

**At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held remotely on
WEDNESDAY 9th DECEMBER, 2020 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Heron, Johnston, Lawson. N. MacKnight, Rowntree, Speding, Thornton and Dr G. Walker

Also Present:-

Jill Colbert	Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services	Sunderland City Council
Wendy Cook	Area Network Representative	Sunderland North Community Business Centre
Pauline Hopper	Area Community Development Lead, Coalfield	Sunderland City Council
Neil Hudspeth	Sergeant	Northumbria Police
Allison Patterson	Area Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	Area Co-ordinator	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 Coalfield Area Committee meeting and advised that the meeting would be live streamed for the public to view on the Council's YouTube channel.

The Chairman introduced the Vice Chairman, Councillor Juliana Heron.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Turner.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 29th September, 2020 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Community Wealth Building Champions

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and the Cabinet Member Communities and Culture submitted a report to advise the Coalfield Area Committee of the next steps, following Cabinet Approval in March 2020 of the Sunderland Community Wealth Building Strategy, taking into consideration the additional action to be taken to continue to grow community wealth across the City's communities.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Helen Peverley, Area Co-ordinator provided the Committee with a powerpoint presentation on the Community Wealth Strategy for Sunderland and how the Area Committee could support delivery of the Strategy.

Ms Peverley briefed the Committee in relation to the Council's journey in growing the proposals around Community Wealth, highlighting the Let's Talk Sunderland engagement and pointing out how this had been fed into the City Plan and the Neighbourhood Investment Plan which would focus on delivery on the ground.

Ms Peverley advised that as part of the resident consultation it had become really clear that residents wanted to make sure that the wealth was kept in the city and that they looked wherever they could to improve employment opportunities, to improve opportunities for residents to earn the living wage and also that they were able to grow the City's VCS capacity.

Ms Peverley drew Members' attention to the number of partners the Council was working with across the City in support of the Community Wealth Strategy. She highlighted by way of an example of the strength of the partnership arrangements, the COVID-19 virtual community hubs which were pulled together to support residents most in need by using technology to coordinate services and volunteers.

Ms Peverley referred the Committee to the seven key priorities of the Community Wealth Strategy and asked the Committee to focus on two of them that evening, namely 'Demonstrating our Commitment' and 'Improving Community Resilience,' looking how the Area Committee could start and demonstrate this commitment and become the champion for community wealth.

Ms Peverley briefed Members on the role of the Community Wealth Champion and the considerations to be taken into account when making a Call for Projects, Supporting Local Traders, managing Land and Assets and working with partners, all of which the Committee was in effect, already doing to support the Strategy on a day to day basis. She asked the Committee to commit to continue to support the Strategy and agree that the Area Chair be named as the Champion for the Coalfield Area.

Councillor Dr G. Walker commented that he was pleased to see that the Community Wealth Strategy had filtered down to the Area Committee and stressed the importance of a Community Wealth Strategy during a pandemic. He pointed out that COVID-19 was not only a public health crisis but that it was also an economic crisis and that the country was facing an economic recession. The Community Wealth Strategy had been launched almost two years previously and there had been a great deal of interest in it since it had come into being and he was grateful for advice and support which had been provided from many organisations.

Councillor Dr Walker welcomed the report giving it his support but moving from the Chair of the Area Committee being the Champion for the Coalfield Area, that all Elected Members across the area be Community Health Champions.

Councillor Rowntree commended Ms Peverley for the presentation and commented that she would be pleased for the approach to be adopted by the Area Committee as it would help to drive forward the growth and sustainability of the area's communities. Having Elected Members as Community Health Champions would enable a stronger economy, but focus must also be on tackling unfair practices from housing and energy to financial services and supporting local businesses so that everyone benefitted from the Community Wealth approach.

Councillor MacKnight commented that he was very happy to support the report and endorse the comments. He reminded colleagues of the merits of best value, although they was a need to look at the potential impact of this on local suppliers and the need to be cognisant of community value by using local suppliers in all of this.

Councillor Rowham complimented Ms Peverley on the presentation and commented with regards to Land and Asset Management and improving green spaces, how the Committee felt about this issue, bearing in mind that some of the Council's partners were trying to build on open spaces.

