

**At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held remotely on
WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE, 2020 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Cunningham, Heron, Johnston, Lawson. N. MacKnight, Rowntree, Speding, Turner and G. Walker

Also Present:-

Louise Butler	Area Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Jill Colbert	Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services	Sunderland City Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Community Development Lead, Coalfield	Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	Neighbourhood Investment Plan Project Manager	Sunderland City Council
Kay Rowham	Councillor	Hetton Town Council
Christine Tilley	Community Governance Services Team Leader	Sunderland City Council

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting introducing himself, the Vice Chairman and Officers supporting the meeting.

Prior the start of the formal business, the Chairman made reference to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had had on communities in the Coalfield area, the pain and sorrow felt by those who had lost loved ones, as well as the acts of kindness shown in looking after one another.

The Chairman thanked key workers, Councillors, partners and volunteers on the work they had done to support Coalfield residents. He paid tribute to the Voluntary and Community Groups which had supported the Council such as ELCAP, Be Active and Be Fit, Loaves and Fishes, Space4, SNCBC, the Bethany Centre, SHaRP, Hetton New Dawn and St John's at Shiny Row, for their efforts in working with the community throughout the pandemic.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Kevin Burns, Station Manager Tyne and Wear Fire Service, Wendy Cook, Paul Finch, Ellen Bewick and Christine Willis, Area Network Representatives, Debbie Hall, Environmental Services Manager, Sunderland City Council, Inspector Nick Gjørven, Northumbria Police and Michael Donachie, Head of Operations, Gentoo Group.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

Ms Kay Rowham, Councillor of Hetton Town Council indicated that she had some small points which she had made at the last meeting, together with the responses she had received to those points, which she would like to be included in the minutes of the meeting. Ms Rowham proceeded to detail the comments for inclusion.

Mrs Christine Tilley, Community Governance Services Team Leader, advised the Committee that the minutes were not a verbatim record of the meeting, they included key points and were a record of the decisions made.

Councillor MacKnight responded to a couple of the points made by Ms Rowham and asked that his responses be recorded in the minutes should Ms Rowham's points be included.

The Chairman invited Councillors to indicate whether they supported the proposed amendments to the minutes.

Councillor Speding commented that he agreed with the Clerk to the Committee's report, that it was not a verbatim record and that he accepted the report in full.

The Chairman having asked all Members of the Committee if they were in agreement with Councillor Speding and Members unanimously having indicated that they accepted the report; it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 11th December, 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Supporting our Communities and Finalising Neighbourhood Investment Plans

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture submitted a joint report (copy circulated), which advised the Coalfield Area Committee of the next steps, following Cabinet approval in March 2020, of the Article 10 Neighbourhood Investment Plans, which took into consideration the additional priorities required to support Sunderland through to recovery post Covid-19.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Helen Peverley, Neighbourhood Investment Plan Project Manager, presented the report drawing Members attention to the background to the development of the Neighbourhood Investment Plans. She advised that Members had received the papers in respect of the priorities for the Coalfield Area Neighbourhood Investment Plan as part of the agenda for its Committee meeting scheduled for 18th March 2020. Unfortunately, that meeting had been cancelled in accordance with Government advice in respect of the coronavirus pandemic. Ms Peverley pointed out however that Members had received papers by email which highlighted the exact content of the Coalfield Area Neighbourhood Investment Plan prior to it being approved at Cabinet and the content of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan was determined following a significant consultation exercise with all of the residents across the city and working very closely with the voluntary and community sector.

Ms Peverley stated that once the Neighbourhood Investment Plans were approved by Cabinet on 24th March 2020, which had been one of the last meetings to physically take place at the very start of the lockdown, it was due to the relationship with residents and the voluntary and community sector that they had been able to take immediate action at the start of the pandemic.

Ms Peverley briefed the Committee on the establishment of the community hubs from 24 March and the support received from the Voluntary and Community sector on this which she stated had been outstanding and she highlighted how effective they had been in supporting residents. Ms Peverley advised that they had worked in partnership with GP Alliance colleagues to support those residents who were shielding in the city throughout the pandemic to date. A leaflet had also been dropped into every household across the city highlighting the help available to residents and how to volunteer if they wanted to help. She advised that within days there had been over one thousand residents in the city volunteering to help.

Ms Peverley referred to the weekly reports Members had been receiving advising of the work the hubs had been undertaking. She advised that the work of the hubs continued and they were supporting residents as their needs changed, particularly those who were becoming unshielded and were feeling vulnerable as a result.

Ms Peverley briefed the Committee on the funding support provided to Voluntary and Community Associations by the Area Committee and the work done to help them access any Government support grant.

Ms Peverley advised of the further resident consultation carried out as they had finalised the Neighbourhood Investment Plans and the questions which were being asked detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

Ms Peverley advised of the Member Workshop being arranged to discuss the detail of the Coalfield Area Neighbourhood Investment Plan, review the priorities, identify any gaps in provision and determine where Members wanted to invest as an Area Committee moving forward. She provided Members with a summary of residents' views. Ms Peverley stressed the importance of reflecting on the Area Community Hubs and what had been learnt from their delivery over the last few months.

The Chairman thanked Ms Peverley for her report and asked if Members had any questions or comments.

