At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held at the NEW LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTRE, NEWBOTTLE STREET, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING on WEDNESDAY, 7TH JANUARY, 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Richardson in the Chair

Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Ellis, A. Hall, Heron, Rolph, D. Smith, Speding, Tate and Wakefield.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a Happy New Year.

Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor J. Scott.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 29th October, 2008

i) Regeneration Issues Report: Feedback on Projects Previously Funded through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) – Lambton Miners Memorial Project

The Committee noted that all references to the above project should read 'Lambton Miners Memorial Project' and not 'Lambton "Minors" Memorial Project' as stated on one occasion.

Councillor Rolph commented that there had been no mention of Newbottle Primary School in the feedback report.

The Chairman stated that an enquiry needed to be made as to whether the school was still included in the project.

Councillor Hall commented that she sympathised with the project organisers in not being able to attend the October meeting and feedback to the Committee, however, she suggested that another invitation be made and an

indication be sought from them as to when it would be possible for a representative to attend a future meeting.

ii) Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group

Councillor Wakefield advised that the usual closing time for Police Stations was in fact 5.00 p.m. and not 9.00 p.m. as stated in the minutes and corrected Dave Pryer's job title to Chief Superintendent.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 29th October, 2008 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the above amendments.

Declarations of Interest

Item 7 – Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB): Regeneration Issues Report

i) Houghton Kepier Sports College

Councillor Rolph declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application as a Council appointed Governor and as a parent of a child who attends the school and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the above application.

Councillor Speding declared a personal interest in the above application as a member of the Football Association.

ii) 'The Hive' (Moorsley and Peat Carr)

Councillor Speding declared a personal interest in the above application as a Council appointed Governor of Barnwell Primary School.

Item 8 – Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

Councillor Rolph declared a personal interest as a Council appointed Governor of Newbottle Primary School.

Councillor Tate declared a personal interest as a Council appointed representative on the Easington Lane Community Access Point.

Councillor Wakefield declared a personal and prejudicial interest as his grandson attends Newbottle Primary School and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

Item 9 – Executive Summaries of the Meetings of the Coalfield Area Forum

Councillors A. Hall and Rolph declared personal interests as Members of the Management Board and of the Executive Committee respectively of the Coalfield Area Forum.

Item 12 – Sport and Leisure in the Coalfield

Councillor Blackburn declared a personal interest in the above report as a Council appointed Governor of Easington Lane Primary School.

Councillor Rolph declared a personal interest as a Council appointed representative on the Board of Herrington Burn YMCA and as a Council appointed Governor of Newbottle Primary School.

Councillor Tate declared a personal interest as a Council appointed representative on the Easington Lane Community Access Point.

Northumbria Police Crime Statistics relating to the Coalfield Area

A copy of the crime statistics produced by Northumbria Police (copy circulated) showing all crime in Sunderland and detailing the figures for the Coalfield Area from March 2007 to November 2008 was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Ellis commented on the rise of offences shown for November 2008. Community Inspector Graham Finlay advised that there had been a lot of police activity which had resulted in the recovery of stolen property, cannabis and amphetamines at an address. This had meant that the number of crimes detected had increased and were recorded in the statistics.

Councillor Ellis enquired as to whether Community Inspector Finlay had bar charts to show the prosecutions for recorded crimes.

Community Inspector Finlay advised that the Crown Prosecution Service would have this information, however, he would make enquiries on Councillor Ellis' behalf and let her know.

Councillor Anderson referred to the concern she had expressed at the last meeting with regard to the increase in burglaries and enquired whether there were any areas of the Coalfield which had a higher number of burglaries being committed than others.

Community Inspector Finlay advised that Easington Lane and Shiney Row had a higher number of burglaries than other areas in the Coalfield. He added that he would obtain the information from the Force Headquarters and pass this on to Members.

2. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

Minutes of the Last Meetings of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group

A copy of the minutes of the meetings of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) Group held on 7th October and 11th November, 2008 (copies circulated) were submitted.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

Councillor Tate enquired as to when the four CCTV cameras would be sited in the Coalfield Area as agreed back in March 2008 and in particular the Easington Lane area.

Community Inspector Graham Finlay advised that the four sites had been identified. Two cameras were initially to be sited. The camera at Hetton had been moved to Easington Lane.

The Chairman briefed the Committee in relation to progress on the CCTV cameras following receipt of an update on the matter and suggested that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Rolph advised that the Strategic Investment Plan had provided for a total of 24 CCTV cameras in the City. The Coalfield Area had two at the moment and a further two would follow when the installation programme was carried out.

Councillor Rolph commented that the current format of the LMAPS minutes did not provide enough information as to the location of the anti social behaviour areas.

The Chairman advised that the Committee had been asked to have a named Deputy representative on the LMAPS Group and asked the Committee to give consideration to the matter.

The Chairman introduced Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Regeneration Officer to the Committee at this juncture. He advised that Ms. Hopper was recently appointed to the post and would assume responsibility for the Coalfield Area from Ms. Nicol Trueman who would be taking over the role for the Washington Area. He wished Ms. Trueman well on her new venture.

