

Provide Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) appropriate to the needs of the Coalfield area residents

Background

Family, Adult and Community Learning works in partnership with a wide range of agencies to develop and deliver projects aimed at improving access to learning and improving the skills of adults and families. Family Learning offers parents, grandparents, guardians and carers a chance to learn alongside their children in a fun and friendly way. Adult Learning courses can provide opportunities to build confidence learn for fun and enjoyment or offer routes to further learning and developing skills for employment. Skills for Life, Skills for Work, Skills for Independent Living courses that help adults brush up their English and Maths skills to support children at school, assist with job search and help with training at work.

There are gaps in service, both in terms of subject matter and location. The current programme often does not meet the needs of the community with barriers such as childcare and transport preventing take up. The commissioning arrangements can exclude smaller, community organisations who are sometimes best placed to work with residents in their own community. Smaller organisations often do not have paid staff and lack the capacity to develop tenders to deliver work. The procurement arrangements are being reviewed and it is to be recommended that the Coalfield area is selected to pilot a new way of working during 2010/11 for implementation across the City 2011/12.

Key Facts

- Some courses, including Family Learning, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Skills for Life (maths and English) are free
- Courses are also free if you are in receipt of income-based benefits
- A reduction of 50% is offered to anyone aged 60 or over
- Informal and community learning is often a first step to more formal, accredited learning
- Family learning such as healthy cooking and growing vegetables can contribute to the increase in healthy lifestyle activities
- Area Committee have requested a review of current provision which is now being undertaken

Current Interventions

- The current service has three funding streams: Wider Family Learning (WFL); Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) and Personal Community Learning (PCD) and a development fund; First Steps
- Courses are currently delivered at the Hetton Centre, Easington Lane Community Access Point (ELCAP), Houghton Library, Shiney Row CA, Kepier Hall and Eppleton Primary School
- Most courses are delivered in the day time. There is limited evening and weekend provision

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Sandra Kenny, Children's Services. Area Committee establish a Local Task & Finish group with key members from the Committee to support the development of a more locally responsive community learning programme and develop the pilot for the City.
- B** Lead Agent: Sunderland Learning Partnership. Area Committee receive information and updates via the e-bulletin and take part in consultation regarding the review of the Citywide programme.

Tackle Health Inequalities

Background

The recent Health thematic report for Coalfields highlighted three key issues which can be supported at a local level in order to reduce health inequalities in the area. Smoking, Obesity and Risk Taking Behaviour (Teenage Conception and Alcohol use) have been identified by Public Health Specialists from the Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (STPCT) as the key priorities to address in order to increase healthy lifestyle choices. There are a small number of STPCT funded health programmes delivered within the community. However, due to staffing and capacity within some local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to compete for funding, the local service delivery can be limited.

Key Facts

- Sunderland has high levels of smoking during pregnancy and at time of delivery, impacting on infant mortality, childhood illness and low birth weight
- There are high levels of smoking amongst people diagnosed with a chronic disease and in particular wards which contributes to health inequalities and the life expectancy gap
- Sunderland has high usage of illicit tobacco which provides opportunities for children and young people to smoke and contributes to childhood poverty and health inequalities
- Obesity is the second most common preventable cause of death after smoking
- Obese people have an increased risk of dying prematurely or developing diseases such as cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- 10.3% of reception, and 21.2% of year 6 pupils in Sunderland are obese
- Children born to teenage mothers have 60% higher rates of infant mortality and are at increased risk of low birth-weight, which has an impact on the child's long term health
- Teenage mothers are 3 times more likely to suffer from post natal depression and experience poor mental health for up to 3 years after the birth
- Teenage parents and their children are at increased risk of living in poverty

Current Interventions

- There is a Smoking in Pregnancy Pathway service which is offered on an 'opt out' basis, rather than an 'opt in'
- Sunderland is a pilot for the 'Reducing Health Inequalities through Tackling Illicit Tobacco' programme
- Sunderland TPCT have committed over £1m per annum to support a wide range of 'high impact' interventions to reduce obesity
- An adult weight management programme has been developed and the NHS South of Tyne and Wear Obesity Strategy identifies a number of priorities which must be addressed at a local level in order to be effective
- Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) Training is available for all STPCT providers who work with young people
- Sunderland City Council Youth Information Staff provide sexual health advice and support in a range of young people settings

