

**At a meeting of the COALFIELD AREA COMMITTEE held in the Mayor's Parlour at City Hall, Sunderland on WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2022 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Dodds, Heron (Vice Chair), K. Johnston, N. MacKnight, Mason-Gage, Price, Rowntree, D. Snowdon, Speding and Thornton

**Also Present:-**

Jill Colbert	Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services	Sunderland City Council
Dave Geddes	Member of the Public	
Lindsey Gibson	Member of the Public	
Bob Heron	Member of the Public	
Pauline Hopper	Area Community Development Lead, Coalfield	Sunderland City Council
Toni Longstaff	Area Support Assistant	Sunderland City Council
Nic Marko	Local Democracy Reporter	
Andrew Nelson	Station Manager	Tyne and Wear Fire Service
Patrick Scott	Acting Inspector	Northumbria Police
Sandra Stephenson	VCS Community Support Officer	
Donna Thomas	Member of the Public and Houghton le Spring Residents Group	
Christine Tilley	Community Governance Services Team Leader	Sunderland City Council
Susan Waterson	Member of the Public	

**Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Coalfield Area Committee meeting and introductions were made.

The Chairman referred to the recent death of former Councillor Florence Anderson who had been a former Member of the Area Committee for a number of years and all those present stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to her.

The Chairman advised the Committee that this was Councillor N. MacKnight's last meeting as he was not seeking re-election at the May Local Government Elections. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked Councillor MacKnight for his support and input into the work of the Area Committee and wished him well for the future.

Councillor MacKnight suitably replied.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Scott, Councillor Little, Hetton Town Council representative, Ellen Bewick, Area Network Representative, Shiney Advice and Resource Project (ShARP), Wendy Cook, Area Network Representative, Sunderland North Community Business Centre, Michael Donachie, Head of Operations, Gentoo, Julie McBurnie, Environmental Services Manager, Sunderland City Council and Steve Passey, Inspector, Neighbourhood Policing Southern, Northumbria Police.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The following declaration was received:-

Item 4 – Area Budgets Report – Coalfields Pride

Councillor Thornton made an open declaration in respect of the above application as Chair of the Coalfields LGBT+ Support Group and she left the meeting prior to any discussion on the application and took no part in any decisions on funding which might affect the organisation.

### **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **Neighbourhood and Community Board Report**

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated), which provided an annual update of the Coalfield Neighbourhood Investment Plan Delivery Plan 2020-2023 and provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair of the Coalfield Neighbourhood and Community Board, Councillor Heron highlighted a number of projects including support the VCS to host community events and activities, the project to tackle empty properties and the project to improve parks and play areas, taking on board the results of the consultation with residents with a top suggestion being to improve lighting in parks which would be done in Hetton Park. Councillor Heron highlighted that £100,000 had been allocated to Houghton Rectory Park by the Area Committee and a project steering group had been formed to consider the results of the consultation to develop a park plan.

Councillor Heron also mentioned the project to carry out environmental improvements and the development of a 'Clean it, Green it' project to encourage volunteering and resident participation and the installation of the first 'Happy to Chat' benches created in Hetton in partnership with Hetton New Dawn to help reduce social isolation. Councillor Heron referred the Committee to the work which the Stephenson Trail Task Group was doing to improve the route of the trail.

The Committee viewed a short video setting out the achievements of the projects and the sessions delivered by way of showing progress against the Area Priorities.

The Chair thanked the VCS for all the work they had done and the support they had provided to the community.

Councillor Speding advised that he would like to propose two schemes for the Shiney Row ward.

The Chair advised that the schemes could be discussed at the next meeting of the Neighbourhood and Community Board on 30<sup>th</sup> March and asked that Councillor Speding provide the details in advance to Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead.

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

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the Highways Maintenance 2022/23 programme as highlighted in bold in Annex 1 of the report be approved;
- ii) the progress and performance update regarding the Coalfield Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/23 be noted and the proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 2, be approved; and
- iii) the Area Committee video update be noted.

### **Tyne and Wear Fire Service Update**

Station Manager Andrew Nelson, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) submitted a report (copy circulated), providing Performance Monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee area from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 compared with the same period the previous year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Station Manager Nelson highlighted that there had been no deaths recorded during the reporting period. He also highlighted that there were 11 deliberate property fires, a decrease of 35% from last year. Operational crews and the prevention education department had reinstated safe and well visits as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of September. There had been a decrease of 11% overall in secondary fires. During the reporting period TWFRS had attended 201 deliberate secondary fires compared to 228 over the same period last year. It was hoped that the multi-agency HALO project recently launched would assist in the further reduction of secondary fires looking ahead to the following year.

