

AREA 1 FORUM

Monday,
6 November 2006
6.30 p.m.

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

AGENDA and REPORTS

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Democratic Services



01388 816166

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To notify the Chairman if you have an interest in any of the following items.

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2006. (Pages 3 - 10)

4. SEDGFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - THE SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT

Report of Head of Strategy and Regeneration. (Pages 11 - 14)

5. REVIEW OF AREA FORUMS

To seek views regarding the proposals set out in the attached report. (Pages 15 - 40)

6. POLICE REPORT (LOCAL ISSUES AND ROAD SAFETY)

A representative of Spennymoor Police will attend the meeting to give a report on crime statistics and initiatives in the area and road safety.

7. QUESTIONS

The Chairman will take questions from the floor.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 11th December 2006 at 6.30 p.m. at Spennymoor Town Hall

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To consider any other business which, with the consent of the Chairman, may be submitted. Representatives are respectfully requested to give the Chief Executive notice of items to be raised under this heading no later than 12 noon on the Friday preceding the meeting in order that consultation may take place with the Chairman who will determine whether the item will be accepted.

Brian Allen
Chief Executive

Council Offices
SPENNYMOOR
27th October 2006

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection in relation to this Agenda and associated papers should contact Mrs. Gillian Garrigan, Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240 ggarrigan.sedgefield.gov.uk

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Distribution List

Sedgefield Borough Council

Councillor J. M. Khan (Chairman)
Councillor A. Smith (Vice-Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. A. M. Armstrong, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray
M. T. B Jones, B.M. Ord, G.W. Scott, Mrs. C. Sproat, K. Thompson and W. Waters

Spennymoor Town Council

Councillors Miss.S.L. Armstrong and Mrs. M. Smith

Durham County Council

Councillors E. Foster and N.C. Foster

Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive School Council

,Jan Geldard and Nicholas Wood

Spennymoor Comprehensive School Council

S. McEwan , J. Palmer and P. Lenagh

Spennymoor Police

Inspector A. Green

County Durham Primary Care Trust

Mrs. M. Fordham

Tudhoe Community Centre

J. Smith

New Life Community Church

R. Gibson

CAVOS

G. Magill

Spennymoor Pub Watch

C. Fletcher

Spennymoor Chamber of Trade

J. Welsh

Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator

Mrs. E. Croft

The Oaks Residents Association

S. Bright

St. Pauls Gardens Residents Association

D. Pattison

Eden Residents Association

Mrs. C. Bell

MARG

Ms. T. Pollard

Greenways Residents Association

A. Lamb

B. Lamb

P. Lawton

OTHERS

Mr. B. Argyle

Mrs. M. Bower

Mrs. Brown

Mr. S. Case

Mr. D. Gordon

Mrs. M. Khan-Willis

Mrs. E. Maddison

Mr. P. Moore

Mrs. A. Mumford

Mr. K. Pritchard

Mr. J. Redman

Mrs. A. Robinson

Mr. F. Ryder

Mrs. J. Slater

Mrs. A. Stapleton

Mr. R. Stewart

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

AREA 1 FORUM

Middlestone Moor
Community Centre,

Monday,
4 September 2006

Time: 6.30 p.m.

- Present:** Councillor J.M. Khan (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and
- Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor Mrs. B. Graham – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor A. Gray – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor B.M. Ord – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor G.W. Scott – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor A. Smith – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor Mrs. C. Sproat – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor K. Thompson – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor W. Waters – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Inspector A. Green - Durham Constabulary
 - Councillor E. Foster - Durham County Council
 - Councillor N. Foster - Durham County Council
 - A. Lamb - Greenways Residents Association
 - S. Brown - Middlestone Moor Community Centre
 - E. Croft - Neighbourhood Watch
 - M. Fordham - Sedgefield PCT
 - A. Learmonth - Sedgefield PCT
 - Councillor Miss S. Armstrong - Spennymoor Town Council
 - Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison - Elected Member Spennymoor Ward,
Spennymoor Town Council
 - B. Bowman - Member of the Public
 - H.W. Bowman - Member of the Public
 - D. Gordon - Member of the Public
 - P. Lauder - Member of the Public
 - A. Shell - Member of the Public

In

Attendance: R. Clayton, H. Dent and G. Garrigan

Apologies: Councillor M.T.B. Jones - Sedgefield Borough Council
Mrs. G. Wills - Sedgefield Primary Care Trust

AF(1)8/06 RONNIE CAMPION

A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect for Ronnie
Campion, former Chairman of Sedgefield Borough Council, who had died
on Sunday 3rd September 2006.

AF(1)9/06 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2006 were confirmed as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

POLICE REPORT (LOCAL ISSUES AND ROAD SAFETY)

Inspector Adrian Green was present at the meeting to give details of crime figures for the area.

The reported crime figures for June and July 2006 were as follows:

<u>Type of Crime :</u>	<u>June 2006 :</u>	<u>July 2006 :</u>
Total Crime	133	138
Dwelling Burglary	3	2
Burglary Other	13	8
Vehicle Crime	11	9
Criminal Damage	41	47
Violent Crime	24	41
Theft	33	

It was reported that the crime detection rate as a percentage had improved. The figure for July was 29.7% compared with 27.8% for June.