Ms Peverley clarified that the reference to Land and Asset Management in the Community Wealth Strategy was in relation to the assets which were owned by the Council and to making sure that those assets were developed. Therefore, for example if there was an opportunity to bring in volunteers to a park or develop facilities in the park on the play area or greenspace, which could increase employment or opportunities in this regard. The issue in respect of other partners' land, could be picked up as a separate discussion.

Councillor Rowham welcomed the opportunity of further discussion in respect of the issue she had raised, as detailed above, on another occasion.

Full consideration having been given to the report and the Chairman having thanked Ms Peverley for her report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the contents of the report be noted and the work undertaken to support the growth of Community Wealth across Sunderland be acknowledged and that the Committee agree to continue to support the delivery of the Sunderland Community Wealth Strategy; and
- ii) the Committee agree to support the Area Committee Chair to deliver their Community Wealth Champion role on behalf of the residents of Sunderland, demonstrating the commitment of Coalfield Area Committee to support growth.

Neighbourhood and Community Board Report

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhoods and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated), which presented the Coalfield Area Committee 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 Neighbourhoods and Community Board, Councillor Heron invited Councillor Rowntree to share some information with the Committee.

Councillor Rowntree reported that she was delighted to share with the Committee that Easington Lane Community Access Point (ELCAP) had been recognised as a North East small Charity of the Year.

Councillor Rowntree reported that the Organisation worked hard every day to ensure that residents were supported. She thanked every volunteer who had worked with ELCAP especially through the pandemic to support the community to get through the unprecedented time. The recognition from the North East Charity Awards was a testament to everything they had achieved.

Councillor Heron commented that she was sure all Members of the Area Committee would endorse Councillor Rowntree's comments.

Councillor Heron proceeded to brief the Committee on the report and reminded Members of the Let's Talk consultation undertaken with residents to develop the area's priorities. She advised that this consultation had continued during the pandemic to ensure the priorities were still appropriate.

There were now 17 priorities which the Task Groups were going to look at. One Group had already begun to meet and another Group would be starting in January.

Councillor Heron referred the Committee to the Annex to the report which detailed progress on the projects and pointed out the Vehicle Activated Signs programme. She highlighted that all sites had now been agreed and a procurement exercise completed to acquire 8 signs to be deployed at 31 sites on a 3 month rotation plan. It was hoped that installation of the signs would be in the new year.

Consideration having been given to the report it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the progress and performance update with regard to the Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/23 be noted and the proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 1 be approved.

Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network Update

The Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Representatives submitted a report (copy circulated), advising that the Coalfields VCS Network had commenced VCS Network meetings via Teams since the last Coalfield Area Committee meeting.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Wendy Cook, Area Voluntary and Community Sector Representative advised that Coalfields VCS Network had met twice in November and she highlighted the activity for each of those meetings advising that Councillor Blackburn had been introduced as the new Area Chair of the Coalfields Area Committee and that the Network would like to extend its thanks to Councillor Anne Lawson for her support as Area Chair.

Ms Cook advised that approximately 18 Groups had attended the initial meeting and that it had been fantastic to hear about the great work taking place in the Coalfields and the support being offered to the area's most vulnerable residents.

The network was attended by approximately 30 groups at the following meeting where they had received the Green Doctor Presentation delivered by Julia Bentley from Groundwork NE & Cumbria. The project supported people to address fuel poverty offering tips and installing small energy measures such as draft excluders and reflective panels behind radiators etc. Ms Cook reported that Julia had advised that 1 in 10 residents in the UK experienced fuel poverty.

Ms Cook stated that over the past 3 months, the Coalfield VCS organisations and groups had been invaluable in providing support to residents. A large number of organisations had continued to deliver through the Covid-19 pandemic and had been successful in securing funding to develop work in the Coalfield locality area.

Ms Cook referred Members to examples of the projects being delivered in the Coalfield Area. She reiterated the sentiments of Councillor Rowntree with regards to the fantastic work Easington Lane Community Access Point had delivered in the Coalfields Area and that they had been recognised for this.

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

4. RESOLVED that:-
 - i) the contents of the report be received and noted;
 - ii) the Committee continue to support the Sector when developing and implementing actions against local priorities and;
 - iii) the Committee use information gathered from Network meetings to inform current and future priorities and the Area Committee Plan.

