

16 March 2022

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF COALFIELD SUNDERLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY BOARD

Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020-2023

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report:-

- a. Provides an annual update of the Coalfield Neighbourhood Investment Plan Delivery Plan 2020-2023
- b. Provides an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the approval of the Neighbourhood Investment Plans in March 2020, the Coalfield Area Committee worked together to finalise their Delivery Plans. All priorities have been determined following significant resident consultation via Let's Talk Sunderland. The Council also undertook further consultation with residents, during June 2020, to ensure the priorities were still relevant.

3. Area Committee and Neighbourhood Investment Plan Governance Arrangements

- 3.1 The Area Committees are part of the Council's Executive Function and have two key roles:-
- a. Influencing decisions on services delivered at a neighbourhood level; and
 - b. Identification of key priorities for their areas, in the context of supporting the delivery of the Council's City Plan at a neighbourhood level and ensuring maximum impact where necessary, through utilising its own resources.
- 3.2 Following the approval of the Article 10 Neighbourhood Investment Plans at Cabinet in March 2020, the Neighbourhood Investment Plans replaced the former Article 10 Local Area Plans.
- 3.3 It is now the responsibility of each Area Committee to deliver their agreed priorities to support the delivery of the Neighbourhood Investment Plan. Area Committee Delivery Plans have been developed to enable this to happen.
- 3.4 The Neighbourhood and Community Boards will be Chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Area Committee. All Coalfield Area Committee City Councillors are invited to attend all board meetings.
- 3.5 Members will work alongside key officers in what will be practical action orientated groups. It should be noted that the Board is not a decision-making body and the work/ recommendations of the Board will be presented to the Area Committees for final endorsement. The Area Committee Chair and Vice-Chair were agreed at Annual Council in May 2021.

4. Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020-2023- Areas of Key Action/Progress

- 4.1 Outlined below is a summary of the key areas of action/progress of the Board up to February 2022. Further updates are contained in Annex 2, Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan

Priority/Issue	Update
Transport and Highways – Highways Maintenance Programme	The 2021/22 programme of highways maintenance was agreed by Area Committee in March 2021. Further updates have been received and Members put forward areas for consideration in the 2022/2023 programme. The suggested locations have been assessed, and further discussions took place at the February Board meeting. Priority locations recommended by the N&C Board are highlighted in bold in Annex 1 to this report.
Support VCS to host community events and activities	Following an expression of interest to the February 2022 N&C Board, the Board agreed to receive a full application from Coalfields Pride for a celebratory and inclusive event in July 2022. The Board recommend approval of the project detailed in Item 4 Budget Report
Tackle Empty Properties	<p>Officers from Housing Services gave an update to the February 2022 N&C Board meeting about the range of functions within the service, including:</p> <p>Housing Strategy - Oversees the delivery of the Housing Strategy for Sunderland City Council as well as providing a central strategic support function for the service.</p> <p>Housing Development - Delivering new social housing through the Council's Housing Delivery and Investment Plan. This 5-year plan will invest £59m in delivering 574 Council homes, including bringing empty homes back into use.</p> <p>Housing Management - Letting and managing the housing stock for Sunderland City Council as a Registered Provider of Social Housing. Homes are let at an affordable rent to those in housing need.</p> <p>Housing Options - Delivers statutory functions in line with Part VII of the Housing Act. Manages the Unauthorised Encampment Policy for Gypsies and Travellers. Supports the refugee resettlement scheme for Sunderland.</p> <p>Private Rented Sector - Officers work in partnership with Private Landlords to tackle poor property standards to improve management practices via a range of measures including accreditation, private sector leasing and deposit guarantee.</p> <p>Empty Homes - Officers work to tackle empty homes and return them back into sustainable occupation across the City. Further information regarding number of empty homes and strategies to improve problematic areas were discussed.</p>
Reduce fear of crime by working in partnership	Following a meeting of the ASB Task and Finish group, the Board received further information regarding current initiatives and services available to tackle ASB across the area. It was agreed that a proposal to fund an additional ASB Officer to strengthen a proactive and partnership approach would be brought to Area Committee and recommend approval of an application for funding detailed in Item 4 Budget Report .

