

At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber at City Hall, Sunderland on WEDNESDAY 7TH JUNE, 2023 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Burrell, Dodds, Heron (Vice Chair), K. Johnston, Mason-Gage, Price, Rowntree and Thornton

Also Present:-

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| Phil Baker | Inspector | Northumbria Police |
| Chris Binding | Local Democracy Reporter | |
| Emerly Christie | Area Network Representative | |
| Jill Colbert | Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services | Together for Children Sunderland City Council |
| Wendy Cook | Area Network Representative | |
| Vicky Gamblin | Head of Neighbourhoods | Gentoo |
| Pauline Hopper | Partnership and Community Resilience Manager | Sunderland City Council |
| Sean Laws | Councillor and Chairman of Washington Area Committee | Sunderland City Council |
| Amy Swan | Area Network Representative | |
| Christine Tilley | Team Leader, Community Governance Services | Sunderland City Council |
| Scott Wilson | Station Manager | Tyne and Wear Fire Service |

Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Coalfield Area Committee meeting and in particular Councillor Sean Laws, the newly appointed Chairman of the Washington Area Committee, Phil Baker, Vicky Gamblin and Scott Wilson who were attending their first meeting of the Area Committee and introductions were made.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Scott, D. Snowdon and Speding and Councillor Bill Little, Hetton Town Council.

Declarations of Interest

The following declarations were received:-

Item 5 – Coalfield Area Budgets Report

Councillor Johnston made an open declaration in relation to the application regarding Coalfields Family Fun Swims from the Neighbourhood Fund as an employee of Everyone Active and withdrew from the meeting and took no part in any consideration of this item.

Councillor Mason-Gage made an open declaration in relation to the application regarding Elba Park Holiday Activities as an employee of Groundwork and withdrew from the meeting and took no part in any consideration of this item.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15th March, 2023 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Variation of Order of Business

At this juncture it was moved by the Chairman and duly seconded that the order of business of the meeting be varied in order to consider the report of Inspector Phil Baker next on the agenda as Inspector Baker needed to leave the meeting to attend another engagement.

2. RESOLVED that the order of business be varied accordingly.

Northumbria Police Update

Inspector Phil Baker, Northumbria Police submitted a report (copy circulated) providing a community update and key information in relation to Coalfields Area between the 8-week period 5th March and 26th May 2023.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Inspector Baker firstly updated the Committee with regards to the HALO Project advising that this was moving into Easington Lane and was live from 1st June. He advised that they were hoping to do a community event which was likely to take place in the first week of the summer holidays.

Inspector Baker highlighted that the most significant crimes recorded in Coalfields in this period were violence against a person with no injury, criminal damage and then theft. The area with the most crimes recorded was Shiney Row followed by Houghton Town centre and then Easington Lane.

Inspector Baker also highlighted that in this 8-week period there had been 219 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents. Most of the disorder was around motorcycle disorder, nuisance and then under 18 youth related disorder. The ASB hot spots for the sector were Houghton Town Centre followed by Shiney Row and Houghton (area bordered by the A690 and Gillas lane). He added that he was hoping to put in a

significant resource into combatting ASB. There had been an increase of 3 new Neighbourhood PCs in the area and they were looking to increase numbers in the HALO team also.

Councillor Heron reported that there was an issue in Houghton Town Centre with schoolchildren after school and with motorbikes.

Inspector Baker replied to say that he would look into the issues regarding school children after school in the Town Centre and the motorbikes which he stated he had witnessed personally.

Councillor Mason-Gage advised that she had been advising residents to report issues in the Shiney Row ward and therefore the figures might be up as a result of this.

Inspector Baker stressed the importance of reporting crimes so as the Police were aware of issues and they had the opportunity of doing something about them. He briefed the Committee on the internal meeting arrangements where issues were discussed which would feed into the Summer Plan. He advised in response to Councillor Rowntree that the Summer Plan was a confidential document which could not be shared with Members and residents.