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Pam Lee, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust. Area Committee set up a Local Task & Finish group to include the Tobacco Alliance, Sunderland Obesity Partnership and Teenage Pregnancy Management Team, which will support the identification of local issues and explore opportunities to add value to existing provision.
- B** Lead Agent: Pam Lee, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust. Area Committee receive updates and information regarding actions and progress within the area (in relation to smoking, obesity and teenage conception) via the e-bulletin.

Deliver Responsive Local Services

Background

The Community Leadership Programme, which commenced in September 2008, is based upon the need to accelerate delivery of quality of life improvements for the people of Sunderland and to improve their satisfaction levels with the way the Council and its partners perform. The Responsive Local Services (RLS) project is designed to satisfy the service delivery element of the programme ensuring that, in delivering its day to day services, the Council is more responsive to the needs and expectations of its customers and engages with citizens more effectively. In summary RLS is a 'method of area working' that was established via Cabinet to:

- Increase levels of resident satisfaction through providing services that are responsive to community needs and effectively communicating improvements
- Tailor services in recognition of differing area/locality circumstances either through local problem solving or adapting service standards
- Recognise and enhance the community leadership role of elected members.

Key Facts

- There are currently five services that fall within the scope of the RLS remit these are: Litter Removal, Refuse Collection, Grass Cutting, Graffiti and Dog Fouling
- The services included in the first wave have been chosen according to their relative importance and the ability to measure performance against the current service standards.
- It is necessary, in this respect, to publish the associated service standards to enable residents and Members to engage in service delivery performance updates, via Area Committees. This will enable Area Committees and residents to consider local priorities and service performance when tailoring service standards to match local need or to undertake local problem solving.
- The service scope of each subsequent wave of the Project is defined upon the basis of customer feedback through the Customer Services Network, feedback from Residents' Surveys, Area Committees, Ward visits and the analysis of service requests via staff reports.

Current Interventions

- Performance reports produced and presented to each Area Committee. Reports were presented in January and March 2010 and will be presented to each area committee as required.
- An RLS Issues Log is established and working to track local problem solving issues arising from Area Committee discussions and the service interventions to address the issues raised.
- Communication activity is underway to ensure the Council and local members receive recognition for the improved services. The communication is also designed to encourage residents to engage with Area Committees regarding local issues.
- Partnership working is underway particularly in respect of Gentoo in order to align neighbourhood activity and service standards where possible.
- Work is underway to identify the next wave of services to be included within the project.
- Any resource implications are in the first instance managed within existing budget provision or as part of the Medium term Financial Planning Process. Area Committees are also able to call upon their Strategic Investment Plan allocations to respond to local issues arising from service demand or, as was the case for the previous cycle, to address any issues coming forward from ward visits and the staff reporting line.

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Mike Poulter City Services. A Local Task and Finish Group (including partners as required) is set up to consider local problem solving as required.
- B** Lead Agent: Mike Poulter, City Services. Area Committee to continue to receive performance reports and information updates via the e-bulletin. Task and finish groups (including partners as required) set up to consider local problem solving as required

Develop a Bulb Planting and Soft Landscaping Project

Background

The Coalfield area has large areas of open greenspace/grassed areas which could be made more attractive and increase pride in the area. Some estates and residential areas are visually unattractive and would benefit from work to improve appearance. The provision of shrubs, bulb planting, for instance, provides a more attractive place to live. There is a need to engage with communities effectively to encourage involvement and reduce negative perceptions of area. This is one area where Area Committee could make a real difference to the whole area and create a sense of pride amongst residents

Key Facts

- In relation to their homes as a place to live, satisfaction levels of Coalfield residents are lower than the City average

Current Interventions

- City Services are undertaking a Citywide audit of all green space. The audit will look at a wide range of issues such as ownership and use of space
- Gentoo have a maintenance programme and work with residents to improve residential areas. This includes environmental schemes, such as planting, painting etc..
- The Local Development Framework Core Strategy is being developed and will set out the overarching strategic planning framework for the development of the City up to 2026. The Core Strategy identifies improvements to public realm along major roads and local district centres within the Coalfield area.