Members were informed that a number of burglaries had been committed by people posing as officials from Water/Gas Companies, and were advised to be vigilant.

Concern was expressed regarding the problem of young boys on motor cycles in the Durham Road area. It was reported that Police, subject to their legal department's approval, planned to obtain CCTV footage of the cyclists and request the public to identify them, with a view to obtaining anti-social behaviour orders.

Specific reference was made to Police attendance at incidents and staffing levels. It was pointed out that all incidents were prioritised and the responses were graded. With regard to staffing, it was reported that the existing vacancies should soon be filled and it was anticipated an additional PCSO should be in post by the first quarter of next year.

It was reported that there had been 34 recorded damage only accidents, 10 minor injury accidents and no fatal or serious injury accidents for the period 5th June to 4th September 2006.

Local residents expressed concern regarding vehicles crossing the by-pass when turning right on leaving Jewitts. It was reported that the Police had no power to prohibit motorists from turning right, however, Jewitts had been asked to request all drivers to proceed to the roundabout rather than turn right. It was pointed out that the County Council's Highways Department and Durham Constabulary Traffic Management were aware of local residents concerns and had the matter under review.

Concern was expressed regarding the taxi rank outside the Cube. It was pointed out that on Friday and Saturday nights the queue of taxis often

encroached on the roundabout, obstructing the highway and it was requested that enforcement action be taken.

Reference was also made to the fact that a number of retailers were parking their vehicles outside their shops all day, ignoring waiting restrictions. It was requested that enforcement action be taken.

The Forum's attention was drawn to a recent Department of Transport Circular, which required that the local speed limits on all A and B class roads be reviewed by 2011.

AF(1)11/06

EVALUATION OF OPERATION BOAZ - ST PAULS/EDEN ROAD AREA, SPENNYMOOR

Helen Dent, Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Manager, attended the meeting to give details of the above operation.

The Forum was informed that the purpose of the operation was to tackle issues that impacted on the community's quality of life such as:

- Criminality
- The fear of crime
- Anti-social behaviour
- The fear of anti-social behaviour
- Environmental Issues
- Youth provisions

It was noted that four joint operations were planned to take place within the Borough each year and would be conducted in four phases:

- Week 1 – Education and Advice in the community
- Weeks 2 and 3 – Enforcement and clean up
- Week 4 – Media/publicity and post operation evaluation

The operations involved the following:

- Police Authority
- SBC Neighbourhood Wardens, Environmental Health, Street Scene, Licensing and Leisure Services,
- Fire and Rescue Service
- DVLA
- Durham County Council Trading Standards

It was reported that Operation Boaz had commenced with a walkabout around the Eden Road and St. Pauls areas of Spennymoor to enable residents to express their concerns or make suggestions for their area. Unfortunately only two residents had attended the walkabout, however, the Resident Associations in the areas and local Councillors had provided details of their concerns/ suggestions.

As a result of the walkabout, a number of environmental issues were identified, which had since been addressed by SBC Street Cleansing Team.

In the Eden Road area, weed spraying had been undertaken on the paths, stickers had been placed on all wheelie bins detailing collection days, rubbish in local car parks had been removed, graffiti on garages at the back of Water Board Field had also been removed and street signs had been replaced where damaged or missing.

With regard to the St. Paul's area, fencing at the rear of St. Paul's Close play area had been restored and a new litter bin had been placed outside Rosa Street Primary School. It was noted that 11.36 tonnes of domestic waste had been removed during the planned clean-up, which had resulted in many of the back streets and yards looking a lot cleaner and tidier.

During the operation, over 3,940 leaflets had been distributed around the Eden Road and St. Paul's area by the Neighbourhood Wardens. The leaflets gave advice about home security, fire safety and waste collections. The CCTV van had also been deployed for 40 hours, during which time it recorded an incident that resulted in a statement being taken from the Duty Officer for an ASBO fire.

It was pointed out that no fixed penalties had been issued by the Neighbourhood Wardens during the Operation, however, since its conclusion 9 fixed penalties had been issued in respect of dog fouling, litter and fly tipping. It was also noted that a truancy street had been carried out during the Operation, which had resulted in seven school age persons being spoken to. Police officers and the Council's Licensing team had also carried out an evening of licensed premises checks.

Specific reference was made to the fact that all year 10 pupils of Spennymoor Comprehensive School had been given a presentation on anti-social behaviour and the consequences of acting in an anti-social manner. A Fire Safety and Road Safety talk had also been given to Year 8 and Year 11 pupils, which was accompanied by a road traffic collision demonstration and a kitchen fire demonstration.

Members of the Forum made reference to the use of CCTV surveillance in Spennymoor. They were of the opinion that the CCTV van used in Operation Boaz had acted as a deterrent and requested that covert cameras be deployed. It was explained that covert cameras could not be used unless authorisation had been obtained under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

AF(1)12/06

SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

Melanie Fordham attended the meeting to give an update on local health matters.

