotspots.

2.3 As Responsive Local Services was not fully operational during this period it was agreed to obtain the same management information for the period April 2011 – to date and have this information detailed by customer service requests and staff requests.

2.4 This information would be considered with projects and service delivery to understand what had made an impact and been successful in reducing the number of overall requests to consider how further work can be taken forward in the future to build on good practice.

2.5 The RLS representative confirmed that a number of the issues were enforcement issues and currently within the Responsive Local Services and audit was being completed in each area to identify hotspots for dumping of waste, animal fouling etc. This information would then be

used to target these areas with enforcement officers. The task and finish group agreed that the list of hotspots would be provided to the group once collated.

### **3 Shopping Centres**

- 3.1 The group discussed the issues regarding the shopping centres in the North area with particular reference to the impact of the current climate on local shops.
- 3.2 The group also discussed the issues around properties above shopping areas which quite often are in a very poor state of repair and have been empty for some time and how these may be brought back into use or enforcement used to ensure the areas remain in a good state of repair.
- 3.3 The group proposed that a member of the empty property team and planning team be invited to future Task and Finish Groups to establish what action can be taken regarding the empty properties and properties in a poor state of repair.
- 3.4 The ownership of commercial properties was considered and it was agreed that this detail should be established for shops across the North area and what action could be taken.
- 3.5 It was acknowledged that the current economic climate was impacting on the local shopping centres and the group requested it was established what support was available where and how this was made available.
- 3.6 The workplan identified the need to establish what the current and future plans of the owners of commercial shops in the North area was in order to inform how Committee could support this. A member of the Business Investment Team will be engaged to establish how this could be progressed.

### **4. Neglected Land**

- 4.1 There has been some work to date completed on establishing areas of neglected land, who owns the land and action taken with landowners to improve the areas identified.
- 4.2 The Task and Finish Group agreed that this work needed to be taken a step further in terms of identification of derelict or unmaintained land across the North area.
- 4.3 It was proposed that a full audit be undertaken across the North area of neglected or derelict land on a ward basis. This audit would incorporate location of site, ownership, current state of site, previous use, future plans, and reference to strategic plans. This information would be used to prioritise potential action or improvements to the area

with reference to the Greenspace audit and consultation with local residents.

- 4.4 In order to progress the audit Clive Greenwood would be invited to the task and finish group to advise along with property services, planning service and a member of the empty property team.

## **5 Statutory Allotments**

- 5.1 The representative from Parks service confirmed that the audit of the statutory allotments in the North area was underway and a report was expected in 2-3 weeks time which would provide information on each site and plot that could be used to inform action that would be taken to address the issues on sites as well as inform how the North Area Committee would be able to support.
- 5.2 The Task and Finish Group proposed that consideration be given to allocating SIB funding to the improvement of statutory allotments dependent upon the outcome and findings of the audit report.

### **Recommendations**

- Note the content of the report.
- Agree the proposals for membership of the Task and Finish Group.
- Agree the actions proposed in points 2 – 5 to be taken forward.

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