

30 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on 2010/11 Priority: Review of Greenspace Strategy

1. Why has it come to Committee?

- 1.1 The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan (**Annex 1**).

2. Report on the Coalfield Area Workshop

- 2.1 Elected members, partners, residents and officers attended a workshop, held at Easington Lane Community Access Point in January 2011. The purpose was:
- 1) To explain progress on the Green space Audit and demonstrate improvements made since the first consultation in October 2010
 - 2) To gain a better understanding on the local value of green spaces. This included:
 - scoring and mapping all green space sites in terms of their quality and local value, and making sure that the scoring is correct
 - Asking what the most important types of greenspace are in the area
 - Asking what makes a greenspace site valuable to local people
 - Asking what types of greenspace people would like to see more of
 - Asking how far local people would travel to use different types of greenspace
 - Asking what the most important greenspaces are to local people, and what makes them so good.
- 2.2 During the workshop a variety of maps were displayed to participants, who were then asked to individually identify issues relating to the above questions, and to independently vote on their preferences. The full results of the Workshop have been sent to members previously, and are available on request.
- 2.3 The Workshop was open to all and initial results have proven to be very beneficial to help frame an online survey on Greenspace value. Those attending agreed that the value survey should be extended for a number of months to enable a much wider range of responses to be received. It is now proposed to commence the online survey as soon as possible (with paper copies available on request) and to work with schools and community groups further in Spring and early Summer. The results will feed into the Greenspace and Green Infrastructure Strategy due to be complete at the end of 2011. It is also intended to publicise the draft results on individual site value for public scrutiny in the summer.
- 2.4 A training session on Green Infrastructure was also held in March for Councillors at the Crowtree Leisure Centre. Dr Ingo Schuder from Natural England carried out the training, which helped to introduce and explain the objectives and scope of Green Infrastructure and to demonstrate its relevance to local neighbourhood improvement.

Recommendation:

- Note the information regarding the second workshop and receive further updates regarding the progress of the Greenspace and Green Infrastructure Strategy.

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30 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on Regeneration at Rectory Park

1. Why has it come to Committee?

- 1.1 The report provides an update of progress on the Regeneration at Rectory Park, Houghton.

2. Background

- 2.1 Rectory Park is located on a site which has been a garden to the old rectory since the 12th Century. Over the past 800 years the site has evolved continually to give us a relatively modern Park on an ancient site, however, the Park has fallen into disrepair and is in need of extensive works to curtail an ongoing erosion of the facility. The Friends of Rectory Park Group, together with Coalfield Area Councillors and residents from the local community have been meeting for some period of time resulting in Officers of City Services and the Chief Executive becoming involved towards the development of a masterplan for the Park.
- 2.2 With the support of the Deputy Manager of Planning Implementation, a masterplan was drawn up for the park and a number of meetings with the Friends of Rectory Park have directed the development of work to be carried out. The Friends Group has expanded with the involvement of Planning Implementation, Property Services and Property Maintenance together with City Services parks staff, the City Arboriculturist and, through the Conservation Officer, English Heritage. The work will be carried out in a phased approach to allow time and resources to be invested into raising the relevant amount of funding.
- 2.3 To date, bids to the following Sunderland City Council funding streams have been successful in providing financial assistance:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Community Chest | £1,600 |
| SIB (Strategic Investment Budget) | £50,000 |
| SIP (Strategic Improvement Plan) | £4,000 |

The Coalfield Area Committee approved all of the above applications and were keen to provide this funding and offer support to ensure some early results were achieved and also enable the Friends of Rectory Park to apply for further funding from alternative sources to deliver future phases.

3. Progress

- 3.1 As part of phase 1 there has been a significant amount of work carried out. The toilet block has been demolished and extensive repair work is being carried out to rebuild the stone wall and associated railings. Tree works have taken place in two phases and a number of minor works including the removal of redundant shrubs and litter bins have taken place. The Tithe Barn roof has been repaired to a high standard and the works to the fountain have been started. Other works including bulb planting with the Friends group and local school children has taken place and will continue as the project progresses.

Recommendation

That the update is noted and Committee agree to receive a further update as part of the Annual Report in June 2011

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30 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on 2010/11 Priority: Heritage

1 Why has it come to Committee?

The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan (**Annex 1**).