Northumbria Police Update

Sergeant Neil Hudspeth, Northumbria Police presented a report (copy circulated), providing data in respect of Crime and Disorder for the Coalfield area comparing year to date figures with the preceding year for the same period.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Sergeant Hudspeth reported that most of the crime categories were down, although there were two areas relating to Youth ASB and Violence against the Person without injury which had shown an increase of 5% and 12% respectively. Overall total crime for the Coalfield Area was down by 4% on the year.

Sergeant Hudspeth advised that Youth ASB related to 15 reported incidents. The main area of concern was the recent increase in Hetton Town Centre, primarily around the Hetton centre and the welfare football ground, as well as Tesco extra where there had been an arson the previous week to the bin shed and the fire appliances that arrived had had eggs thrown at them. He highlighted the relaunch of Operation Avalanche in order to manage the incidents, full details of which were included in the report.

Sergeant Hudspeth advised that there have been no reported ASB incidents at the Hetton centre since the bin fire on the 4th December.

Sergeant Hudspeth stated that their priority in recent months had been to combat burglaries to both dwellings and commercial premises. The figures showed a decrease in dwelling house burglaries for the year and significant reductions in commercial burglaries. Operation Castle had been launched which had increased patrols and officers allocated to patrol burglary Hot Spot areas, which included Hetton, Houghton and Shiney Row. Known burglary offenders had been identified and actively targeted.

Violent crime with injury was down over the course of the year and some of this might be able to be attributed to the reduction in the night time economy, due to Covid19. There was a set domestic violence protocol to assist victims who reached out and reported matters to the police and this would remain a priority for the 24/7 response teams.

Sergeant Hudspeth referred to the increase of 12% in violence against the person without injury (which included Public Order offences) and commented that he was unable to explain why this had increased.

There had been a decrease in theft from motor vehicles and damage to motor vehicles across the whole of the sector and the neighbourhood teams had focused on letting residents know to lock their vehicles overnight and to remove valuables when unattended.

Sergeant Hudspeth stated that the teams had been very busy attending and enforcing reports of Covid19 breaches over the past year and would continue to do so in line with the government's current policy.

Councillor Rowham referred to the welfare football ground and issues regarding access to it. She reported that she had requested as a Member of Hetton Town Trust, that the

Trust meet to discuss the matter. She asked that the Area Committee make a recommendation to the Trust that they hold a meeting to discuss the issue of access to the football ground.

The Chairman advised that the above matter was not within the remit of the Area Committee.

There being no further questions of Sergeant Hudspeth and the Chairman having thanked him for his attendance, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the information detailed in the report be received and noted.

At this juncture the Chairman asked that if Members had questions or wanted any further information on the following two partner reports that they submit them to Ms Hopper who would forward the questions to the relevant partner representative for a response.

The Chairman advised that both Station Manager Kevin Burns, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and Mr Michael Donachie, Head of Operations, Gentoo had sent emails asking for their Christmas Wishes to be passed on to the Committee Members.

Tyne and Wear Fire Service Update

Station Manager Kevin Burns, 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 September, 2020 to 25th November, 2020, compared with the same period in 2019.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that in the lead up to November 5th that he had received a number of emails about fireworks and objections to companies selling them. He enquired whether the issue could be discussed at one of the Working Groups of the Area Committee.

The Chairman commented that he felt this was an issue which could be discussed at the Neighbourhood Board and it was:-

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

Gentoo Update

Mr Michael Donachie, Head of Operations, Gentoo provided an update from Gentoo for the Coalfield Area Committee from September to November 2020 to enable Members to be up to date on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that the report 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 update position on progress in relation to allocating Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme, Neighbourhood Fund 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 Neighbourhood Capital Investment Programme as set out in paragraph 2.3, advising that there was one proposal for funding under that item for a mining heritage project.

Ms Hopper advised that the Council was close to finalising negotiations for the development of the former Houghton Colliery site and a key element of the site's development was the requirement to include a sculpture commemorating the Colliery's history and heritage.