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Les Clark, Head of Street Scene. Area Committee set up a Local Task & Finish group to develop a Coalfield-wide environmental scheme to include a large scale bulb planting programme.
- B** Lead Agent: Les Clark, Head of Street Scene. Area Committee receive information and updates regarding environmental programmes delivered by mainstream budgets within the area (soft landscaping, planting schemes etc...) via the e-bulletin.

Improve Allotment Sites

Background

Many allotment sites across the Coalfield Area are in an unkempt and unsightly condition so much so that they can't be offered to potential tenants even though there is a waiting list. This view is supported by the Police who regularly receive reports about illegal and anti social activity at some of the less well managed allotment sites. The Local Multi Agency Problem Solving group (LMAPS), chaired by Inspector Graham Finlay, has addressed issues regarding a number of allotment sites during the past year.

Key Facts

- There are 94 allotment sites in the City with a total of 2755 individual plots
- There is one Allotment Officer for the City and a maintenance budget of £30,000 per year
- There are 36 allotment sites within the Coalfield area
- The total number of people on the waiting list for an allotment on a site within the Coalfield area is 384

Current Interventions

- The Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee is developing options for improvement of allotment provision across the City.

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Les Clark, City Services. Area Committee to consider the outcomes of the option development work (when available) in a local context.
- B** Lead Agent: Les Clark, City Services. Area Committee receive regular updates and feedback regarding the work of Scrutiny via the e-bulletin and take part in consultation where appropriate.

Promote and Celebrate Heritage

Background

Heritage is an area of continuing growth both across the region and for the City of Sunderland. Sunderland has a distinct heritage, of which there is a strong sense of pride across the City. The Coalfield area offers a variety of attractions, events and places of interest such as Hillside Cemetery, Houghton Feast, Rainton Meadows, Stephenson Trail, Heritage Open Days and Hetton Lyons Country Park. The area's heritage is important to local people and the Coalfield area also has a dedicated community and voluntary sector consisting of many local people who have a vast knowledge of the area and its heritage, including Friends of Copt Hill, Houghton and District Local History Group, Hetton Local History Group, Shiney Row Local History Group and Friends of Hillside Cemetery.

Key Facts

- The Coalfield is home to a number of important attractions such as Alice Well, Cox Green, Copt Hill and Seven Sisters Nature Reserve, Kepier Hall, St Michael and All Angels Church and Penshaw Monument

Current Interventions

- The City Council recognises the need to deliver a city wide heritage strategy which would identify the priorities for the City, raise the profile of heritage and influence future developments. Officers are currently investigating options in order to take this forward.
- A nomination is currently being developed for World Heritage Status for Sunderland, which would allow the City to become a cultural heritage landmark as one of three World Heritage Sites across the region and 27 sites across the UK, allowing the City to prosper in areas such as economic development and tourism.
- Heritage for the City is managed and delivered through City Services, with two part time heritage officers working to deliver the Heritage agenda, this involves: providing co-ordination and overview of relevant events and activity across the City, assisting with heritage projects as appropriate, supporting the voluntary sector as appropriate, promoting heritage and developing partnership working.
- Responsibility for the conservation of built heritage lies within the Planning and Conservation sector within the Office of the Chief Executive.
- Houghton, Hetton, Shiney Row, Fence Houses and Easington Lane libraries all offer access to a range of Local Studies material including bookstock and PC access websites
- The Local Development Framework Core Strategy highlights the potential of culture and tourism development within the area due to historic industrial heritage and transformed natural environment

Options

- A** Lead: Chris Alexander, City Services. Area Committee establish a Local Task and Finish group and select key members, including partners from Committee to support Lead Agent in the development of a Heritage programme for the Coalfield area.
- B** Lead Agent: Chris Alexander, City Services – Review the situation when selecting priorities in 2011/12 following confirmation of funding to allow for a Heritage Strategy and consider local projects and a joined up approach to the heritage offer in the Coalfields.

