

At a Meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in HOUGHTON HOUSING OFFICE, THE SKYLINE CENTRE, 88 NEWBOTTLE STREET, HOUGHTON LE SPRING, DH4 4AJ, on WEDNESDAY, 9TH MARCH, 2016 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Lawson in the Chair

Councillors Allen, Blackburn, Cummings, Ellis, Heron, D. Smith, Speding and G. Walker.

Also in Attendance:-

Ron Barrass	Member of the Public	
Steve Burdis	Station Manager, Rainton Bridge	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Charlotte Burnham	Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements	Sunderland City Council
Melanie Caldwell	Head of Operations	Gentoo Ltd.
Wendy Cook	VCS Representative, Youth and Community Co-Ordinator	Sunderland North Community Business Centre
Paul Finch	VCS Representative	Hetton New Dawn
Les Goodliff	Acting Inspector Washington and Coalfield	Northumbria Police
Debbie Hall	Area Response Manager Coalfield	Sunderland City Council
Pauline Hopper	Area Community Officer, Coalfield	Sunderland City Council
Sam Humble	Head of Operations	Gentoo Ltd.
Amelia Laverick	Member of the Public	
Chris McCaul	Scrutiny and Area Support Officer	Sunderland City Council
Dave McCreedy	VCS Representative	Fence Houses YMCA

Christine Tilley	Community Governance Services Team Leader	Sunderland City Council
Glenis Wallace	Councillor	Hetton Town Council

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

The Chairman announced that Chris McCaul and Melanie Caldwell were leaving their respective posts with the Council and Gentoo Ltd. to take up opportunities in Thailand and Australia respectively.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Chris and Melanie for their contribution to the work of the Area Committee and support to Members and wished them good luck for the future.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Turner, M. Turton and W. Turton and Neighbourhood Inspector Steve Pescod.

Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Item 4 – People Board Progress Report

Councillor Lawson made an open declaration as a Board Member of Sunderland YMCA in respect of the application for SIB funding from Fence Houses YMCA.

Councillor Walker made an open declaration in respect of an application for SIB funding from Youth Focus North East to deliver Wellbeing Challenge Days due to his working involvement with the organisation.

Item 6 – Area Budgets Report

Councillor Lawson made an open declaration as a Board Member of Sunderland YMCA in respect of the application for SIB funding from Fence Houses YMCA and also in respect of the Houghton Feast 2016 – Community Programme application for SIB funding as Chair of Houghton Feast Steering Committee.

Councillor Ellis made an open declaration as a Friend of Rectory Park in respect of the Houghton Feast 2016 – Community Programme application for SIB funding.

Councillor Heron made open declarations as a Board Member of Fence Houses YMCA in respect of the organisation's application for SIB funding and also in respect of the Houghton Feast 2016 – Community Programme application for SIB funding as a Member of Houghton Feast Steering Committee.

Councillor Speding made an open declaration as a Member of Houghton Feast Steering Committee in respect of the Houghton Feast 2016 – Community Programme application for SIB funding.

Councillor Walker made an open declaration in respect of an application for SIB funding from Youth Focus North East to deliver Wellbeing Challenge Days due to his working involvement with the organisation.

Members left the room when the applications for SIB funding in which they had made declarations were being considered.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 2nd December, 2015 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Coalfield Area Committee Annual Report 2015-16

The Chair of the Committee submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval of the Coalfield Area Committee's Annual Report for inclusion as part of the combined Area Committee Annual Report 2015-16 to be presented to full Council.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman advised that the content of the report would continue to develop to include photos and detail the achievements of the Area Committee over the last year prior to its submission to Council. Councillor Lawson thanked all those who had been involved and paid tribute to the contribution made from the VCS.

2. RESOLVED that approval be given to the Coalfield Area Annual report for inclusion in the combined Area Committee Annual Report for 2015-16.

Place Board Progress Report

The Chair of the Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the current year's, 2015/16 Place Board Work Plan and provided an update on performance.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor John Cummings, Chair of the Coalfield Area Place Board briefed the Committee on the report drawing attention to:-

- The work Responsive Local Services had carried out in respect of dealing with the incidences of flooding which had occurred in the Coalfield Area, and the measures to restrict vehicular access to graveyards in order to reduce damage to grassed areas beside graves.
- The meetings which had been held to consider the future service standards in respect of Responsive Local Services, highlighting the need for Members to attend the next meeting later in the month.
- The extended consultation which had taken place in relation to the changes to the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Scheme.
- The streets recommended for inclusion in the Highways Capital Maintenance Programme 2016-2017 as set out at Annex 2.
- The retail and business support being provided to independent traders in Shiney Row, Houghton and Hetton shopping centres.
- The programme of local events and activity which included the community art project to celebrate the mining heritage with a full sized sculpture of a miner.

The Chairman commented on the huge community engagement success of the community art project where all age groups in the Coalfield had taken part in the workshops.

Councillor Blackburn thanked Nexus for all their hard work to make the DRT Scheme a success.