Councillor Rowntree commended the report and commented that she was delighted to see the Neighbourhood Investment Plan being put in place as someone who had advocated wider community involvement in the Area Committee's priorities. She was also pleased to hear of the tracker system which would also encourage community involvement.

Councillor MacKnight also commended the report and paid tribute to Ms Hopper, Area Community Development Lead, Coalfield for heading up and co-ordinating a lot of the work done in the community and making the job much easier. The community had been mobilised in so many ways, Councillors had been involved distributing food parcels, providing help and support to the elderly and the vulnerable; a lot of which had been coordinated through Ms Hopper and the Area Hub. As a community the area had pulled together exceptionally well, so credit was due to everyone involved.

Councillor Speding echoed the comments of previous colleagues concerning the efforts of the VCS and Council officers who had worked well together through the pandemic. Councillor Speding commented that business support in the city had been tremendous, however there were a small number of businesses that hadn't been able to make use of the support being offered and had not understood what the process was and enquired whether information on business use and take up of the support available could be included in the report.

Ms Peverley stated that she was keen to get the details from Councillor Speding after the meeting on those businesses which had not be able to take up the support available in order to get them connected up to the Business Team.

Ms Peverley advised that an update on how businesses had been supported could be provided at the workshop.

Councillor Lawson commended the report which paid tribute to everybody in the Coalfield and Officers who had helped the most vulnerable in communities and also had shown how to engage with people who wanted to do more. Councillor Lawson stated that it was important as stated in the report, that the Committee thought about how to say thank you to all of those people.

Councillor Lawson commented that a lot of the people who volunteered for the Council were helping to support people within the health services and she asked was there any coordination between all of those thousands of people who volunteered to help the NHS and how that fitted in with what was happening in the community hub.

Ms Peverley advised that the NHS volunteer programme was a completely separate programme and the Council was unable to influence who volunteered for that programme, however a resident could choose to volunteer for the Council as well as the NHS. A lot of residents were working across both platforms as they had been furloughed or really want to help and weren't being asked immediately. Ms Peverley advised how volunteers were assigned and how they were looking at a communications plan with residents and asking how they could tap in more with the NHS Volunteering Scheme to make it as easy as possible to refer residents into the NHS hub.

Councillor G. Walker also commended the report and advised the Committee of the work he had been doing with the Joint Leadership Team and the Cabinet, referring to an initial report he had shared and to the work done at neighbourhood level which took account of this, especially of the need to address the economic imbalance and increase wealth in localities and communities at a local level, as well as the need to align the existing City Council strategies such as the Cooperative Council Strategy, the Community Wealth Building Strategy and the Health Inequalities Strategy. Councillor Walker commented that the report was going in the right direction and that he looked forward to the workshop so as to be able to make a number of detailed points in this respect.

Ms Rowham referred to the themes in the Coalfield Neighbourhood Plan and commented that she was pleased to see lots of things that were going to be actioned which the residents of Hetton had reported lots of times to Hetton Town Council as being what they wanted in the town.

Ms Rowham referred to the ninth theme listed in the report, 'Residents Value their parks but think they could be improved and used more'. She stated that she had hoped that a representative of Gentoo would have been present at the meeting as there was a particular issue she wanted to ask them about, which was a very detailed proposal to build 86 homes on green space next to the park at Cragdale Gardens.

The Chairman advised that the above issue was not included on the agenda for the meeting that evening and therefore this was not the place for discussion on the proposal Ms Rowham was referring to.

Ms Rowham commented that Gentoo seemed to be going against the above theme and that she had received correspondence from residents who lived at Cragdale Gardens asking her to ask the Coalfield Area Committee if she could read out a short letter at the meeting as they were looking for support.

The Chairman ruled that the point Ms Rowham had raised above could not be further discussed as the proposal she had referred to concerning Gentoo was not included in the agenda for the meeting that evening and it was not known whether it was the case that Gentoo was going against the theme.

The Chairman added that the Committee was not looking at the detail at the meeting that evening; the detail of the themes for the Neighbourhood Investment Plan would be looked at in future meetings where Ms Rowham would probably have the opportunity of raising whatever she wanted to raise. The meeting that evening was simply to agree the themes for the Plan.

Ms Rowham commented that she felt the Coalfield Area Committee needed to be made aware of the proposal by Gentoo.

Ms Jill Colbert, Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services commented that she wanted to reference the need to be clear that the Committee might need to reconsider some of the priorities that had been identified in the light of the impact of the pandemic. Ms Colbert explained that for example, within the priorities in the action plan, there were specific areas of work around skills, employment and education that would be heavily impacted by the restrictions that

people had experienced now for some considerable time and she referred specifically to the impact on apprenticeships.

Ms Colbert added that it was important to understand the impact on the Committee's priorities and its ability to drive the level of progress both Members and Officers would like, as despite best efforts, it was likely that people would be living with the financial and economic impacts of COVID 19 for many years to come.

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

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the contents of the report be noted and that the work undertaken through the Area Community Hubs to support residents during the COVID-19 pandemic be acknowledged; and
- ii) further resident consultation to finalise the detailed priorities for the Coalfield Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan, to be presented to the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board in early July 2020, prior to a meeting of the Area Committee, be approved.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) BLACKBURN,
Chairman.