It was reported that the County Durham PCT would come into existence on 1st October 2006. Lady Anne Calman had been appointed as the

Chairman of new Trust, however, the Chief Executive appointment had not yet been finalised.

It was noted that Nigel Porter, Chief Executive of Sedgefield PCT would be taking early retirement/voluntary redundancy on 5th November 2006.

The Forum's attention was drawn to the Performance Management report that had been submitted to the PCT Board on 10th August 2006. Specific reference was made to the Ambulance Service targets and the tremendous improvement with regard to Category A call responses during the past three months.

Alyson Learmonth, Director of Public Health and Health Improvement attended the meeting to present her Annual Report.

The report had been prepared as a stimulus to action and service development that would improve health and wellbeing for the people of Sedgefield. It provided an overview of the health of the population, tracking changes since last year's report, identified inequalities which must be addressed if the gap in the health experience was not allowed to widen and made recommendations for Sedgefield, in the context of the combined County Durham and Darlington Public Health Annual Report.

The presentation covered those areas where good, steady and little progress had been made in the past year, the priorities for the Local Strategic Partnership and Practice Based Commissioning Groups, Practice Business Plans and recommendations.

AF(1)13/06 **SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION**
Ruth Clayton, Waste Management Officer, attended the meeting to give a presentation on the above.

It was explained that the Council was in the processing of developing a new Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan to take the Authority forward to 2012.

Sedgefield Borough, as the designated 'Waste Collection Authority', had a duty to provide a service for the collection of municipal waste, which included household waste and litter. Durham County Council was the designated 'Waste Disposal Authority' responsible for the disposal of all municipal waste collected within the County.

Household waste included material collected from domestic wheeled bins, plus items such as white goods, bulky waste for example furniture and carpets and garden waste. Municipal waste comprised household waste, plus commercial trade waste.

It was noted that on average, household waste within Sedgefield Borough was increasing by approximately 3% a year, and the Council was determined to take positive steps to tackle the problem.

The Forum was given details of what type of waste was found in bins. It was noted that 35% of the contents comprised of green or food waste. Waste Minimisation Initiatives such as home composting, re-usable nappies, reducing the amount of junk mail, smart shopping and bin size reduction were being examined.

Specific reference was made to a stakeholder consultation, which had been undertaken to gain an understanding of residents' views on:

- Support towards a number of waste reduction methods including alternate weekly collections
- Current level of satisfaction with the current waste collection service
- Future services residents would like to see provided.

It was reported that a questionnaire had been developed and had been delivered to houses throughout Sedgefield Borough. Copies of which were circulated at the meeting.

Members were reminded of the Council's existing waste management service which included domestic wheelie bins/trade waste, special collections, bring sites, white good collection and the Kerb It Scheme. The Council offered a free special collection service for white goods to all residents across the Borough.

It was reported that the current kerbside recycling scheme – 'Kerb It' was scheduled to expire in March 2008 and decisions needed to be made in the near future about the provision of an alternative/replacement service. It was reported that there were health and safety concerns over the manual lifting and handling of the containers both by the operatives and by the householders.

It was noted that the collection of green waste was very popular with residents, however, Durham County Council did not pay recycling credits for its collection.

Reference was made to the challenges facing the Council and the existing and future recycling and composting targets. The target for 2007 was 20% and it was anticipated that it would increase to 30% to 35% in the next couple of years.

It was reported that any system chosen needed to be convenient to use and accessible to residents financially sustainable and operationally sustainable it also must fit in with the residual waste collection service and the disposal and treatment services available. It was pointed out that the questionnaire sought the public's views on which materials they would like collected for recycling. The list included plastics.

Reference was made to the contribution to the Council's 20% recycling rate by the various collection services. It was noted that 58% came from the Kerb It Collection Scheme, 9% from Green Waste/Composting and Wood Waste, 5% from White Goods, 4% from Bring sites, 20% from

material recovered by the Thornley Digester and 4% from third party and other.

Members of the Forum queried whether there was still a need for Bring sites, given the fact that the Kerb It Scheme was now in operation. It was pointed out that the future of the Bring sites was currently being considered. The Council currently collected from 29 sites, 6 of which performed particularly well.

AF(1)14/06 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Monday 6th November 2006 at 6.30 at the Borough Council offices,
Spennymoor.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. Gillian Garrigan, Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240 ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk

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Item 4

AREA 1 FORUM

6th November 2006

Report of the Head of Strategy and Regeneration

Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme

Application Report- Spennymoor Settlement Regeneration project

Introduction

This report highlights a Local Improvement Programme (LIP) application submitted to and appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Section. The report provides information to the Area 1 Forum for their consideration and comments, which will be used to formulate a report and recommendation to the Sedgefield Borough Council cabinet in due course.

The Area 1 Forum has been allocated £836,000 of LIP capital resources between 2006 and 2009, none of which has been approved to date. Of this amount, £278,800 has been allocated to financial year 2006 / 07.