Members welcomed the Place Board's decision to retain support for local shopping centres as a priority for 2016/17 suggesting that support should be extended to the smaller shopping centres such as Easington Lane and Barnwell.

Ms. Hopper invited Members to attend the Place Board when the priority was to be discussed in order that their views were taken into consideration.

Ms. Hopper informed Members that the launch of the Mining Heritage Project was scheduled for 12th May and invited everyone to attend.

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

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the progress and performance update with regard to the Coalfield Area Place Board's Work Plan for 2015/16 be noted and the proposals for future delivery be approved; and
- (b) the recommendations of the Place Board regarding the Highways Capital Maintenance Programme for the Coalfield Area for 2016/17 attached at Annex 2, be approved.

People Board Progress Report

The Chair of the People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the current year's 2015/16 People Board Work Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In the absence of Councillor W. Turton, Chair of the Coalfield Area People Board, Councillor Lawson briefed the Committee on the report drawing attention to:-

- the health priorities which had been identified for the Coalfield Area;
- the improved partnership working with the CCG/Public Health on joint priorities;
- the range of advice services and support available to people in the Coalfield area to help reduce the stress caused by financial concerns;
- the work the Board was undertaking to find out about and understand the main mental health issues in Sunderland and the Coalfield Area and what support and local provision is available;
- the work the Board was doing to try to improve training and learning opportunities for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and;
- the applications presented under the CAN DO Fund.

Councillor Lawson highlighted that the next funding round of the CAN DO project was open and the closing date for applications was 12th April, 2016.

4. RESOLVED that the progress and performance update with regard to the Coalfield Area People Board's Work Plan for 2015/16 be noted and the proposals for future delivery be approved.

Partner Agency Reports – Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network Progress Update

Ms. Wendy Cook, Mr. Dave McCreedy and Mr. Paul Finch, Area Network Representatives submitted a report (copy circulated), providing an update with regard to the Coalfield Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Network.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Paul Finch, Area Network Representative briefed the Committee on the report highlighting that a briefing on Devolution and the Combined Authority had been provided by the Deputy Leader of the Council at the January meeting of the Coalfield Area VCSN. Information on Universal Credit had also been circulated and a brief discussion had taken place regarding what the changes would mean for local people.

At the February meeting the Summer Activity Programme had been discussed. In addition, colleagues from ShARP and Sunderland City Council Benefits Advice

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Team had attended to discuss what welfare advice and support is available in the Coalfield Area.

Mr. Finch reported that the Mining Heritage workshops had generated lots of interest from local people and continued to be well attended.

In response to Councillor Wallace, Mr. Finch advised that ShARP provided outreach support in Hetton and at ELCAP and visited foodbanks.

Ms. Melanie Caldwell, Head of Operations, Gentoo Ltd. added that ShARP could also provide a drop-in service at the Skyline Centre as there was space available where this could be held. Ms. Caldwell advised that Gentoo Ltd. also provided money matters support.

Members commented on the difficulties people may face if they needed to apply for benefits if they were not IT competent or had access to a computer as applications had to be made online.

The Chairman referred everyone to the display which had been erected highlighting some of the work carried out by the VCS and conveyed her thanks for all the work the VCS groups did in the Coalfield Area.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be received and noted;
- (ii) the Area Committee continue to support the Sector when developing and implementing actions against local priorities; and
- (iii) the proposal for the Summer Activity Programme be supported.

Partner Agency Reports – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Station Manager Steve Burdis, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Performance Monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee area from 1st November, 2015 to 1st February, 2016 compared with the same period in 2014/15.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Burdis highlighted that there had been no deaths recorded during the timeframe of the report. There had however been one incident where injuries were sufficient for the casualty to attend hospital.

Mr. Burdis briefed the Committee on the accidental fires in dwellings and the deliberate primary fires both excluding and including road vehicles. He highlighted the 'Darker Nights Campaign' undertaken with partners from the Police, the Council, Gentoo and Voluntary Groups which targeted Anti-Social Behaviour fires and activities across the Sunderland District.

Mr. Burdis referred to the assistance provided by Gentoo in allowing the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service to use one of its properties in the Avenue Vivian area to test out new firefighting technology which was invaluable to the service.

In response to Councillor Blackburn, Mr. Burdis advised that the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service carried out tours of the area and asked residents to remove any build-up of rubbish from outside of their properties to prevent any risk of fires. He advised that the nearest stations were Farringdon – 7 minutes away and Washington – 8 minutes if assistance was needed.

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

Partner Agency Reports – Northumbria Police

Acting Inspector Les Goodliff advised that there had been a rise of 29% in crime overall in the Coalfield. The Force's overall crime had also risen by 29%. He stated that although there had been changes in the reporting mechanisms, which were more transparent, accountable and victim focussed than before and might be contributing to the increase, the levels of crime had increased.

Acting Inspector Goodliff reported that there had been:-

65 sex offences to date, which was a rise of 23%;
267 violent injury offences, which was a rise of 34%.

