

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber at City Hall on WEDNESDAY 15th DECEMBER, 2021 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Dodds, Heron (Vice Chair), K. Johnston, N. MacKnight, Mason-Gage, Price, Rowntree, Scott, D. Snowdon and Speding

Also Present:-

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| Ellen Bewick | Area Network Representative | Shiney Advice and Resource Project (ShARP) |
| Wendy Cook | Area Network Representative | Sunderland North Community Business Centre |
| Michael Donachie | Head of Operations | Gentoo |
| Nick Gjorven | Inspector, Neighbourhood Policing Southern | Northumbria Police |
| Bob Heron | Member of the Public | |
| Pauline Hopper | Area Community Development Lead, Coalfield | Sunderland City Council |
| Nic Marko | Local Democracy Reporter | |
| Julie McBurnie | Environmental Services Manager | Sunderland City Council |
| Andrew Nelson | Station Manager | Tyne and Wear Fire Service |

Sandra Stephenson VCS Community Support Officer

Christine Tilley Community Governance Sunderland City Council
Services Team Leader

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Coalfield Area Committee meeting and in particular Councillor Iain Scott who had been elected on 30th September the day after the last Coalfield Area Committee meeting to represent the Hetton Ward and was attending his first meeting of the Area Committee. The Chairman also welcomed Inspector Nick Gjorven who had returned after a period of absence from work.

The Chairman thanked VCS colleagues for the support and hard work being carried out within the Coalfield Area looking after the most vulnerable residents which had been highlighted by ELCAP winning the Sunderland Shining Stars Organisation of the Year Award.. He asked Councillor Rowntree the Council's representative on the Board of Trustees to convey the Committee's congratulations to the Board.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Jill Colbert, Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services, Sunderland City Council and Paul Finch, Area Network Representative, VCS.

Declarations of Interest

The following declaration was received:-

Item 4 – Area Budgets Report -Application No.1 – Improved Access

Councillor D. Snowdon made an open declaration in respect of the above application submitted by ShARP as an employee of the organisation and he left the meeting prior to any discussion on the application and took no part in any decisions on funding which might affect the organisation.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 29th September, 2021 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the Station Manager's name, Tyne and Wear Fire Service being corrected from Andrew Newton to Andrew Nelson.

Neighbourhood and Community Board Report

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated), which provided an annual update of the Coalfield Neighbourhood Investment Plan Delivery Plan 2020-2023 and provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board, Councillor Heron highlighted a number of projects including the installation of the Vehicle Activated Signs, the support which continued to be provided to the VCS by the Area Committee to ensure that they had access to all internal and external funding opportunities and the digital support to local residents.

The Committee viewed a short video setting out the achievements of the projects and the sessions delivered by way of showing progress against the Area Priorities.

Full consideration having been given to the report it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the progress and performance update regarding the Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/23 be noted and the proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 1, be approved; and
- ii) the Area Committee video update be noted.

Tyne and Wear Fire Service Update

Station Manager Andrew Nelson, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) submitted a report (copy circulated), providing Performance Monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee area from 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 compared with the same period in 2020.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Station Manager Nelson highlighted that there had been no deaths recorded during the reporting period. He also highlighted the School Road Initiative where TWFRS was working with Northumbria Police to monitor and identify any trends/patterns/underlying issues. The School Road Initiative with partners was helping to monitor and share information to help reduce ASB and improve the local area.

Station Manager Nelson advised that problems were predominantly related to refuse and fly tipping. He referred to the FireStoppers reporting details included in the report and advised that they were looking for volunteers to do leaflet drops to highlight that people needed to report any issues they were having.

Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead offered to take the above information to pass on at the VCS meetings, advising that the representatives would then take this back to their organisations.

In response to Councillor Speding, Station Manager Nelson took on board the point that some children in the Shiney Row ward were attending Biddick Academy and therefore his colleagues in Washington needed to coordinate their efforts to get the message out to them.

Station Manager Nelson added that they had taken more calls as a result of Storm Arwen than they had over the Bonfire night weekend due to the scale of the damage caused by the storm.

Full consideration having been given to the report it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted.

Northumbria Police Update

Inspector Nick Gjorven, Northumbria Police reported that it had been a busy period with the darker nights and they were expecting to be busy with Black Friday and Christmas approaching. However, the data was showing that Halloween and Bonfire night in the Coalfield had been the quietest sector in Sunderland.

Inspector Gjorven stated that they were 73 offences down on the previous year which was a 36% reduction in relation to residential burglaries and arrests had been made. There had been residential burglaries in Easington Lane, but they had tended to be the vacant properties where the boilers and pipes had been ripped out. Commercial burglaries were 19% up. There had been 12 incidents and Newbottle Street had been targeted with hairdressers, takeaways and sweet shops falling victim of crude break-ins where a brick had been thrown through the window and the till float had been taken. Two people thought to be responsible had been arrested and were under investigation.

Inspector Gjorven advised that antisocial behaviour offences were up as every COVID instance had to be reported and there had been 306 incidents in the last 12 weeks. There had been 38 cases of youth disorder and they were receiving 4 calls a week on this. They were focusing on certain areas such as Hetton and Peat Carr estate. They were looking at problem solving plans in Fairy Street and antisocial behaviour issues at Penshaw and Shiney Row. There was underreporting and Officers were engaging with people in that location.