In response to Councillor Burrell, Inspector Baker advised that with the 3 new Neighbourhood PCs they were not back to 2010 level but this was pushing them towards that level and with more resources again, they would be pushed over the level they had previously had.

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

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020-2023

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated), which provided an update on the progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan and an update on Neighbourhood and Community Board Governance Arrangements for 2023-2026.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board, Councillor Heron presented the report and highlighted a number of projects contained within the Delivery Plan and the work of the VCS Network, for example the priority to provide support for Children and Young People where 334 individual young people had accessed youth services/activities in the Coalfield's locality area. The Chair read out some of the comments from the young people.

Ms Pauline Hopper, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager delivered a presentation on behalf of Springboard on the 'Clean it, Green it' Project, which was started in October 2022 and which set out the main achievements of the project so far.

Councillor Mason-Gage asked that Councillors be advised when the project was taking place so as they could have the opportunity of going along to help.

Ms Hopper advised that she would feed this back to the project.

Ms Hopper circulated a booklet on the Stephenson Trail and updated the Committee on the progress of the project

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

4. RESOLVED that the progress and performance update regarding the Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/23 be noted and that a copy of the 'Clean it, Green it' presentation be circulated to the Committee.

Coalfield Area Committee Area Plan 2023-2026

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated), presenting for consideration and approval the Coalfield Area Committee Area Plan for 2023-26 and an update on Area Committee Area Plan Governance arrangements.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Pauline Hopper, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager briefed the Committee on the report highlighting the development of the Plan to date at the Area Committee workshops held in March and May and the work being undertaken by Council services and partners in collaboration with the Area Committee on the priorities identified for the area.

Ms Hopper referred the Committee to the proposed Coalfield Area Committee Area Plan and Area Priorities for the Area Committee's consideration and approval which was set out at Annex 1.

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

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) approval be given to the draft Area Committee Area Plan for 2023–2026 as set out at Annex 1, External Priorities for referral to Cabinet for approval;
- b) the internal priorities, which were discussed and agreed at the Area Committee Workshop in May, be shared with Council Service Leads and Partners to consider the feasibility of delivery and provide feedback; the priorities were currently proposals where the Area Committee wished to influence/add value to existing service provision;
- c) discussions on the Service Plans with Sunderland City Council Service leads continue and a list of Area Priorities for the Coalfield area be developed; to be appended to the Area Committee Area Plans and that arrangements be made for quarterly updates;
- d) the Area Committee continue to collaborate with key partners (currently including Gentoo, Police, TWFRS, and the Voluntary Sector Alliance) to provide their plans for future activity in the Coalfield area; to be appended to the Coalfield Area Committee Area Plan and that arrangements be made for quarterly updates; and
- e) the Terms of Reference set out at Annex 2 of the report, be noted.

Tyne and Wear Fire Service Update

Station Manager Scott Wilson, Tyne and Wear Fire Service submitted a report (copy circulated), providing Performance Monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee's area from 1st April 2023 to 24th May compared with the same period in 2022.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Station Manager Wilson presented the report highlighting that there had been no deaths during the reporting period and that there had been a decline in reported incidents in deliberate property fires, primary road vehicle fires started deliberately and secondary fires not involving property or road vehicles started deliberately across the area with the exception of the Copt Hill ward in relation to the last category, where there had been a significant increase. Copt Hill ward had also seen an increase in deliberate fires.

Councillor Heron reported dust bins being burnt out in Houghton, the burning out of the play park at Old Durham Road and the burning out of a local yard over the weekend.

Ms Pauline Hopper, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager reported that there had been 9 fires in play areas across the city, 3 in the Coalfield, 3 in Washington and 3 in the West Area.

Station Manager Wilson advised that they were keeping an eye on the play area locations on an evening.

Councillor Rowntree stated that communications needed to go out from the Council stating that when the play areas were damaged there was no funding to replace them and that they were therefore depriving the community of a facility.