Project Background

- **Name of Project:** Spennymoor Settlement Regeneration Project
- **Name of Applicant:** Spennymoor Settlement
- **Legal Status:** Registered Charity
- **Date of Application:** 8th September 2006
- **Landlord:** Spennymoor Settlement Trustees
- **Brief Description of Project:** The project will refurbish the existing facilities at the Everyman Theatre to enable the Settlement Association to provide extra arts and community based activities to ensure that the Theatre is used to it's full extent and safeguarded for the future.
- **Requested from LIP:** Approximately £118,106 (70%)
- **Total Project Cost:** £ 168,106
- **What will the LIP be used for:** To carryout a full overall of this Grade II Listed building and surrounding external garden area to provide enhanced facilities for the community. This includes new kitchen, toilets, heating, stage electrics system to enable more productions to take place, security and emergency system to enable additional activities / opportunities to be provided as a result.

LIP Criteria

- **DCLG Definition:**

The Everyman theatre was built in 1939 and has undergone few works since then therefore the vast majority of the building is original. The building in its current state is not suitable for the majority of the activities, which have expressed an interest in locating there. The building is therefore significantly underused and the project will bring the theatre and its grounds back into effective use.

- **Community Strategy Objectives:**

The project links to three of the four community strategy objectives. These are Healthy – Improving the health and well being of local communities through the provision of greater Arts and well-being activities, Prosperous- Development of the Borough's unique cultural and tourism attractions, and Attractive –Develop and maximise the leisure and cultural facilities in the Borough.

- **Evidence of need and community support:**

A feasibility study has been carried out by CAVOS. As an integral part of this study, a questionnaire was delivered to all residents of Spennymoor and responses analysed. Households adjoining the premises and all groups using the premises have also been consulted.

A structural survey has been carried out on the building, which highlighted significant issues to be resolved in order for the building to cater for new user groups.

- **Value for money and Revenue implications:**

The applicant has applied for **£118,106 (70%)** of the total project costs. The remaining costs of £50,000 has been applied for from the Heritage Lottery Fund but not yet confirmed. Revenue costs will be covered primarily from income generation from additionally opportunities to hire the facility. All elements of the work will be tendered to ensure value for money criteria is considered as part of the process.

- **Statutory Approvals:**

Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission will be applied for.

Recommendation from the Strategy and Regeneration Section:

That the Area Forum considers the following key issues

- The relative priority of this project within the Area 1 locality and the historical importance of the building.
- The applicant has not yet supplied three quotes for the project, and as such the costs outlined in this report represent a cost estimate. The project will be subject to a full tender process before any works begin.

Subject to being happy with the above points that the Area Forum support the progress and further development of this application.

Material considerations:

Other applications received from Area 3:

In taking the above decision, the Area Forum is requested to consider the implication of the funding level requested against the following projects that have been received for future determination by the Forum.

- Tudhoe Grange School - New Community & Family Support Area - £20,000 requested from LIP. Total project cost £33,250. This application will be brought to the next Area Forum for discussion.
- Middlestone Moor Playground Phase 3, Middlestone Moor Action Reform Group - LIP amount requested £41,518, Total project cost £64,734.

The following projects are under development although no application has been received to date. Once applications are received these projects will be brought forward to the Forum for debate.

- John Kitson Arch- Spennymoor Town Council. No costs as yet
- Kirk Merrington Play Area - Kirk Merrington Community Association- No costs identified as yet.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Area Forums

Report of the Review Group

Members of the Review Group

Councillor B. Hall (Chairman)

Councillor A. Gray

Councillor D.M. Hancock

Councillor J.M. Khan

Councillor Mrs I. Jackson-Smith

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Further information on this review can be obtained from
Jonathan Slee, Scrutiny Support Officer: Tel 01388 816166 ext.4362.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Council introduced revised decision making arrangements as a result of the Local Government Act 2000. Area Forums were established as part of these changes with the aim of making them an important part of the Council's democratic process. The Council recognises the importance of keeping communities informed and involved, and sees both of these responsibilities as key roles of area forums. The Scrutiny Review Group has therefore examined Area Forums' operation to determine their effectiveness, and also with a view to making changes which strengthen community involvement.

The Review has been carried out by a small group of Councillors, supported by Officers from the Council's Democratic Services who have gathered the detailed information for the review. Information has also been obtained from officers involved in Regeneration. There has also been input from Council partners and from residents and tenants groups. Following a wide ranging review, a number of recommendations have been made for consideration by Cabinet.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to the review and look forward to developments arising from its conclusions and recommendations.

Councillor B. Hall,
Chairman of the Review Group

26th April 2006

SUMMARY

Membership of the Review Group

Councillor B. Hall (Chairman) and
Councillors A. Gray, D.M. Hancock, J.M. Khan, Mrs I Jackson-Smith

Objectives of the Review

- To examine the way in which Area Forums currently operate
- To determine their effectiveness and whether this can be improved

Contribution to the Council's Ambitions and Community Outcomes

The Council's Ambitions and Community Outcomes are shown in its Annual Corporate Plan. This Review contributes towards the Council's ambition of developing strong communities and the associated community outcome of engaging local communities.