Station Manager Nelson pointed out that crews from Rainton community fire station were continuing to work with partners and be proactive to help reduce incidents as highlighted in the report. Attacks on emergency services were on the increase across

the Tyne and Wear service area. Additional fire safety/ASB school talks had taken place at Hetton School and Houghton Kepier school. Moving forward, work with Inspector Passey and his team to carry out joint education sessions with local schools was currently being developed with the intention of reducing the number of attacks on blue light responders and reducing ASB.

Station Manager Nelson highlighted the FireStoppers reporting details included in the report.

Councillors Speding and Mason-Gage drew attention to a piece of private land located in the Shiney Row ward at the end of Best View where regular fires were being started and causing a nuisance.

Station Manager Nelson undertook to feed this information into the Team and ask them to get in touch with the land owner to address the issues being caused there. He also suggested meeting the Councillors at the location to take this forward.

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

3. RESOLVED that the content of the report be received and noted.

### **Northumbria Police Update**

Inspector Passey, Neighbourhood Policing Southern, Northumbria Police submitted a report (copy circulated), providing an overview of crime in the Coalfield area in relation to burglary, criminal damage, anti-social behaviour and motorcycle disorder.

Acting Inspector Patrick Scott, Northumbria Police highlighted that since the last Area Committee meeting there had been an increase in overall crime figures by 3% which in real terms amounted to only 7 additional crimes reported during the period. There had been a significant increase in Drug Crime of 73% and he stated that the Police were attributing this rise in drug crime to the good proactive work they had done in targeting drug misuse, as the vast majority of drug crimes were only recorded following Police involvement.

Acting Inspector Scott drew attention to the point that Houghton currently had the highest burglary rate in the Sunderland City region.

Councillor Heron commented that the number of burglaries was very worrying and enquired whether there was anyone supporting those people affected.

Acting Inspector Scott advised that a large proportion of the burglaries were from sheds and empty properties. However, all victims of domestic burglary were referred to Victims First Northumbria which carried out a needs assessment and provided support, care and advice and monitored the victims constantly.

In relation to the Wear Here for You Bus, Jill Colbert, Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services clarified that the bus was not an antisocial behaviour bus but was funded to provide universal services for all children and young people.

Councillor Snowdon reported that social media and the local newspaper had reported back in January the top 10 hotspots which included Hunter Street and Maple Terrace and asked if any feedback could be provided on this.

Acting Inspector Scott stated that he did not have any information with him in relation to the above and the above streets had not featured that morning. He advised that it would depend on the time period being looked at and that he would look into this and feedback to the Committee.

The Chair asked that the information be provided to Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead who would forward the information to Members of the Committee.

In response to Councillor MacKnight, Acting Inspector Scott advised that in relation to commercial burglaries the offenders locked up were not the ones who had committed the most recent cases and that they were targeting some individuals and intelligence gathering. The next day there was an additional operation being undertaken in the area. He was able to provide a breakdown of residential and commercial burglaries if required.

Councillor MacKnight commented that 96% of the population felt safe in their homes and therefore felt that this showed that something right was being done.

Councillor Speding commented on the Council's recently launched website to report incidents such as abandoned vehicles and quoted a particular case which resulted in the vehicle being moved from one place to 20 yards further up the road and the nuisance it was causing had not been addressed.

Acting Inspector Scott advised that there was a little bit of overlap between the Council and the Police responsibilities working with the DVLA in cases like this and suggested that information sharing might yield a better response or outcome and that he would have a conversation with the relevant Council department.

Councillor Johnston commented on the offences being caused by repeat offenders at Gravel Walks and that it was frustrating due to the amount of resources which had gone into the area and that Councillors and the Police needed to be backed up by the Courts with stiffer sentences in order to bring the numbers down.

Members having considered the report and the Chairman having thanked Acting Inspector Scott for his attendance, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

### **Coalfield Voluntary and Community Sector Network Update**

Ms Sandra Stephenson, VCS Community Support Officer advised that the Network had met twice since the last Coalfield Area Committee meeting in December. The meetings had been hybrid meetings in that some attendees had attended in person and others on Teams.

Ms Stephenson provided the Committee with a verbal update on the work of the Coalfield VCS Network, advising that an update on how to access services on Mental Health by the City Council had been provided at one of the meetings.