Inspector Gjorven referred to the murder which had happened in Houghton where 14 people had been arrested and 3 charged. Lots of work was going on around safeguarding, supporting the victim's family and with the offenders' families. Houghton Feast Steering Group had asked to be involved with the arrangements for next year to make the event safer.

Inspector Gjorven briefed the Committee on the Hetton Project, which was a multiagency project mirroring the SARA project in Southwick. He advised that some appointments had been made to the Hetton Project and that the launch was a date in January. He was hopeful that it would be helpful to what they were all trying to achieve.

Councillor Rowntree commented that she shared Inspector Gjorven's enthusiasm for the Hetton Project and had every confidence that it would be a success.

Councillor Rowntree suggested that there had been a drop in residential burglaries as homes had been occupied more due to the pandemic and the reverse in respect of commercial premises which had been closed and therefore empty.

Inspector Gjorven stated that he was unsure as he would have expected this to have happened the previous year also if this was the case as the pandemic was even more acute and there had been more lockdowns.

Councillor MacKnight enquired about the scale of underreporting of antisocial behaviour and whether people were just using social media.

Inspector Gjorven stated that it was difficult to tell and this could only be found out when engaging with people. It was a double-edged sword in that sometimes it was just perceptions as youths were only gathering together.

It was reported that three robberies had occurred the previous night in the area and had been rounded up quickly by the Police.

Members having considered the report and the Chairman having thanked Inspector Gjorven for his attendance, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network Update

Ms Wendy Cook, Area Voluntary and Community Sector Representative provided the Committee with a verbal update on the work of the Coalfield VCS Network, advising that the Network had met twice in person since the last Coalfield Area Committee meeting in September and that there had been almost 40 organisations there. Sandra Stephenson had been introduced at the VCS meetings and an update report on the Summer holidays provision had been given.

Ms Cook highlighted that the VCS had secured £204,000 through the Community Renewal Project upskilling people who might want to work in the sector and that this would be rolled out during January.

The Chairman having thanked Ms Cook for her report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Gentoo Update

Mr Michael Donachie, Head of Operations, Gentoo provided an update from Gentoo for the Coalfield Area Committee to enable Members to be up to date on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

Mr Donachie advised that Gentoo had made a delivery of 250 meals to vulnerable people on Christmas Eve and had taken 20 vulnerable families to the Sunderland Empire Theatre the previous week where they had received a packed lunch and a gift. Gentoo staff were delivering Christmas presents to families and children who were struggling financially.

Mr Donachie updated the Committee regarding the damage following Storm Arwen and advised of the work being carried out clearing things up including 800 additional roofing repairs, a quarter of which were in the Houghton and Hetton area. He also advised of

the work they were doing with Sunderland CCG offering communal rooms in which Booster vaccinations against COVID-19 were being given.

Mr Donachie briefed Members on the work they were involved with in the Hetton Project, with the Police and others as part of a multi-agency approach to reduce antisocial behaviour.

Mr Donachie advised that the Investment Plan work was completed for this year and a lot of windows and roofing had just been completed. The target for the City was for all tenants to have double glazing in three years.

Councillor Heron complimented Mr Donachie on how Gentoo had looked after vulnerable people.

Mr Donachie advised that there had been a spate of incidents where lead had been ripped off the rooves of Gentoo properties and where empty properties were being ripped out before they were able to get security measures in place.

Councillor MacKnight enquired whether anything could be done working jointly with the Police to tackle the antisocial behaviour relating to quad bikes which were causing damage to play areas.

Mr Donachie stated that if this was a particular play area that they would be able to send Officers out and commented that there was a lot of underreporting of this kind of incident.

The Chairman having thanked Mr Donachie for his attendance, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Coalfield Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience, Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated), providing a financial statement as an updated position on progress in relation to allocating Area Committee Neighbourhood Funding, Neighbourhood Investment Plan Capital Programme and Community Chest and presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead, presented the report, drawing the Committee's attention to the current financial position of the Area Committee Neighbourhood Fund 2021/2022 as set out in paragraph 2.1. She advised that a thank you letter had been received from Springboard for the funding towards the purchase of a Kawasaki Mule which had been delivered two weeks previously, on the day of Storm Arwen. In the following days it had proved invaluable dealing with unprecedented damage within Hetton Lyons Country park as the Mule allowed them to access the site with the chipper and process damaged branches/trees with ease; previously work was restricted to the tarmac track.

Ms Hopper advised that there was one funding proposal for Neighbourhood Funding for consideration set out in paragraph 2.3 with further detail at Annex 1 in respect of Shiney Advice and Resource Project (ShARP). The total Neighbourhood Fund budget requested for approval was £6,000 and if approved, the remaining balance would be £189,802.

Ms Hopper advised that Coalfield Area Committee had been allocated £500,000 for capital developments which complemented the Neighbourhood Investment Plan. The table at 3.1 detailed the projects already funded and she pointed out that there was a remaining balance of £243,039. There were no funding proposals presented to Area Committee for consideration that evening from the Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme.

Ms Hopper referred Members to paragraph 4 of the report detailing the Community Chest budget approvals and balance remaining.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1, be noted;
- b) the one Neighbourhood Fund application by ShARP set out in section 2.3 and Annex 1, be approved; and
- c) the Community Chest approvals supported from 2021/2022, as detailed in Annex 2, be noted.

Current Planning Applications (Coalfields Area)

A schedule (copy circulated) of current planning applications lodged during the period 1st October and 30th September, 2021 was submitted for Members' information only.

(For copy schedule – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the schedule be received and noted.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and participation at the meeting and wished them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,
Chairman.