Support activities for children and young people during school holidays	In June 2021 Area Committee approved 8 projects across the Coalfield area to deliver holiday activities. During the July/August 2021 Summer Holidays a total of 69 sessions were delivered to 428 children and young people aged 4-14. During October half term 7 sessions were delivered to a total of 128 children and young people. This programme is now coming to an end and a request to develop a Call for Projects for presentation to the June 2022 Area Committee is contained in Item 4 Area Budget report
Improve parks and play areas	<p>Following consultation (between July and November 2021) regarding Hetton Park, the initial designs have been revised to take in comments and views of the community and respond to consultation feedback. New signs and bins have been installed and further improvements including a community orchard, picnic benches, new seating and improved games facilities are planned.</p> <p>Area Committee has allocated £100,000 for improvements in Houghton Rectory Park. Consultation was carried out between October and December 2021. A project steering group has been formed to consider the results of the consultation and develop a park plan. The top suggestion for improvement was lighting in the park. An audit has been carried out and a plan with costs presented to the steering group. A request for funding is presented at Item 4 Area Budget report. Further information on plans for the park will be reported to the June 2022 Area Committee.</p>
Carry out environmental improvements	<p>A number of local schemes, identified by the N&C Board, are planned or underway, as part of the Neighbourhood Fund Environmental Improvements project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing, re-planting and re-instating concrete planters around the Gravel Walks area • Refurbishment of seating around the cenotaph in Shiney Row, to include a new 'Remembrance' seat • Clearance of shrubs and replacement with wildflower 'meadow' area at Grasswell <p>Further improvements and schemes will be developed at the direction of the N&C Board.</p>
Identify open and green spaces where land, not identified for other use, can be improved and/or used for community activity	<p>The LinkTogether project approved at the September 2021 meeting will improve open spaces, engage local people and encourage community use. An application for almost £1m has been submitted to the Heritage Fund to address this priority.</p> <p>To complement the work to date, and to encourage volunteering and resident participation, the N&C Board explored the development of a 'Clean it, Green it' project at the November 2021 meeting. Further information was requested and was presented to the February 2022 Board meeting. A recommendation to allocate a budget and develop a 'call for projects' is contained in Item 4 Area Budget Report.</p>
Preserve and celebrate local heritage	In February 2022, the Stephenson Trail Task Group received an update on the Walking the Routes results, which identified environmental and physical improvements required. Working with Council services and partners the Task Group is developing an action plan to improve the route of the trail.

	<p>The Cultural Spring will deliver the Educational programme and are engaging with seven primary schools, whose location is near the Trail. The Schools in the Coalfield area (St Michaels, Hetton Primary, Easington Lane Primary) will work with specialists from the creative sector to produce an Education Pack which will be shared with other Primary Schools within the City. In addition, there is an array of community activities on offer during 2022, which include: way markers competition; song writing; banners and flags project; photo competition; oral history recordings; pop up gigs across the Summer months; the West Area Committee will promote the Trail at their hugely successful annual Barnes Park event, as well as the Hetton Colliery Railway 2000 Group promoting it at the Hetton Steam Carnival in June 2022</p> <p>Discussions are being held with Highways about the feasibility of exploring options to connect the Trail to other routes (e.g. Laura's Loop / Lambton route), making it more varied and accessible. The Events Team are considering whether the Trail could be used as part of the annual BIG bike or walk event in 2022 and have added the route to the Step Up app.</p> <p>The Task Group is liaising and co-ordinating plans with the Elemore Greenspace Project, including the installation of an iconic art feature at the beginning of the route, and the Riverside Sunderland regeneration developments and events programme.</p>
Reducing social isolation	<p>Happy to Chat benches have been created in Hetton in partnership with Hetton New Dawn. This is the first of a series of identified seating across the City to invite people to take time to chat to others. Signs will be installed in Houghton ward in partnership with The Old Rectory, and in Shiney Row ward in partnership with ShARP.</p>

5. Recommendations: Members are requested to: -

- 5.1 Agree the Highways Maintenance 2022/23 programme as highlighted in bold in Annex 1
- 5.2 Consider the progress and performance update regarding Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/23 and agree proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 2.
- 5.3 Note the Area Committee video update

Annex 1 Highways Maintenance 2022/23

Annex 2 Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/2023

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