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

3. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the LMAPS Group held on 7th October and 11th November, 2008 be noted.

Regeneration Issues Report: Feedback on Projects Previously Funded through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB)

The Chief Executive (Designate) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with information on St. Michael's and All Angels Church – The Heritage Resource Centre, which was awarded £26,324 on 6th June, 2007 from SIB.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Jean Henderson, Director of Restoration and Re-ordering, submitted a report updating the Committee as to how the funding was being used. She advised that the official opening of the Church would be done by the Bishop of Jarrow in March and all Members of the Committee would be invited. The week after the official opening all local history groups would be invited to come along.

Members of the Committee applauded the representatives on the work done and congratulated all those involved in the project on its success.

Ms. Henderson thanked the Committee for its support. In response to Members' enquiries as to how the Group had publicised that it had received the support of SIB, Ms. Henderson advised that initial reports in the press on the project had acknowledged that the project had benefited from SIB funding. Once the official opening of the Church had taken place, there would be more publicity. Later a permanent record would be produced in Church of all the donors who had supported the project.

The Chairman advised that recognition of the Committee's assistance, the SIB logo on any literature produced on the project together with acknowledgement in any publicity that the project had been helped with SIB funding was needed.

Ms. Henderson informed the Committee that a guide book and DVD pointing out the history of the Church would also be produced.

4. RESOLVED that the feedback on St. Michael's All Angels Church – The Heritage Resource Centre Project, be received and noted.

Urgent Item

In accordance with Section 100(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman proposed and it was agreed by the Committee that a further application for Strategic Initiatives Budget funding submitted by the Polish Partnership, a copy of which had been circulated to the Committee, be considered at this meeting as the project organisers were looking to hold an event in March 2009.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB): Regeneration Issues Report

The Chief Executive (Designate) submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining proposals for the allocation of SIB funding to support initiatives of benefit to the area,

requesting the Committee to consider the principle of deferring commitment of expenditure from next year's SIB budget (subject to budget approval), except in cases of clear emergency and to defer consideration of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) expenditure until the new financial year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members proceeded to give consideration to the request to defer commitment of expenditure from next year's SIB budget as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Mr. Dennis Napier, Finance Manger – Technical Services, advised that the reasoning behind deferring commitment of expenditure was so as the Committee was able to establish the priorities so that funding could be prioritised and it was not intended to stop worthwhile projects, if it was considered that they would fit the priorities identified in any case.

Following some discussion on the issue, the Chairman moved that the Committee agree to suspend recommendation 2.2 of the report and given consideration to the applications for funding that were submitted before them and this was agreed.

Ms. Pauline Hopper, Area Regeneration Officer, outlined the budgetary position to the Committee as detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The Committee then proceeded to consider the applications for SIB funding:-

i) Houghton Kepier Sports College

Ms. Hopper briefed the Committee on the application. Mr. Dave Brennan, Community Development and Cluster Manager and Ms. Sue Crest, Assistant Head of Houghton Kepier Sports College, were in attendance.

Mr. Brennan referred Members to page 37 of the agenda which detailed the confirmation from the Teaching Primary Care Trust that the project would prove extremely beneficial to the community as it provided the opportunity to link in physical activity with on line research. Mr. Brennan advised Members that he had letters of support for the project from various organisations.

In response to Members' enquiries as to why the project would be using laptops, Mr. Brennan stated that it was beneficial in that they could be moved and locked away when not in use for security reasons. Mr. Brennan stated that Houghton Kepier Sports College would undertake not to have any involvement with the laptops which were for community use. It had its own laptops and had no need to seek to use this equipment.

Ms. Crest assured the Committee that Houghton Kepier Sports College would not be using the laptops that would be procured for the project.

Councillor Ellis enquired what would happen to the laptops at the end of the three year period.

Mr. Brennan advised that it was hoped that the equipment would still be effective beyond this 3 years, however, the project would look to secure further laptops at the end of the period if this was not the case. He added that it was an extremely busy site and there was no reason to think that the project would not get support from the community.

Mr. David Thompson, Solicitor, referred Members to the proposed attachment of conditions should the Committee be minded to approve the application as detailed on page 32 of the agenda. He added that the grant conditions would be agreed between the Council and the Sports College, should the Committee be minded to approve the requested allocation of SIB funding.

ii) The Hive

Ms. Marion McGuinness and Ms. Audrey Bewick were in attendance from Barnardos and outlined the project to the Committee.

In response to Members, Ms. Pauline Hopper confirmed that there was no reason, if the Committee was mindful to approve the application, why the funding could not come out of the 2008/2009 budget rather than from the 2009/2010 budget as detailed in the report.

Councillor Ellis expressed concern about what she considered an unsubstantiated statement "the Project will challenge racist attitudes that generally exist within the local population by using the lessons learnt from prior work…" and she asked for clarification.

Ms. McGuinness commented that it was her experience that the above attitudes existed towards Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the area.

Other Members of the Committee also felt this was the case and supported Ms. McGuinness.

Councillor Smith expressed concern about what he considered to be the high level of remuneration for a "development worker". He added that the £33,095 for this position was a third of the payroll budget and almost double the average wage.