Ms Stephenson advised that Paul Finch was retiring as a VCS representative and passed on thanks to him for the contribution made. A presentation had been made on what being a VCS representative would entail.

Ms Stephenson advised that at the early March meeting, the VCS Network had had discussions on governance models to best determine its needs and this would be discussed at a further meeting. They had received a number of applications and in April they would select a new VCS representative. Ms Stephenson thanked everyone who had taken part.

The Chairman having thanked Ms Stephenson for the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

### **Gentoo Update**

The Chairman advised that as Mr Michael Donachie, Head of Operations, Gentoo had submitted his apologies for the meeting, a written report would be circulated to the Members of the Committee providing an update on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

6. RESOLVED that the above information be received and noted and that the report be circulated accordingly.

### **Coalfield Area Budget Report**

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience, Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated), providing a financial statement as an updated position on progress in relation to allocating Area Committee Neighbourhood Funding, Neighbourhood Investment Plan Capital Programme and Community Chest and presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Pauline Hopper, Coalfield Area Community Development Lead, presented the report, drawing the Committee's attention to the current financial position of the Area Committee Neighbourhood Fund 2021/2022 as set out in paragraph 2.1.

Ms Hopper advised that the Coalfield Area Committee currently had £189,802 Neighbourhood Funding available for capital and revenue projects. There were three applications to the Neighbourhood Fund for consideration set out in paragraph 2.3 with further detail at Annex 1. The total Neighbourhood Fund budget requested for approval was £180,797 and if approved, the remaining balance would be £5.

Ms Hopper referred Members to paragraph 2.5 asking the Committee to make a Call for Projects via the Coalfield VCS Network, inviting organisations to apply for up to £5,000 per project for holiday activities for children and young people.

Ms Jill Colbert, Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director of Children's Services, Sunderland City Council, briefed Members on the provision previously in place to help parents in relation to holiday activities for children and young people and the Holiday Activity Fund Government scheme which targeted families, advising that provision was in place for the Easter holidays. Ms Colbert stressed the importance of lining things up between the Council, Together for Children and whatever the Area Committee was looking to fund so that there was no duplication and also of keeping to nutrition standards in relation to what was provided.

Councillor MacKnight stated that it was gratifying to be able to feed children doing activities and was pleased with the work the Area Committee had done previously.

Ms Hopper advised that the Area Committee projects would target families not necessarily eligible for Free School Meals and that she would write this into the project brief and take Ms Colbert's comments into consideration.

Ms Hopper advised that Coalfield Area Committee had been allocated £500,000 for capital developments which complemented the Neighbourhood Investment Plan. The table at 3.1 detailed the projects already funded and she pointed out that there was a remaining balance of £243,039. There were one funding proposal presented to Area Committee for consideration that evening from the Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme called 'Lighting up Rectory Park' for £35,000 which was set out in paragraph 3.4. If approved the remaining balance would be £208,039.

Ms Hopper referred Members to paragraph 4 of the report detailing the Community Chest budget approvals and advised that since the agenda had been published more project proposals had been submitted and the Community Chest was just about all allocated.

Councillor MacKnight commented that it had been gratifying to go out and consult with people on what they wanted to see done in Rectory Park, which had been done in face-to-face meetings, online and on Facebook.

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

7. RESOLVED that:-
  - a) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1, be noted;
  - b) the two Neighbourhood Fund applications in respect of an ASB Officer and Coalfields Pride for £79,840 and £9,957 respectively, as set out in section 2.3 and detailed at Annex 1, be approved;
  - c) the Neighbourhood Funding of £100,000 be aligned to the 'Clean it, Green it' project, as set out in section 2.3 and detailed at Annex 1;
  - d) the Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme application 'Lighting up Rectory Park' for £35,000, as set out in section 3.4 and detailed at Annex 2, be approved;
  - e) a Call for Projects be made inviting organisations to apply for up to £5,000 per project for holiday activities for children and young people; the applications to be presented to the June 2022 Area Committee for funding approval; and
  - f) the Community Chest approvals supported from 2021/2022, as detailed in Annex 3, be noted.

### **Current Planning Applications (Coalfields Area)**

A schedule (copy circulated) of current planning applications lodged during the period 1<sup>st</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 was submitted for Members' information only.

(For copy schedule – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the schedule be received and noted.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and participation at the meeting.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN,  
Chairman.