Process/Methodology

The Review Group gathered information and evidence as follows:-

- a) Through seven meetings between September, 2004 and April, 2006.
- b) Through presentations by D. Anderson, Principal Democratic Services Officer, A. Crawford, Scrutiny Support Officer, R. Prisk, the Council's (former) Head of Regeneration and A Charlton the Council's Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator.
- c) By questioning the above Officers.
- d) By visiting Area Forum meetings.
- e) Through discussions with Council partners - namely representatives of town and parish councils, Durham County Council, the Police and the Primary Care Trust (PCT).
- f) Through discussions with Sedgefield Residents Forum and Sedgefield Borough Tenants Federation.
- g) Through analysis of responses to a questionnaire which was circulated to participants in Forum meetings and to all persons on the mailing lists for agendas.

Summary of Main Review Findings

- Area Forums have a key role to the success and delivery of the Local Improvement Plan and development of Local Area Frameworks.

- There is general support for the operation of Area Forums, and for what they are trying to achieve, from individuals and organisations who attend meetings.
- The Purpose for Area Forums is not widely understood
- Attendance from members of the public to Area Forum meetings is generally linked to specific agenda items or they wish to receive information.
- Few decisions appear to be taken which are significant to local communities.
- Agendas don't appear to be based around local issues and communities.
- Change is required to the operation of Area Forums to encourage greater attendance and involvement from established Community Groups.
- Durham Constabulary and Sedgefield Primary Care Trust endorse and support the operation of Area Forums and welcome the opportunity to review and further develop their organisations role.

MAIN FINDINGS

Background

Area Forums were established in June 2000 following the Council's introduction of new decision making arrangements under the Local Government Act 2000.

Five Area Forums were established – Area Forums 1,2,3,4, and 5 – based on the same geographical areas which were covered by the former Council Area Management Sub- Committees, as follows:-

Area 1	Spennymoor and surrounding area
Area 2	West Cornforth, Bishop Middleham, Chilton and Ferryhill
Area 3	Sedgefield, Fishburn, the Trimdons, Bradbury and Mordon
Area 4	Shildon and Eldon
Area 5	Newton Aycliffe, Aycliffe Village, Middridge and Woodham

The five meetings occur on an eight weekly cycle and are held in the evening at locations within each of the areas, with meetings rotating between venues in some areas. Chairs and Vice Chairs of the forums are Borough Councillors. Administrative support is provided by officers from Democratic Services. Members of the public and a wide range of Council partners are invited to attend forum meetings.

The stated purpose of Area Forums when they were established was to provide an opportunity for communities to interact with the Council on issues of local importance. It was also envisaged that some issues would be referred to Cabinet directly from Area Forums.

Issues

The Review Group have carried out consultation with meetings with Durham Constabulary, Sedgefield Primary Care Trust, Officers from Sedgefield Borough Council, Town and Parish Councils, the Tennant's Federation and Sedgefield Residents Group.

Feedback from the consultation reported that communities consider that Area Forums have facilitated a positive community involvement in respect of the local area. In addition, both the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Durham Constabulary consider that Area Forums are most useful in assisting those organisations in achieving their community consultation and involvement objectives.

Through carrying out the review a number of issues have been highlighted that require attention. These are as follows:

- The purpose of Area Forums is not widely understood.
- Few decisions appear to be taken which are significant to local communities.
- Agendas don't appear to be based around local issues and local communities.
- Attendance/Membership does not always reflect the local communities.
- Change is required to the operation of Area Forums to encourage greater attendance and involvement from established Community Groups.

Current Developments

Throughout the review process the Review Group has taken into consideration initiatives that are currently being developed by the Council and partner organisations that will have an effect on community engagement.

- **Local Area Frameworks**

The Local Government Act 2000 requires all local authorities to produce a Community Strategy that sets out how public services, other organisations and local people will work together to improve the quality of life in the area.

Sedgefield Borough Council published its Community Strategy in November 2004, which sets out a ten-year vision for the Borough based on the aspirations, needs and priorities of local communities. The Community Strategy was developed following an extensive community appraisal and consultation process undertaken through the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The Strategy will be the main policy document for partners' work within the Borough and was launched at the LSP's second Annual Conference in November 2004.

The engagement and participation of local people in the delivery of the Strategy is vital to its success. Community participation will be promoted through the development of Area Frameworks aligned with the Council's five Area Forums that will outline contributions at a local level to the overall aims of the Strategy. This will enable Area Forum meetings to be focused towards achieving aims that are relative to the local communities.

- **Local Improvement Plan**

The Cabinet in September 2004 agreed a Housing Land Capital Receipts Strategy to govern the use of resources to support activities within the ODPM eligible expenditure definition of regeneration and affordable housing

The purpose of the Local Improvement Plan is to improve community assets and support community engagement in the regeneration of local areas. The Councils Area Forums will play a key role to determine a

proposed series of works against criteria agreed by Cabinet and make recommendations to Cabinet which schemes should be supported.

