

**At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the BUNNY HILL CENTRE, HYLTON LANE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> JULY, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Bonallie, Charlton, Copeland, Francis, Howe, MacKnight, Shattock, Stewart, J. Walton, L. Walton and D. Wilson

**Also in Attendance:-**

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|---------------------|--|
| Ms. Estelle Brown   | - Youth and Community Lead, SNCBC  |
| Ms. Amanda Cattle   | - Centre Manager, Bunny Hill, Sunderland City Council  |
| Mr. Les Clark       | - Head of Streetscene, Sunderland City Council   |
| Ms. Ruth Coyne      | - Senior Youth Worker, Oblivion  |
| Ms. Coleen Doneathy | - Corporate Communications, Sunderland City Council  |
| Mr. Bill Forster    | - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service  |
| Mr. Mike Frankland  | - Training Manager, Sunderland City Council  |
| Ms. Francis Kelly   | - Francis Kelly Management Consultants   |
| Mr. Dave Leonard    | - Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council   |
| Ms. Julie Lynn      | - Welfare Rights Service Manager, Sunderland City Council  |
| Insp. Lisa Musgrove | - Northumbria Police   |
| Mr. Richard Parry   | - Area Officer, Sunderland City Council  |
| Mr. Mike Poulter    | - Head of Project and Service Development, Sunderland City Council                                   |
| Mr. Neil Revely     | - Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services, ALE (Area Lead Executive), Sunderland City Council |
| Ms. Dawn Rugman     | - Policy Officer (Diversity), Sunderland City Council  |
| Mr. Raj Singh       | - Extended Services and Attendance Group Manager, Sunderland City Council                            |
| Ms. Joanne Stewart  | - Senior Democratic Services Officer, Sunderland City Council  |
| Mr. Ken Tears       | - Act Strategic Development Director, SAFC Foundation  |
| Mr. Graham Wharton  | - Community Manager, Salvation Army  |
| Ms. Ethel Wilson    | - Allotment Officer, Sunderland City Council   |
| Mr. Mike Wooler     | - School Improvement Officer, Sunderland City Council  |

## **Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman, Councillor Bell, welcomed everyone, invited introductions around the room and opened the meeting.

## **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Foster, G. Hall and N. Wright

## **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2010**

With both Councillors Howe and Wilson being in attendance, Councillor Wilson took the opportunity to comment on the minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2010 which he had previously reserved the right to do so in relation to the provision of grit in Castletown.

Both Councillors having commented, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **Community Action : Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions (2010/11 Work Plan)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided information on the progress made in relation to its Work Plan and the priorities as discussed at its last meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Dave Leonard, Area Co-ordinator presented the report referring Members to paragraph 1.6 of the report which outlined the findings of the Questions to Area Committees pilot that had been undertaken. The pilot demonstrated that there was a need to ensure Committee time is dedicated to dealing with questions that affect groups of residents while using other mechanisms to resolve more specialist issues that may only affect a single individual.

Therefore, from July 2010 resident's questions to the Committee would form an information stream within the Community Insight element of the agenda,

considering them together with information from a range of other sources which would provide the Committee with a rounded view of current and emerging community priorities.

Councillor J. Walton referred to the pilot that had been carried out and felt that the scheme had not worked and the poor response of questions had shown this. Mr. Leonard advised that the new approach would open up the scheme to a wider base and audience through Ward Councillors, community newsletters and other avenues available to promote it.

Mr. Leonard then advised that since the last meeting officers and partners had met to look at which elements from each of the proposed topics could form a work programme. Members having previously agreed that aspiration, self esteem and pride lay at the heart of any potential solutions to each of the issues, it was felt that the programmes proposed in the presentation reflected this theme.

Mr. Leonard then introduced Les Clark, Head of Street Scene with regard to the Greening of the North Area programme, Estelle Brown, Youth and Community Lead, SNCBC, with regard to Heritage and Aspiration programme and advised that the Volunteering aspect would underpin both of these programmes.

The Officers having updated the Committee in relation to current activities to deliver the priorities and addressed questions and comments thereon, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted;
- (ii) the performance data relating to new issues raised will be evidenced through Customer Insight information from September, 2010 be noted; and
- (iii) the work plan for the North Sunderland Area as identified in the presentations of the Working Group be agreed.