Other Members of the Committee considered this to be an appropriate salary level and commented that it was needed in order to attract someone of the appropriate calibre.

Councillor Wakefield queried why the Charity was asking for £1,000 to pay VAT.

Ms. McGuinness advised that the Charity was not VAT exempt and would need to pay this amount.

iii) Polish Partnership

Mr. Andrew Butler and Mr. Paul Harrison representing Education Business Connections Ltd. were present. Mr. Butler advised that the Company had been set

up by former Councillor, Iain Kay, in 1998. However, Mr. Kay had resigned from the Company in January 2008. Mr. Butler proceeded to brief the Committee on the application.

It was noted that information as to the programmes that Education Business Connections would deliver had not been attached to the application form as stated and the information on the project was therefore not complete.

It was therefore:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

a) recommendation 2.2 of the report be suspended;

b) i) subject to the necessary grant conditions being agreed between the Council and Houghton Kepier Sports College, approval be given to the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £10,000 from the 2008/2009 budget to Houghton Kepier Sports College to support the 'Learning in the Community' project;

ii) approval be given to the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of £35,095 from the 2008/09 budget to employ a Community Development Worker and provide a development budget for 'The Hive' (Moorsley and Pete Carr); and

iii) consideration of the application for SIB funding from the Polish Partnership be deferred for further information until the next meeting of the Area Committee scheduled for 5th March, 2009; and

c) the SIB statement of Resources detailed at Annex 2 be noted.

Urgent Item

In accordance with Section 100(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman proposed and it was agreed by the Committee to consider a further application for Strategic Initiatives Budget funding from the 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest.

Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive (Designate) submitted a report (copy circulated) bringing forward a total of 4 recommendations relating to the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that:-

i) approval be given to the 3 proposals for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest as detailed on Annex 1 to the report at a total value of £1,500; and

ii) consideration of the proposal in respect of St. Aidan's Art Group as detailed on Annex 1A be deferred to the next meeting of the Area Committee scheduled for 5th March, 2009.

Executive Summaries of the Meetings of the Coalfield Area Forum

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Coalfield Forum held on 28th October, 2008 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that the Executive Summary of the Meeting of the Coalfield Area Forum held on 28th October, 2008 be received and noted.

Moor House

Mr. David Smith, Housing Strategy Manager, was in attendance and proceeded to provide Members with a verbal update on the extra care development on the Moor House site.

Mr. Smith advised that Moor House Council Home for Older Persons was now closed. Demolition of the building had been completed at the end of October and no complaints had been received in respect of the demolition work. All residents had been successfully relocated to alternative housing. Work was due to start on the housing scheme in February and the development was scheduled to open in April 2010. The Local Development Control Sub-Committee had approved the full planning application at the meeting held at the end of November 2008.

In response to Councillor Tate, Mr. Smith confirmed that the scheme would have a library, restaurant/bistro and there would be a range of events and activities taking place on the site; the aim being to play an active part in the community and attract local people in to use the facilities. It would be a mixed tenure scheme and provide a vital resource for the locality.

In response to Councillor Anderson, Mr. Smith advised that a name for the development based on historical research carried out was “Bramble Hollow”. A lot of consultation on the scheme would be taking place at the end of February/beginning of March, once the developers move onto the site in February.

8. RESOLVED that the information on the development be received and noted.

Festivals and Events in Sunderland

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an update regarding events activity that took place within the City, including the Coalfield Area, for the period 1st April – 31st August, 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Ann Scott, Principal Librarian – Library Operations, briefed the Committee on the report.

Councillor Rolph commented that she was pleased that it had been acknowledged that Houghton Feast needed to be enhanced. She referred to paragraph 5.4 of the report concerning the Sunderland Music in the City framework and commented that St. Michael's All Angels Church in Houghton would provide a fabulous live venue for music in the City and that the acoustics of the building were great.

9. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Sport and Leisure in the Coalfield Area

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) providing the Coalfield Area Committee with information relating to provision of Sport and Leisure Services.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Julie Russell, Sport and Leisure Partnership Manager, briefed the Committee on the report. She referred the Committee to Appendix 1 which detailed the sites identified for the Play Pathfinder Project in the Coalfield area. Ms. Russell advised that the timescale for the developments was tight in that they needed to be out of the ground by 31st March, 2009. She informed the Committee that the Strategy had identified 28 sites Citywide for development and improvement by 2010. She invited Members to provide feedback on the locations they considered would benefit from future investment in play provision.

Councillor Rolph congratulated the department for the work on play provision in the Fence Houses area.

Councillor Heron advised that football pitches in the Hetton Downs area were a concern. The pitches were ungraded as there were no changing facilities. In respect of play areas he referred Ms. Russell to input on the Hetton Downs Action Plan and the Kirklea playing field.

10. RESOLVED that the report and the comments detailed above be received and noted.

Heritage Open Days – Post Event 2008

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) updating Members on Heritage Open Days 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Ann Scott, Principal Librarian – Library Operations briefed the Committee on the report.

11. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) D. RICHARDSON,
Chairman.