Area Forums will therefore have a key role to the success and delivery of the Local Improvement Plan and enable greater focus on local issues and priorities.

- **StreetSafe Review**

Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 have undertaken a review into the Councils role with the StreetSafe initiative. The StreetSafe Review Group recommended *'that the Area Forum Review Group be requested to consider how Area Forums could be used as a means to raise awareness of the StreetSafe initiative and help engage with local communities in order to support its aims.'*

This recommendation could be delivered through partnership working with Durham Constabulary and coherently identifying links with the Local Improvement Plan and development of Local Area Frameworks.

Proposals

The Review group through consultation and current developments have identified the following proposals to focus Area Forums to meet their aims and objectives.

- **Purpose**

Established in June 2000, the main purpose of Area Forums is for communities to interact with the Council and tackle issues of local importance to each area. Interaction will relate to the Councils ambitions detailed within the Community Strategy. The Local Area Framework will be developed in order to deliver these objectives to ensure that they are applicable within local communities and supplemented by Parish and Town Council Plans.

To deliver the main purpose of Area Forums the Council are to work in partnership. Durham Constabulary and Sedgefield Primary Care Trust support Area Forums and their input is to continue but with greater focus on each community area. In order for Area Forums to successfully tackle strategic issues we must consider formalising membership of the Area Forums to ensure that it is representative of the communities, which it aims to serve.

- **Membership**

Area Forum membership is to be reflective of the Communities which it seeks to serve. Currently Area Forums are an open forum for any members of the public to attend, with the purpose to engage with residents of the borough. However, this has led to attendance of Area Forums not being fully representative of local communities. Whilst the Review Group does not wish to exclude people from attending Area

Forum meetings, emphasis should be placed on the attendance of relevant groups and associations to the community it is to serve.

The Police and PCT report to the Area Forum meetings but do not have appointed members. Members are represented from Durham County Council and all Town and Parish councils, including appropriate local councillors, they are sent copies of the agendas for meetings. The public and any interested organisations receive copies of agendas upon request and are placed on the relevant mailing list on the same basis.

The Review Group recommend to formalise membership of Area Forums to include:- Sedgefield Borough Council Members, Members of Town/Parish Councils, Members of Durham County Council, Established Community Groups, Regeneration Partnerships, Durham Constabulary and Sedgefield Primary Care Trust. Officers attending Area Forum meetings from the Borough Council, Primary Care Trust and Durham Constabulary will not have a vote when making decisions or recommendations.

Enclosed in Appendix 1 is a table identifying organisations that have attended Area Forum meetings during 2005. Findings from Appendix 1 concluded that the proposal to formalise membership would not adversely affect attendance at Area Forum Meetings, as attendance from members of public is low.

The recommendation to formalise membership does not include members of the public who do not represent a community group. Guidance and best practice from professional advice recommends that engagement with the community will be of greater effect through Residents Forums and Community Groups and strategic community engagement is best delivered within the Area Forums.

The Review group has identified that attendance from members of the public to Area Forum meetings is generally linked to specific agenda items or they wish to receive information from Councillors and Officers at the meeting.

- **Public Question Time**

Formalising membership of Area Forums will have a positive effect and ensure representation from the communities it serves. Members of the public are welcome to attend Area Forum meetings and it is proposed that a thirty-minute time allocation at the start of the meeting is to be used for public question time. Following question time, members of the public may, if they wish, remain for the rest of the Area Forum meeting as observers.

Members of the public may submit a question prior to the meeting, this will endeavoured to be answered at the meeting. However, a question posed at the Area Forum meeting may not receive a full response until a later date if further information is to be sought.

- **Chairman & Vice-Chairman**

The Review Group were of the opinion that Area Forums continue to have a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from Members of Sedgefield Borough Council. This is due to their experience and expertise to chairing meetings. In addition there should be a non-councillor appointed as Vice Chairman to reflect the importance of community involvement.

- **Agenda**

Evaluating the business of Area Forum meetings, the Review Group have established that agendas are not always focused on local issues and priorities. Agenda items are, in the main, presentations or reports for information with the general exception being appointment of Forum Members to the Local Strategic Partnership. Excluding minutes of the previous meeting, two standard items appear on each Area Forum agenda. These are presentations/updates from the Police and from the Primary Care Trust (PCT). Other agenda items vary from meeting to meeting. A number of consultees referred to meetings being too long, particularly when there is more than one presentation, or when detailed presentations are followed by a number of other agenda items. In terms of agenda content there is generally little input from members of the local communities, with items generally being placed on the agenda by the Council, PCT and the Police. Agenda items are seldom specific to a local community or area, but are usually more general in nature – for example, updates on the possible transfer of the Council’s housing stock, or Council policy on abandoned vehicles.

If greater involvement from Community Groups is to be achieved, agenda content should place a greater emphasis on local issues, with the Community Groups being encouraged to bring items forward for inclusion on the agenda.