### **Community Action : Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which:-

- (i) briefed Members on issues previously identified through the 2009/10 Work Plan and provided an update on issues and actions arising.
- (ii) sought approval for recommendations in relation to the allocation of SIB, SIP and/or Community Chest funding.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Dave Leonard, Area Co-ordinator presented the report advising that North Sunderland Area had agreed that aspiration, self-esteem and pride lay at the

heart of its work and that those elements from each of the priorities would form a work programme. The 12 key priorities for 2010/2011 are:

- Antisocial behaviour;
- Increase confidence and trust levels in the community;
- Responsive Local Services project;
- Inclusiveness and community cohesion;
- Environmental and street scene improvements;
- Enhancing and raising the public profile of the heritage of the North Sunderland area;
- Ensure that Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) provision is delivered in line with local need;
- Identify and address gaps in youth and play services for all ages;
- Addressing the reasons behind the inequity of life expectancy across wards in the North Area;
- Child poverty at a local level;
- Consider how a targeted response could be provided to support individuals who may not be aware that the Council could help them maximise their independence, an objective within the Local Area Agreement; and
- Support enterprise and entrepreneurship.

In response to a query from Councillor Wilson regarding budgets for the year due to the current economic climate, Mr. Leonard advised that the budget for this financial year had been allocated and was set out in Annex 2b to the report and would need to be spent by 31 March 2011.

The Chairman having thanked the Officer for his report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted and that approval be given to Community Action Next Steps/Actions as detailed in Annex 1 of the report;
- (iv) the 2010/2011 Community Chest, SIB and SIP financial statement as detailed in Annex 2b of the report be noted; and
- (v) approval be given to the 22 proposals for funding from the Community Chest.

### **Influencing Practice, Policy and Strategy**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which would offer Members the opportunity for consultation on plans and strategies relevant to the North Sunderland Area. It would also provide information and updates, encouraging Members to feed into proposals for service or policy change.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

To complement the report Raj Singh, Extended Services and Attendance Group Manager, provided Members with a powerpoint presentation on the consultation process for Sunderland's Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan – "Giving Every Child an Equal Chance". Members were informed that the vision behind the Strategy was "to ensure that all Council Services and Local Partners were working in a joined up way to do everything possible to reduce child poverty and mitigate its effects in the City and ensure that today's children don't become parents of poor children in 2005".

The Timeline for the Child Poverty Strategy would be as follows:-

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Draft Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy Consultation</b><br>Consultation will take place from 25 <sup>th</sup> June to 17 September 2010. Formal and informal consultation via e-mail and focus groups. | June 2010      |
| <b>Local Child Needs Assessment</b><br>Poverty Needs Assessment being completed between July and September 2010.   | July 2010      |
| <b>Analysis of the Consultation responses and Needs Assessment</b><br>Analysis of the Consultation and Needs Assessment, with revisions made to the Draft Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy.               | September 2010 |
| <b>Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy</b><br>Revised Strategy to Cabinet and Sunderland Partnership<br>December 2010.   | December 2010  |
| <b>National Strategy</b><br>A National Strategy is expected by Spring 2011.  | Jan/Feb 2011   |

In response to a query from Councillor J. Walton regarding the numbers of people not claiming benefits due to them, Mr. Singh advised that there was not a simple answer in identifying those that were not claiming, but informed the Committee that a piece of work had been carried out recently which indicated that although Sunderland had a high level of residents entitled to free school meals, approximately 17-18% were not being claimed and that there was further work to be carried out to understand the reasons behind this.

Discussions followed around the difficulties families face in returning to work, whereby in some cases they are worse off financially when working for a minimum wage than they were when claiming benefits. It was also raised that some families are secure in knowing their financial incomings and outgoings on benefits and the idea of them earning a wage with the uncertainty for them of not knowing what their weekly/monthly finances are going to look like can be a barrier in them actively looking for work.

Mr. Singh agreed that one of the biggest barriers faced in getting people back into work was the fear factor of the unknown and it was necessary to support

individuals in raising their self esteem and aspirations. There was a lot of work to be done in getting this message across to individuals and helping them progress into employment.

During discussions in relation to child poverty getting worse due to the current economic climate, Mr. Wharton, Community Manager for the Salvation Army, advised that a number of the voluntary sector organisations were experiencing an increased number of requests for food parcels, with a lot of referrals being made by services such as midwives, probation services, schools, etc. Members were shocked and disappointed to hear that residents in the area were having to rely on food parcels and Mr. Wharton advised they were supplied to families where services felt they could not make finances meet their needs and a parcel would ensure they had a supply of basic food stuffs.

Mr. Singh commented that this kind of information was fundamental to the consultation process as it was only through discussions with people working in the community and voluntary sectors that this level of detail could be captured. Mr. Wharton advised that he would be happy to share the information he had on the services they were providing as part of the consultation.

Mr. Singh concluded his presentation by advising Members that he could provide them with printed copies of the draft strategy and any further comments could be e-mailed directly to him by the closing date to be included in the consultation process.

The Chairman having then thanked Mr. Singh for his informative and thought provoking presentation, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received and noted and any further comments be referred to Mr. Singh directly.

The Chairman then thanked the Committee, Officers and Partners for their worthwhile contributions and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. BELL,  
Chairman.