In response to Councillor Rowntree, Ms Hopper advised that an Officer from the Play Team would be getting in touch with the ward Councillors about getting something out in the press about the recent damage to play areas.

Full consideration having been given to the report, the Chairman thanked Mr Wilson for his attendance and it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted and that the Fire Stoppers reporting number be promoted in community groups to drive down deliberate fires.

Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network Update

The Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) providing an update to the Committee on the work of the Sector since the last meeting of the Area Committee in March.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Amy Swan, Area Network Representative briefed the Committee on the report which detailed the VCS meetings which had taken place in April and May 2023 and the issues and topics which had been discussed.

Councillor Heron commented that the meetings of the VCS Network were very well attended and the issues discussed were very useful.

The Chairman thanked the VCS on behalf of the Area Committee for the work they were doing and it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

Gentoo Update

Gentoo submitted a report (copy circulated) providing an update for the Coalfields Area on their work from April 2023 to June 2023.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Vicky Gamblin, Head of Neighbourhoods, Gentoo briefed the Committee on the performance of Neighbourhood Services and the proposed Investment and Renewal planned works for the area for 2023/24.

Councillor Heron referred to the appendix to the report detailing the Property Investment Programme and queried the programme 'Fire Alarm Removal Scheme'.

Ms Gamblin said she would check what this was.

Councillor Burrell enquired what the plans/strategy were when they did the garage demolitions.

Ms Gamblin stated that she was not privy to this information however she did not think that there was any long-term plan and that it was more about the garages not being fit for purpose and an eyesore.

The Chairman referred to re-let times and commented whether this was affected by the stripping out copper by vandals as the houses were being brought back into use.

Councillor Johnston asked for an update on the damp and mould programme.

Ms Gamblin advised that calls had dropped off in relation to damp and mould but that she would get the information as to how many cases had been reviewed. There was a two-day turnaround for the wash. There were some demand issues, it was aged stock, properties were not accessible but there was nothing to say that they could not be re-let.

In response to Members questions, Ms Gamblin reported that the stock condition survey did not just look at damp and mould and that it was expected that residents/tenants reported it. Gentoo operatives were in every property every year for gas servicing and if workers were in for repairs, they too could call it in. It was everyone's responsibility to do this. Ms Gamblin stated that there were lots of tenants who were already identified as being vulnerable.

Members advised that they would pick this up with Ms Gamblin outside of the meeting.

Ms Gamblin invited Members to send her details of any issues.

Full discussion having taken place on the report; Ms Gamblin was thanked for her attendance and it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Coalfield Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated), providing a financial statement as an updated position on progress in relation to allocating Area Committee Neighbourhood Funds and Community Chest and presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Pauline Hopper, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager, presented the report, drawing the Committee's attention to the current financial position of the Area Committee Neighbourhood Fund for 2023/2024 as set out in paragraph 2.1, which detailed that the Area Committee had been allocated £357,946.

Ms Hopper briefed the Committee on the applications for funding set out in the report at paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 advising that the Coalfields Family Fun Swims sessions would be provided at Hetton Community Pool and Washington Community Pool for Coalfield residents.

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

9. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1 and 3.1 be noted;
- b) Approval be given to the allocation of £10,000 contribution from the 2023/24 Neighbourhood Fund towards the Elemore Park Music Festival set out in paragraph 2.3 and Annex 1 to the report;
- c) Approval be given to the 12 project proposals for Holiday Activities for Children and Young People and the balance of £13,554 from the 2023/24 Neighbourhood Fund as set out in paragraph 2.4 and Annex 2 to the report; and
- d) the 9 Community Chest approvals supported from the 2022/2023 budget, as detailed in Annex 3 to the report be noted.

Current Planning Applications (Coalfields Area)

A schedule (copy circulated) of current planning applications lodged during the period 1st April and 25th May, 2023 was submitted for Members' information only.

(For copy schedule – see original minutes)

10. RESOLVED that the schedule be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions stating that he looked forward to seeing them at the next meeting, before he closed the meeting.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,
Chairman.