Burglary of Dwellings, the top priority for the Police, had increased, as had burglary from commercial premises.

Hetton and Easington Lane were hotspots for burglary dwelling and from 1st January to date there had been 36 burglaries, 16 of which had been in Hetton and Easington Lane and had taken place during the evening or overnight.

A burglary prevention programme had been launched and 900 addresses in the area had been leaflet dropped. The 8 week operation to tackle burglaries, which had included increasing patrols, had resulted in the arrest of 2 well known burglars; items that were being targeted included cash and jewellery.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Youth Disorder was down 39%. However Anti-Social Behaviour issues in Hetton had been given renewed focus with Officers looking at what had been done previously and what could be done differently. Meetings had been arranged with the Local Councillors.

Violence without injury offences was up by 70%; a total of 271 reports to date that year. This category included reports of harassment, unwanted and persistent texting, reading and responding to messages on Facebook.

In response to questions from Councillor Speding about the rise in the Police precept on Council Tax and whether this offered value for money as well as the rise in organised crime and the public perception of feeling more insecure, Acting

Inspector Goodliff commented that the Police Force had the Teams and organisation to manage the risk and threats posed by organised crime. He believed the reason why residents felt insecure was as a result of the information publicised in the media which could adversely affect people's perception. The Police had demonstrated their capabilities in combatting instances of organised crime but needed to get better at publicising what action had been taken and he quoted the recent break in at a Houghton commercial premises by professional career burglars.

Acting Inspector Goodliff stated that the rise in the Police precept may be the only way the Police could continue to provide the service it did. Everyone was aware of the current financial situation and that partnership working was even more important.

The Committee having taken the opportunity to ask Acting Inspector Goodliff a number of questions and full consideration having been given to the information presented, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Partner Agency Reports – Gentoo Ltd.

Ms. Melanie Caldwell, Head of Operations, Gentoo Ltd. briefed the Committee on the recent changes to staff at the Company advising that full details of the structure and appointments to the five new Housing Manager Co-ordinator posts would be circulated to Members once they had been confirmed with the Gentoo Management Team.

Ms. Caldwell advised that Ms. Sam Humble was her replacement, however it was not known yet whether she would attend all of the Coalfield Area Committee meetings and Sam would decide who the Coalfield link was.

Ms. Caldwell advised that the Rent Statement would still be sent out to everyone in April, however they were unsure at the moment as to whether the newsletter would continue but Gentoo would continue to contribute to the Council's newsletter if that continued. Ms. Caldwell advised that she would be leaving on 20th May.

In terms of operational activities, Ms. Caldwell advised that a meeting had been held on the 'Big Local' and this was now up and running. The roofing programme was finished at Fencehouses and would be continued in Penshaw in the new year. The heating programme would be taking place at the Racecourse estate.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Caldwell for the update and added that she would be missed by Members.

6. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Area Budgets Report

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated) providing a financial statement as an update position on progress in relation to allocating Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest funding and presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Community Officer, Coalfield presented the report drawing the Committee's attention to the financial position as set out in paragraph 2.1 and highlighting that there was a return to budget of £13,737 resulting in the SIB balance standing at that time at £140,731.

Ms. Hopper highlighted that there were five recommendations for SIB funding which were set out at paragraph 2.2 and annex 1 of the report. Should all the applications be approved, the balance of SIB funding remaining would be £70,325.

Ms. Hopper explained in respect of the recommendation relating to the 'Social Isolation Priority' that Members of the People Board had discussed the importance of this priority and the detail of projects to address Social Isolation would be discussed at the April Board meeting. Discussions were also taking place with the CCG to explore opportunities for joint funding.

Ms. Hopper referred Members to the approvals for Community Chest funding from December 2015 to February 2016 detailed at paragraph 3 of the report.

Consideration having been given to the report it was:-

8. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1 and 3.1 of the report be noted;
 - b) approval be given to SIB funding being allocated to the following:-
 - Houghton Feast 2016 – Community Programme - £10,000
 - The Craft Academy, Fencehouses YMCA - £19,000
 - Wellbeing Challenge Days, Youth Focus North East - £14,406
 - Coalfield Summer Celebration, VCS Network - £7,000
 - Social Isolation priority (allocate budget) – £20,000
- and
- c) the 16 Community Chest approvals supported from the 2015/16 budget as set out in Annex 2, be noted.

NB. Councillor Walker assumed the Chair for consideration of the applications for SIB funding in respect of Houghton Feast 2016 and The Craft Academy, Fencehouses YMCA.

Current Planning Applications (Coalfields Area)

A schedule (copy circulated) of current planning applications lodged during the period 1st January and 16th February 2016 was submitted for Members' information only.

(For copy schedule – see original minutes).

9. RESOLVED that the schedule be received and noted.

The Chairman, having thanked everyone for their attendance, closed the meeting.

(Signed) A. LAWSON,
Chairman.