Improve Local Shopping Centres

Background

Local shopping centres in the Coalfield area have suffered due to lack of economic activity. Some streets have empty shops creating an unattractive environment and a negative impression of the area. Area Committee have identified a need to support local shopping centres, both in terms of their aesthetic and environmental appearance and their economic activity. Houghton le Spring is the administrative centre of the Coalfields and would benefit from improved facilities to attract local people and visitors to shop in the town.

Key Facts

- The Local Development Framework Core Strategy notes that Houghton currently has a limited convenience and comparison retail sector which means expenditure flows out of the area into other town centres. However, Houghton town centre has an important non-retail function and the role and function of the town centre should be developed.

Current Interventions

- A Retail Needs Assessment has been carried out and a 'performance analysis' (commonly referred to as a 'health check') undertaken on the strategic and local shopping centres across Sunderland. The Final Report was published in September 2009 and included findings on Houghton Town Centre, Hetton Town Centre, Shiney Row shopping centre, Market Street, Hetton, Fence Houses and Easington Lane. The study is to form part of the evidence base for the retail policies and proposals in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF)
- A Green Space Audit is being undertaken. It will highlight the quality and quantity of green space across the city and will be broken down into areas. The strategy will show deficiencies in open space – parks, allotments, play areas, recreational space.
- The City Council currently runs a maintenance programme for streets and grounds including shopping areas.
- A Markets Feasibility Study is being carried out to research the potential to hold markets across Sunderland, including Houghton, Shiney Row and Hetton.

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Les Clark, City Services. Area Committee establish a Local Task and Finish group and select key members, including partners from Committee to support Lead Agent in the development of an action plan to support local shopping centres.
- B** Lead Agent: Attractive and Inclusive Delivery Board. Area Committee to be consulted with, and receive information and updates on, the Green Space Audit and the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and action plan once finalised. Area Committee to review this when selecting future priorities.

Increase Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

Background

It has been recognised under the 'Prosperous' theme that there are opportunities to reduce unemployment and increase economic activity by encouraging enterprise and entrepreneurship. The Council is currently finalising its Economic Masterplan that will provide for the growth and development of Sunderland's economy over the next decade and beyond.

Key Facts

- The Business Investment Team is dedicated to delivering the Sunderland Strategy's Strategic Priority Prosperous City: "To create an enterprising and productive global city with a strong and diverse economy providing jobs and careers for generations to come." The primary aim of the Business Investment Team is to ensure improvements in economic prosperity in the City through encouraging business growth, development and investment.
- Between April 2009 and January 2010, 21 businesses in the Coalfield Area successfully applied for financial assistance from the Business Investment Team to implement business growth plans, creating a potential 195 new jobs. It is expected that these investments will generate an additional £1,753,000 in company turnover.

Current Interventions

- Through Working Neighbourhoods funding, talent scouts and business advisors are working to target new potential entrepreneurs and support them on the route to setting up in business. This is backed up by a small and larger grant fund to help new businesses develop and existing businesses grow
- The City is one of the world's most Information Technology (IT) Intelligent Cities and a Beacon for Digital Inclusion and has been awarded £10 million worth of Microsoft Training Vouchers which can be accessed by anyone living or working in Sunderland.
- Business Link provides a range start up and support services to new businesses.
- The WNF programme has brought significant resources to develop and support employment and enterprise to the City, including £14m for Assisting People Into Work activities, £3m Boosting Enterprise Programme, £4m Promoting Visible Workspaces.
- A Markets Feasibility Study is being carried out to research the potential to hold markets across Sunderland, including Houghton, Shiney Row and Hetton.
- The 'Visible Workspace' project, through Working Neighbourhoods Funding (WNF) is a demand survey being carried out to look at all opportunities to develop workspace across the City. Results will inform further work to match up the supply and demand for premises/workspace at specific locations

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Andrew Perkin, Business and Investment Team. Area Committee set up a Local Task & Finish group to explore opportunities to further develop enterprise opportunities in the Coalfield area.
- B** Lead Agent: Economic Prosperity Delivery Board. Area Committee to be consulted with, and receive information and updates on, the current support available and the development of the Economic Masterplan in relation to issues local to the Coalfield area. Committee review the situation once the Economic Masterplan has been finalised.