As part of the capital receipt received for the sale of the site, a sum of £25,000 was available as a contribution to the artwork/sculpture. Area Committee's Work Plan included a proposal to award Neighbourhood Fund or Capital Programme funding to the project. Therefore, to ensure the sculpture was a fitting tribute to the Houghton le Spring area the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board recommended that a contribution of £50,000 was approved from the Capital Investment Programme.

Ms Hopper highlighted the funding which the Committee had approved to date detailed at paragraph 3.

Ms Hopper referred the Committee to paragraph 3.4 which provided details of two projects for further funding. She advised that the first one was a budget that the Committee usually put aside every year for Celebrating Heritage and Local Events and the proposals for this were either done through a Call for Projects or come through the Board meeting. £30,000 was proposed to be put aside for this. The next project was the Wellbeing in the Community proposal which had been discussed through the Board and agreed that a proposal for £8,000 was put forward to this meeting on condition that MBC Arts Wellbeing was successful in obtaining a grant of £40,000 to deliver an arts wellbeing and activity project across the whole of the Coalfield Area.

Councillor Heron passed on positive comments from a resident who had undertaken the Wellbeing project.

Councillor Johnston commented that he was delighted to have got to this stage with the mining heritage project and to have secured some capital funding working with the developer. With the support of the Area Committee they would be able to push forward in the new year with this exciting project. He thanked everyone who had supported the Working Group and himself with the project.

Ms Hopper referred Members to paragraph 4 and to Annex 3 of the report detailing the Community Chest budget, approvals and balance remaining for 2020/2021.

The Chairman referred to the remaining Community Chest allocations and invited Members to email local groups in their ward who might need funding to help them through the pandemic to invite them to make an application.

Councillor Thornton referred to the wonderful video Eppleton Primary and Nursery Academy had made with support from Community Chest, encouraging everyone to view it on the Coalfield Community Facebook page and thanking the Committee for the financial support provided.

Councillor Speding commended the hard work which Ms Hopper had been carrying out throughout the Coalfield on the Christmas illuminations. Shiney Row was excellent that year and had been well received within the community.

Ms Hopper accepted the thanks and replied that she would pass on the thanks to everyone involved.

Councillors Blackburn, Lawson and Heron also expressed their appreciation for the Christmas lights in their wards which residents had been enjoying.

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

8. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the financial statements set out in table one, two and three, be noted;
- b) approval be given to an allocation of £50,000 from the 2020/22 Neighbourhood Capital Investment Programme Fund for the Mining Heritage Project as set in paragraph 2.4 of the report and Annex 1;
- c) approval be given to the 2 projects detailed in paragraph 3.4 and in Annex 2 from the Neighbourhood Fund 2020/21 budget as follows:-
 - Celebrating Heritage and Local Events £30,000
 - Wellbeing in the Community Opportunity £8,000and
- d) the approved Community Chest grants between September and November 2020, as set out in Annex 3, be noted.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Jill Colbert, Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services mentioned that there was some work ongoing within Together for Children called 'Change the Language Campaign' which she would like to speak to the Committee about at a future meeting.

Ms Colbert advised that the campaign was led by the Young People Together for Children cared for in Sunderland and they were asking that they looked at the language used when talking about young people who were in the looked after system. She considered that it was a campaign which the Committee would want to support because the way in which they referred to young people and the language used was pivotal in forming opinions about those children and what happened in life for those children. Ms Colbert proposed that she brought an update to a future Committee meeting adding that she thought it was something the Committee would want to give some commitment to as it was something which spoke to the values of the Council and the values of the Committee.

The Chairman referred to the visits which Members used to do to some of the children's homes to speak to the children living there.

Ms Colbert advised that different arrangements were now in place in this respect, however there were two very good children's homes in the Coalfield Area where the children were very well looked after.

Councillor Heron commented that the homes were indeed really lovely homes and that it would be great to hear from the young people.

Councillor Speding enquired whether the Committee would continue to receive information on planning applications in the area.

Ms Alison Patterson, Area Co-ordinator advised that the item had been removed due to capacity issues, however she would make enquiries with Officers in the Planning Department as to whether the item could be re-instated and the information provided for future agendas for Members' information.

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and participation in the meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year before closing the meeting.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,
Chairman.