The Review Group recommends that agendas include:

- Public Question Time
- Development of Local Area Frameworks
- Monitor progress on tackling issues highlighted in Local Area Frameworks
- Local Improvement Programme – Consider Applications and Monitor progress
- Items from Sedgefield Primary Care Trust, Durham Constabulary and Community Groups.

- **Identity & Publicity**

With greater focus and emphasis on community engagement and local issues and priorities, the Review Group recommend that Area Forums are re-named as ‘Community Forums’ and replace the existing number

with a name. The identity of Community Forums will reflect the Community it seeks to serve and membership of the Forum.

At present dates for Area Forums are publicised and advertised through the Council's Community newspaper Inform. Posters are also distributed fairly widely these include local shops, post offices and social clubs. Any revised meeting procedure and launch of the new identity could also be publicised through Inform.

CONCLUSION

Since creation of Area Forums in 2000, the Review group have identified that Area Forum's have facilitated a positive community involvement in respect of the local area. During this time partnerships have been established with organisations that contribute to the operation of Area Forums.

Building on these firm foundations, partnerships could be strengthened with Area Forums having greater focus on local issues and priorities. To achieve this will require formalising membership and focusing agenda items to reflect the Local Improvement Plan and development of Local Area Frameworks.

A re-launch of Area Forums as 'Community Forums' will give an identity that forums have greater focus and continue to deliver positive community involvement on the Communities that it seeks to serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Area Forums be re-named and re-launched as 'Community Forums' to reflect a greater emphasis on community involvement and the number be replaced with a name that reflects the area.
2. Agenda items to be based on local issues identified through the development of Local Area Frameworks and Local Improvement Plan.
3. Membership of Area Forum be formalised to be representative of the Communities to which it aims to serve.
4. Implement a Public Question Time at the beginning of each Area Forum meeting.
5. Terms of reference for Area Forums be amended to reflect changes from the Review.

APPENDIX A

Attendance at Area Forum Meetings Area Forum 1

Name of Organisation	14/2/05 Town Hall Spennymoor	4/4/05 Community Centre, Middlestone Moor	6/6/05 Community Centre, Kirk Merrington	5/9/05 Council Chamber Spennymoor Town Hall	24/10/05 CR 1 Council Offices, Spennymoor	12/12/05 Community Centre Middlestone Moor
Sedgefield Borough Council - Councillors	7	8	6	11	9	8
Durham Constabulary	2	1	1	1	1	1
Councillor Durham C.C.	2	2		2		
Sedgefield Primary Care Trust	1	2	2	2	2	
Spennymoor Town Council	1	2	2	3	2	2
Local Resident / Member of Public	2	2	2	6	2	2
Eden Residents Association				2		
MARG					1	
St Paul's Residents Association			3			
Greenways Residents Association					3	1
Spennymoor Learning Shop						
Spennymoor Youth & Community Association						
Middlestone Moor Community Centre		1				1
Tudhoe Community Centre			1	1		
Kirk Merrington Village Hall						
Byers Green Village Hall						
Neighbourhood Watch*	1					
Tudhoe Grange School Council*			2	2	2	

* Organisation not listed on the Sedgefield Borough Area Forums Terms of Reference

Attendance at Area Forum Meetings Area Forum 2

Name of Organisation	11/1/05 Chilton & Windlestone Community College	22/2/05 West Cornforth Community Centre	19/4/05 Chilton & Windlestone Community College	21/6/05 Dean Bank & Ferryhill Literary Institute	6/9/05 Ferryhill Leisure Centre	1/11/05 Chilton & Windlestone Community College
Sedgefield Borough Council - Councillors	4	4	6	5	10	5
Durham Constabulary	1	1	1	2	2	1
Councillor Durham C.C.	1		1			1
Sedgefield Primary Care Trust	2	1	2	2	3	2
Cornforth Parish Council	1					
Chilton Town Council	8		3	2	1	5
Ferryhill Town Council	1			1	7	2
Local Resident / Member of Public	4		1		4	7
Castle Residents Association						1
Chilton West Residents Association	1	1				1
Dean Bank Residents Association				1	2	2
Ferryhill Station Residents Association						1
Lakes Residents Association						
West Cornforth Residents Association						
Cornforth Partnership						
Ferryhill Town Partnership						
Chilton Community Partnership	2					
Cornforth Community Centre						
Bishop Middleham Community Centre						
Ferryhill Ladder Centre						
Ferryhill Literacy Institute						
Chilton Henderson House						
Mainsforth Community Centre						
Ferryhill Allotments Association*					2	

*Organisation not listed on the Sedgefield Borough Area Forums Terms of Reference