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that as part of taking forward Heritage as a priority for the Coalfield area, it was agreed to carry out an audit/study which would investigate the heritage offer within the Coalfields area to provide recommendations into the future delivery of the heritage agenda within the Coalfield area.
- 2.2 As part of the process the necessary procurement regulations were adhered to and in December 2010 North of England Civic Trust (NECT) were awarded the contract to carry out the study.
- 2.3 Heritage within Sunderland is an area of continuing growth and the Coalfields area has its own very distinctive and individual range of heritage assets and activities, for which there is a strong sense of pride.
- 2.4 In order to develop the heritage offer NECT were tasked with the following:
- To carry out a full audit of current available collections, memorabilia, records, archives and built heritage within the Coalfield area,
 - A full review of the current heritage offer in the area, assessing the individual strengths and weaknesses of the heritage assets, collections and records relating to the Coalfields and how they contribute to the area and the City.
 - Assess the added value of collaboration between heritage sites and assets within the area, including guidance on volunteers, management and governance etc
 - Assess current demand/usage and how they can be further developed
 - Set out a proposed way forward for the heritage agenda, identifying resources, risks, contingencies and benefits.
 - Submit proposals for future heritage projects within the Coalfields area that would allow local, voluntary and community groups to be able to deliver and engage and that would have physical outcomes that benefit the local community.

3 Progress

- 3.1 In order to fulfill the contract NECT have carried out the following:
- 5 public consultation events held
 - Approximately 150 questionnaires filled in
 - 30+ conversations with relevant contacts (ongoing)
 - Gazetteer/audit of collections ongoing
 - Report on tourism offer and potential completed
- 3.2 The public consultation events mostly took the form of drop-in events, at which 7 questions were asked to gain a snapshot of local views on heritage, which included:
- What does heritage mean to you?
 - What sort of heritage buildings or places are you familiar with in the Coalfield area?
 - What about things like traditional music, food and things which aren't buildings or places?
 - Are you involved in any sort of heritage activities at the moment?

- Have you ever been to a Heritage Open Days event?
 - If you were planning a day out, where would you get/look for information about where to go?
 - What sort of things do you like to do in your free time?
- 3.3 The Hetton Centre and Easington Lane Community Access Point (ELCAP) events proved most successful, with Hetton providing the most diverse audience and ELCAP having the most interest in heritage, particularly in coalmining.
- 3.4 The event at Dubmire Primary School was aimed primarily at children, with the opportunity for them to try stone carving, and a photo competition was organised, to see how many buildings/places they knew in the area. This proved very useful in gauging awareness, however NECT did not manage to complete a large number of adult questionnaires.
- 3.5 The event at Shiney Row Advice Project was not initially a success, as no publicity was visible at the venue and with only 2 people turning up for the event. NECT did however manage to achieve results by going out onto the street and asking people to complete questionnaires. They were therefore able to gauge awareness from a wide range of people, not just those with a particular interest in heritage.
- 3.6 A sample of the general findings to date include:
- There is much enthusiasm for this topic amongst those spoken to, and many are very active in their particular neighbourhoods.
 - There is currently a wide range of groups, individuals and activities, and a degree of working together at a very local level.
 - A general lack of awareness of heritage, frequent inability to name examples of local heritage (in some cases this could be due to over-familiarity with local buildings/places)
 - People do not readily identify with the word 'heritage', but do with the word 'history'.
 - When discussing 'heritage', themes generated tended to revolve around 'community', 'continuity', 'roots' and 'civic pride'.
 - Surprisingly low level of awareness of coalmining heritage, except for 50+ age bracket.
 - Very low awareness of Heritage Open Days.
 - Most people do visit historic buildings in their free time – not as a particular interest, generally as part of their activities during a day out/on holiday.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 NECT are currently in the process of completing their initial findings and held a further Stakeholder meeting on Thursday 24 March.
- 4.2 A final report will now be produced by NECT which will then be submitted to Area Committee for consideration and approval. The report will give the full findings from the study, along with a gazetteer of collections and organisations and will outline the way forward in terms of recommendations for future heritage priorities for the Coalfield area.
- 4.3 Area Committee along with the Heritage Task and Finish Group will then be asked to agree what priorities from the study should be taken forward, in order to develop a work plan for the coming year.

Recommendation:

- Note the report
- Agree to consider the outcomes of the final report to inform future actions

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30 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on 2010/11 Priority: Local Shopping Centres (Coalfield Shopping Initiative)

1 Why has it come to Committee?

The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan (**Annex 1**).

2 Progress report on 2010/11 priority: Local Shopping Centres

Following the agreement of Area Committee to progress with the first stage of the Coalfield Shopping Initiative, work has progressed on the three elements of the scoping exercise.

2.1 Data Collection - Work is underway to establish a database of businesses in the three identified locations – Houghton, Hetton and Shiney Row to assist with the occupier surveys. This has involved identifying known sources of data, such as business databases, together with on-site research and primary data collection. The results of which will produce a comprehensive occupier database for each of the areas.

2.2 Survey - The survey work is divided into two parts – street surveys of shoppers/visitors and a survey of occupier perceptions and retail potential. Both the shopper and the occupier survey questionnaires have been designed, and following consultation with retail consultancy company, BSupplied, further revisions have been made to make the survey as user friendly and informative as possible.

Unfortunately, with the survey coinciding with the Census survey, we were initially advised to delay the shopper survey until after the completion of the Census work. After discussions with the Councils Consultation team, agreement has now been reached to allow the survey to progress alongside the Census completion. It is hoped to commence this work in early April 2011. The occupier survey will also commence in April.