Improve Play Provision

Background

Youth provision is defined as targeting 13-19 year olds in informal activities delivered outside of statutory core curriculum. Play provision is defined as targeting under 13s – this may cover community play parks and extended schools. The current youth provision has been reviewed and developed to better suit the needs of young people in the Coalfields, including weekend mobile youth villages and ward based contracts with youth providers. However, it has been identified that the provision for those under 13 years is an area which would benefit from a review with a view to developing further provision.

Key Facts

- Sunderland City Council secured a £2.1million Government grant named Play Pathfinder to get more children playing outside. Play areas included Keir Hardie, Rectory Park, Barnwell, Grangewood and Easington Lane Flatts.

Current Interventions

- Children's Services and City Services have recently requested funding to complete a scoping document on all services delivered to children, young people and families across the City. If awarded, the scoping document will cover all sectors and will be complete by September 2010.
- The Children's Trust Strategic partnership has recently formed a locality based integrated working group for the Coalfields to develop partnership working to support outcomes for children, young people and their families and consider how local service delivery is meeting their needs.

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Julie Gray, City Services. Area Committee set up a Local Task & Finish group to explore opportunities to further develop play provision in the Coalfield area.
- B** Lead Agent: Judith Hay, Children's Services/Julie Gray, City Services. Area Committee to be consulted with, and receive information and updates, on the scoping document (if funding is awarded). Committee review the situation once the results of the scoping document have been presented.

Reduce Antisocial Behaviour

Background

The Crime and Disorder act 1998 defines Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) as acting "In a manner that caused or was likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household". Examples of Anti Social Behaviour can include: rowdy, noisy behaviour; vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting; dealing or buying drugs on the street; fly-tipping rubbish and street drinking.

Key Facts

- The total crime rate (per 1000 population) for April 2009 – March 2010 for Sunderland as a whole was 72.8. Copt Hill (50), Houghton (55.4) and Shiney Row (47.9) wards were all well below the Sunderland figure, with Hetton (72.5) being equal to.
- The rate of recorded Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) for the City was 92 per 1000 population. Copt Hill (63.5) and Shiney Row (59.8) being well below the City rate and Hetton (100.3) and Houghton (95) above.

Current Interventions

- The Neighbourhood Policing Team is led by Inspector Graham Finlay and has two sergeants – one for the Hetton area and one for the Houghton area. The number of officers has increased and there are named PCs and CSOs for each area. The teams have first hand knowledge of the area, and have a base in a number of community venues making them more accessible and responsive to the local community.
- Sunderland City Council has a dedicated team to investigate and resolve cases of ASB across all housing tenures, their main focus relates to owner occupied and private rented sectors.
- Gentoo Sunderland employs a team of Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers and Witness & Victim Support Officers who are specially trained to be expert in resolving anti social behaviour and preventing it from happening.
- Northumbria Police lead on a Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS) who meet every five weeks to effectively address issues, including Anti Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee completed a policy review on ASB during 2009-10

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Inspector Graham Finlay. Utilise the current infrastructure of LMAPS to continue to reduce ASB across the Coalfield area. The priority already exists within the Coalfield Safe Thematic Action Plan for 2009/10. Area Committee to continue to monitor, receive information and updates, as available, from LMAPS from Northumbria Police, Elected Member representative and Area Officer, via the e-bulletin
- B** Lead Agent: Safer City Scrutiny Committee which completed a policy review on ASB during 2009-10. Area Committee to receive information updates, as available, via e-bulletin.