Attendance at Area Forum Meetings Area Forum 3

Name of Organisation	12/1/05 Trimdon Colliery Community Centre	2/3/05 Mordon & Bradbury Village Hall	27/4/05 Ceddesfeld Hall, Sedgefield	6/7/05 Fishburn Youth and Community Centre	14/09/05 Community Centre, Trimdon Colliery	9/11/05 Oldham Room, Ceddesfeld Hall, Sedgefield
Sedgefield Borough Council - Councillors	5	5	3	3	5	5
Durham Constabulary	1	2	1	1	1	1
Councillor Durham C.C.						
Sedgefield Primary Care Trust	1	2	1	2		1
Mordon Parish Meeting		2	2			
Sedgefield Town Council		1				2
Trimdon Parish Council				1		1
Fishburn Parish Council				2	1	1
Local Resident / Member of Public		2	1		2	4
Trimdon Village Residents Association						
Trimdon 2000						
Joint Trimdon Community Partnership				1		
Trimdon Grange Community Association						
Trimdon Colliery Community Association						
Trimdon Community College						
Trimdon Village Hall Association						
Sedgefield Development Partnership			1			
Sedgefield Community Association						1
Ceddesfeld Community Association						
Sedgefield Community College Association						
Fishburn Community Centre						
Mordon Community Centre						
Trimdon Colliery Community Centre*	1					
Sedgefield Residents Association*				1		

*Organisation not listed on the Sedgefield Borough Area Forums Terms of Reference

Attendance at Area Forum Meetings Area 4 Forum

Name of Organisation	18/1/05 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre	8/3/05 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre	3/5/05 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre	19/7/05 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre	20/9/05 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre	15/11/05 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre
Sedgefield Borough Council - Councillors	3	3	2	4	1	5
Durham Constabulary	2	1	2		2	1
Councillor Durham C.C.					1	1
Sedgefield Primary Care Trust	2	2	3	2	2	3
Shildon Town Council						2
Eldon Parish Council			1	1		
Local Resident / Member of Public	2	2	1	1	6	1
Sunnydale Residents Association						
Jubilee Fields Community Association		1	1			
New Shildon Residents Association	1	1	1	2	1	1
Shildon Housing & Community Resource Centre						
Shildon Centre						1
Middridge Village Hall						
Shildon Community Safety Group*		1	2			1
Shildon Jubilee Community Centre*						1

*Organisation not listed on the Sedgefield Borough Area Forums Terms of Reference

Attendance at Area Forum Meetings

Area Forum 5

Name of Organisation	25/1/05 Town Council Officers, Newton Aycliffe	15/3/05 Town Council Officers, Newton Aycliffe	10/5/05 Town Council Officers, Newton Aycliffe	26/7/05 Town Council Officers, Newton Aycliffe	27/9/05 Town Council Officers, Newton Aycliffe	29/11/05 Town Council Officers, Newton Aycliffe
Sedgefield Borough Council - Councillors	8	7	7	8	11	10
Durham Constabulary	3	1	1	1	1	3
Councillor Durham C.C.					1	1
Sedgefield Primary Care Trust		2	1	2	1	2
Great Aycliffe Town Council	5	4	3	5	1	5
Local Resident / Member of Public	1		2	3		2
Linden Place Residents Association						
Williamfield Residents Association						
Dales Residents Association		1	1	1	1	1
Burnhill Residents Association	4	2	1			
Agnew Community Association						
Silverdale House						
Aycliffe Learning Shop						
Woodham Community Association						
School Aycliffe Community Centre						
Aycliffe Village Community Association						

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF AREA FORUMS
CABINET RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN**

Review Recommendations		Cabinet Response	
	Agreed?	Comments	
1. Area Forums be re-named and re-launched as 'Community Forums' to reflect a greater emphasis on community involvement and the number be replaced with a name that reflects the area.	Agreed	Cabinet agree that the Area Forums be renamed as part of a re launch of the Community Forums. However careful consideration also needs to be given to the name of the community forum to capture the identity of the full area that the Forum brings together.	
2. Agenda items to be based on local issues identified through the development of Local Area Frameworks and Local Improvement Plan.	Agreed	Cabinet agree that the agenda's be focussed on the needs of the area as highlighted through the Area Frameworks and that the community have the opportunity to influence this document. It is important that the forums can be used to help public agencies determine geographic priorities for action within an area. It is agreed that the Area Framework document will be helpful in allowing the forums to make recommendations to the Council's Cabinet with regards any applications for funding through the Local Improvement Programme.	

Implementation Agreed by Management Team	
Responsibility	Timescale
AP/JGT	<p>Sept – Dec Development with Community Groups Regarding style, format venues and conduct of meetings.</p> <p>Report to Cabinet Jan 2007</p>

Review Recommendations		Cabinet Response	
		Agreed?	Comments
3.	Membership of Area Forum be formalised to be representative of the Communities to which it aims to serve.	Agreed	Cabinet agree that membership of the forums for formalised however stresses that meetings should continue to be open and accessible to the public.
4.	Implement a Public Question Time at the beginning of each Area Forum meeting.	Agreed	Cabinet agree that a public question time can be useful addition to the business of the Forum however it must be stressed that answers to questions raised cannot be given instantly in all cases and may require a period of research by officers from the relevant agency.
5.	Terms of reference for Area Forums be amended to reflect changes from the Review.	Agreed	Terms of reference will need to be amended as part of the Council's constitution.

Implementation Agreed by Management Team	
Responsibility	Timescale