2.3 Best Practice Review - Alongside the primary research, examples of good (and bad) practice have been identified to assist in identifying future priorities for the Coalfield Shopping Initiative. These examples have included a mix of Capital Investments (such as retail incubators), business support activities, as well as marketing promotions and specialists activities, such as markets and the Arts. A summary of the best practice will be provided alongside the survey analysis.

3 Next Steps

The project is progressing steadily, but is currently behind the original anticipated schedule for a variety of reasons. The Business Investment Team (BIT) Service Review agreed that the service will be re-focused and resources should be aligned with the Economic Masterplan priorities. A Work Programme is currently in development to ensure that all projects are completed during the transfer to the new team. The Task and Result group for Local Shopping Centres will meet on 13 April 2011.

Recommendation:

- Note the report

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30 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on 2010/11 Priority: Youth Disorder

1 Why has it come to Committee?

The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan (**Annex 1**).

2 Progress report on 2010/11 priority: Youth Disorder

As reported at the January 2011 Area Committee meeting, the XL youth village steering group has extended its membership and remit to include the Task and Result group for Youth Disorder. All members are invited to attend and receive minutes of the meetings.

The group has met twice since the last Area Committee and it has been recognised that there are two distinct elements of ensuring there is adequate youth provision. The first is to provide a quality youth service which is available and accessible to all young people. The second is to provide diversionary activities to specifically target areas of high levels of youth disorder, with the aim being to reduce reported youth disorder. The two elements need to be delivered in a co-ordinated way but need to be recognised as being for different audiences with different outcomes.

The first element as described above is provided by Sunderland North Community Business Centre (SNCBC) as mainstream provision commissioned by the Youth Development Group. The second element is where the current gap is and the Task and Result group have discussed in detail the type of provision required.

Using evidence provided by partners, including Northumbria Police, it has been found that the current hotspots of disorder are located at: a) Easington Lane (particularly around the High Street), b) Houghton Racecourse Estate and c) Penshaw.

The Task and Result group recommend that a pilot project is delivered in the three areas above. The project will provide activities in each location tailored to the need of that particular area. The activities provided will be used to engage and communicate with those young people identified as most at risk of causing nuisance or anti social behaviour, with the longer term plan to support them to engage in existing mainstream provision or other positive activity. Therefore the pilot project will be delivered in partnership with, and alongside, existing and contracted youth services.

3 Next steps

An application for SIB is presented to this meeting. A responsive project to reduce youth disorder and anti social behaviour will be delivered. The Youth Disorder Task and Result group will 'steer' the project to ensure it is in line with evidenced need.

Recommendation

That the application for SIB is considered under item 3g Annex 1a of this report

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30 MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY ACTION IN COALFIELD – PROGRESS REVIEW

Progress Report on 2010/11 Priority: Allotments

1 Why has it come to Committee?

The report provides an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2010/11) work plan (**Annex 1**).

2 Progress report on 2010/11 priority: Allotments

The last meeting of Coalfield Area Committee agreed that improvements to allotments be included in Phase 2 of the Coalfield in Bloom project. The project is now moving to Phase 2 under the project title 'Coalfield Community Challenge' (SIB application at Annex 1a). This is to ensure that current issues and priorities (including allotments) can be considered and delivered in conjunction with the local community and partners via the Area Network.

Information from the Scrutiny Policy Review and allotments and parks officers has been collected and reviewed and will form the basis of developing improvement of allotments in the Coalfield area. Discussions have taken place with the Head of Street Scene and City Services officers and it has been agreed that the Operations Manager responsible for allotments will lead a Task and Result group to develop and implement improvements.

The Area Officer has asked for expressions of interest from those who wish to be part of the Task and Result Group. Those who expressed an interest are listed below:

- Councillor Kath Rolph, Houghton ward
- Councillor Bob Heron, Copt Hill ward
- Councillor Derrick Smith, Copt Hill ward
- Councillor Dennis Richardson, Houghton ward
- Councillor John Scott, Shiney Row ward
- Gerry Roll, Parks Operations Manager, City Services (will lead on the allotment priority)
- Ethel Wilson, Allotments Officer, City Services
- Susan Brown, Community Co-ordinator, City Services
- Nichola Hesselwood, Groundwork
- Melanie Caldwell, Gentoo

3 Next steps

The allotment Task and Result Group will meet in early April to develop an action plan to improve allotment sites in the Coalfield. Ideas to be further explored include:

- Offering derelict plots to those on the waiting list in return for a rent free period
- Community clean up of relevant plots to use as community gardens
- Volunteer clean up events to bring derelict plots back into use
- Review of the waiting lists
- Development of a further SIB application to include improvements to two pilot sites
- Address inappropriate use of plots

Recommendation

- Agree the Task and Result Group membership

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