Increase Locally Delivered Drugs Education and Support and Increase Take up of Treatment Services

Background

The Police have identified that there is a need at a very local level to provide a more focused approach to drugs education and service provision to prevent young people from getting involved in drug use and to support local people who wish to change their drug use. There is a lack of knowledge and understanding about drug issues and what services are available locally.

Key Facts

- There are pockets of high drug use and low numbers of people accessing treatment services in the Coalfield area. Examples of this are Easington Lane and Peat Carr.
- The Safer Sunderland Partnership in conjunction with Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (STPCT) have carried out an analysis and identified Brick Garth, Easington Lane as an area with one of the most hard to reach communities with regard to drug services in the City.
- A Safer Communities Survey measures public confidence in community safety issues and is carried out quarterly by Northumbria Police. The March 2010 survey has shown that drug use ranks in the top five issues raised by residents in the Coalfield area.
- During the period April 2009 to March 2010, drug related ASB incidents in the Hetton ward were the 4th highest of all wards in Sunderland at 2.8 per 1000 population, compared to 1.6 for the City as a whole. The other wards in the Coalfield area were all below the City average.

Current Interventions

- The Safer Sunderland Partnership was formed following the merger of Sunderland's Drug Action Team and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. The Partnership includes the City Council, Police, Fire Authority, Primary Care Trust and a range of organisations from the voluntary, community and business sectors. The aim is to tackle, crime, disorder and the misuse of drugs
- As part of South of the Tyne and Wear NHS's social marketing of drug services, materials have been produced by ex-service users to be distributed in areas which had been identified as isolated from mainstream drug and alcohol service provision and where engagement links are low, drug litter finds had been made and reports from users/carers regarding unmet needs had been received
- In Shiney Row, Gentoo have agreed to circulate leaflets with their mailing lists which will be followed up by recovery advocates and Lifeline to engage users, friends and carers in drug treatment services including confidential health checks, help with housing and debt and information about rehabilitation and detoxification

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Stuart Douglass, Safer Communities Team. Area Committee set up a Local Task & Finish group which will support the identification of local issues and explore opportunities to add value to existing provision.
- B** Lead Agent: LMAPS. LMAPS take forward and identify solutions to the issues raised. Area Committee receive updates and information via the e-bulletin and take part in consultation where appropriate.

Explore Opportunities to Improve Unadopted Roads

Background

There is a high level of unadopted roads/streets in the Coalfield area compared with other parts of the City. Many of the roads are in bad repair and cause problems for residents. A referral from Environment and Planning review committee to Cabinet in 2007 concluded that 'the Council undertaking and funding the making up of private streets in the City cannot be accommodated within budgetary constraints and cannot therefore be recommended'. However, Council policy stipulates that where residents can contribute their costs of making-up a private road, the Council will consider exercising its powers to make-up and adopt the road.

The procedure outlined in a Cabinet report of January 2007 was adopted as policy. This issue has been raised again throughout 2009 during ward visits and Coalfield Area Committee meetings as many of the roads in the Coalfield area are deteriorating.

Key Facts

- There are estimated to be approximately 260 private streets in the City and the responsibility for their maintenance or cost of making up the street rests with the street managers, who are usually the frontage owners. The cost of making up the private streets in the City was estimated to be in the order of £26m at January 2006 prices.
- In 2007 a report stated 'for example a 150m long street, consisting 30 terraced properties either side, could cost in the order of £200,000 to make up. The apportionment to individual properties would be in the order of £3,000 and the Council's contribution (relating to street ends) would amount to approximately £15,000'.
- There are no grants or other central government sources of funding specifically for the making up of private streets.

Current Interventions

- The Executive Director of City Services has requested that an in-depth survey on all unadopted roads is undertaken. The results of this survey will be considered in relation to the current policy and will be complete in late 2010.

Way Forward

Lead Agent: Graham Carr, City Services. Area Committee receive regular updates and feedback regarding the survey via the e-bulletin and take part in consultation where appropriate. Once the final results are available Area Committee will be informed.

Increase Community Engagement

Background

The Coalfield Area Committee has developed its workplan to address issues which are important to local residents and communities in the area. It is important to increase input from local residents, and Area Committee has encouraged attendance and questions from the public at Area Committee meetings. However, this has been progressed slowly and there needs to be more communication and engagement with the community to ensure their views are incorporated to influence decision making. The Coalfield area has a proactive and dedicated community and voluntary sector consisting of many local people who have a vast knowledge of the area.

We can use the National Indicators detailed below to monitor cohesion as well as local intelligence through Community Cohesion Networks, Local Multi Agency Partnerships, and city wide hate incident reporting system (ARCH) statistics

1. How far people agree or disagree that in their local area people from different backgrounds get on well together
2. How far people feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
3. Civic participation in the local area
4. How far people agree or disagree that they can, though their own actions, influence decisions in their local area

Key Facts

- In comparison with the City as a whole, fewer residents in the Coalfield area feel that they can influence decisions.
- The percentage of residents who would like to be more involved in decisions that affect the local area is slightly higher than the City average.

Current Interventions

- The area is soon to establish community cohesion groups; the Coalfield Area Rapid Response group (the practitioners network) and a strategic group to oversee their work, co-ordinated by the Diversity and Inclusion team
- Local ward councillors represent the views of their ward and the wider area via ward surgeries, ward visits and informal contact with local residents
- The Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Network has been established to represent the views of the local voluntary and community sector and three representatives from the network are members of the Area Committee
- An Area Newsletter is produced four times a year to promote and give information on events, projects and activity within the Coalfield area. The newsletter is delivered to all households in the Copt Hill, Hetton, Houghton and Shiney Row wards.
- Sunderland City Council has established a Corporate Communities Group in order to review its activity in relation to Inclusive Communities ensuring a fully joined up approach in this regard. Its approach includes establishing a clear definition and description of Inclusive Communities, and developing corporate policy and aims/objectives for the Council in order to incorporate processes and embed throughout the organisation the Sunderland Way of Working Programme.

Way Forward

The Coalfield Area Committee will continue to address community engagement in all aspects of the Committee work, rather than having it as a separate priority/issue. Each priority taken forward by Area Committee will consider how the community should be/will be engaged/involved/informed. Committee will receive information and reports on the work of the Corporate Communities Group as appropriate via the e-bulletin.

Reduce Child Poverty

Background

The levels of child poverty in Sunderland are unacceptably high. 51% of children are living in relative poverty (44% in the North East, 42% Nationally) as defined by Government. National research by the Child Poverty Action Group tells us that children who grow up in poverty are less likely to succeed at school, more likely to suffer from poor health and less likely to secure a good job as an adult.

The Sunderland Partnership has agreed to take a lead to reduce this level and the emerging Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy will provide a framework for partners to work together with a shared vision.

Key Facts

- The Local Area Agreement LAA includes NI116 - Proportion of Children in Poverty. This is currently being refreshed.
- There is no current single indicator available to determine the exact level of child poverty in Sunderland. A useful indicator commonly being used is the number of children living in workless families and in families who are claiming the maximum working tax credit. Adding these two groups together gives a total of **children in low income families**.
- The draft strategy is based on building blocks of Education, Health & Family, Employment and Adult Skills, Financial Support and Housing & Neighbourhoods.

Current Interventions

- A three month consultation programme for the draft Child Poverty Strategy will begin during May/June 2010.
- A detailed needs assessment will be carried out over a six month period from June 2010. This will identify areas for more targeted service delivery, focused on community needs.
- A locality based integrated working group for the Coalfields has been formed to develop partnership working to support outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Options

- A** Lead Agent, Raj Singh, Children's Services. Area Committee receive updates and progress reports from the Child Poverty Board and take part in the consultation regarding the Child Poverty Strategy at the July or September Area Committee meeting
- B** Lead Agent, Raj Singh, Children's Services. Area Committee review this issue when selecting priorities in 2011/12