

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 1 FORUM

Memorial Room,
Town Hall,
Spennymoor

Monday,
12 February 2007

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 N. Foster - Durham County Council
 - A. Lamb - Greenway Residents
 - J. Brown - Middlestone Moor Community Centre
 - S. Brown - Middlestone Moor Community Centre
 - E. Croft - Neighbourhood Watch
 - Councillor Mrs. M. Smith - Spennymoor Town Council
 - Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison - Spennymoor Ward, Spennymoor Town Council
 - B. Argyle - Spennymoor Resident
 - D. Gordon - Spennymoor Resident
 - E. Hodgson - Spennymoor Resident

In

Attendance: A. Megginson and Mrs. G. Garrigan – Sedgefield Borough Council

Apologies:

Councillor M.T.B. Jones – Sedgefield Borough Council

AF(1)27/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

AF(1)28/06 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to Minute No. AF(1)25/06 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme, it was reported that the application for funding to provide a family/community support area at Tudhoe Grange School had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 1st February 2007.

AF(1)29/06

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 January 2007 were as follows:

Type of Crime	January 2007
Total Crime	144
Violent Crime	38
Robbery	1
Dwellinghouse Burglary	4
Vehicle Crime	13
Drugs Related Incidents	2

The detection rate for January was 24.3%.

With regard to road safety, there had been 2 damage only accidents at the Asda car park and Thinford Roundabout.

Specific reference was made to the Drink Dispersal Programme that had been launched in County Durham. It was reported that the main problem facing the Police in Spennymoor was the consumption of alcohol by juveniles and Police officers already had sufficient powers to deal with the problem.

Concern was expressed regarding the fact that the Police would not take any action regarding a vehicle displaying an out of date tax disc until at least 2 weeks had elapsed. It was explained that it was national policy for vehicle owners to be given 14 days grace.

Reference was made to the gas pipe that had been fractured in Middlestone Moor by a digger and the need to close a section of the A688. Thirty homes close to the scene had been evacuated. It was anticipated that Northern Gas would have an initial cap on the pipe within 3 to 4 hours.

AF(1)30/06

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS

Andrew Megginson, Capital Programme Manager attended the meeting to give a presentation regarding the above.

It was explained that the sale of land for housing had created an opportunity to invest in regeneration across the Borough by creating a Local Improvement Programme to improve community assets, and support community engagement in the regeneration of local areas. Local communities and partner Town and Parish Councils could propose projects for consideration, against the Department for Communities and Local Government "Regeneration" definition and additional criteria agreed by Cabinet. Resources could be released to improve individual sites and improve the useability of community facilities and buildings.

The sum of £3.8m grant funding had been made available, under the Local Improvement Programme, from April 2006 to March 2009.

To facilitate the operation of the Programme, each Area Forum locality had been provided with an indicative ringfenced budget, based on the number of households in the area, for a series of projects. Area Forums had a role to play in the delivery of locally prioritised improvement schemes.

All potential Local Improvement Programme Schemes were assessed against a number of criteria and had to meet the Government's specific definition of regeneration which was as follows:

“any project for the carrying out of works or activities on any land where the land, or a building on the land, is vacant, unused, underused, ineffectively used, contaminated or derelict and the works or activities are carried out in order to secure that the land or the building will be brought into effective use.”

The programme was designed to tackle the key issues facing the Borough linked to:-

- *Community strategy objectives*
- *A strong local need backed through appraisals*
- *Measurable benefits*
- *Consultation*
- *Activity focused towards land and buildings.*

The Committee was informed that 42 enquiries had been received over the past six months of which 5 projects had been deemed not eligible; 32 were in the process of development (14 applications had been received and 18 were still to be submitted) and 7 projects had been approved with a total value of £460,679.

In relation to match funding for projects it was noted that £430,435 of external match funding had to date been committed to approved projects. The normal target for match funding was 33% of the cost of the scheme, if the scheme had been put forward by Town/Parish Council. However, other factors were taken into account when considering applications such as deprivation statistics, the nature of the project and its relationship to the area.

The Strategy and Regeneration Team worked with applicants to assist in the application process and the identification of sources of match funding. Projects needed to be sustainable over a number of years and, therefore, applicants were required to take into account the revenue implications of projects, such as insurance, staffing, maintenance of buildings etc, before submitting applications.

Following feedback on the Local Improvement Programme process, the application form had been revised, making it easier for applicants to complete. The amount of detail required in the application form, relating to projects, would depend on the level of funding requested. In order to

simplify the application process, voice recording equipment was being piloted, for those applicants unused to completing application forms etc., to allow them to verbally outline the project and its objectives.

In developing projects, a need had been identified for initial technical surveys and professional reports required for LIP schemes. Surveys needed to be carried out in order to ensure that works could be feasibly undertaken in relation to buildings and to identify the technical issues which need to be addressed to bring buildings back into use. A first phase, "fees only", technically focused application had been introduced in response. A delegated approval mechanism had been established to provide initial funding to a maximum of £15,000 for such works eg. design/architectural work, survey work, quantity surveyor work, planning fees etc. The information from the surveys would provide a fully costed, developed LIP project application for consideration.

As part of the decision making process, applications were appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Team, initially to establish eligibility. Proposals were then discussed at Area Forum meetings, which had a role in endorsing projects, as an important local priority as well as proposing new projects. The view of the Area Forums were then forwarded to Cabinet, where the decision to allocate LIP funding was made.

It was explained that applications took approximately 3 months from the date of receipt, to the decision being made. Approved projects were monitored by the project team on a quarterly basis to ensure that organisations received the necessary support to carry out the projects.

Application packs etc., were available at the meeting.

With regard to Local Improvement Programme projects previously considered by the Forum, it was reported that work was progressing in respect of Spennymoor Settlement.

Unfortunately Middlestone Moor Action Group had not received Big Lottery funding for its project, however discussions were being held with officers in the Council's Leisure Department, with a view to a report being submitted to the Council's Management Team.

AF(1)31/06

BISHOP AUCKLAND GENERAL HOSPITAL

Members expressed concern regarding recent press reports that the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust was closing ward 3 and was also considering closing ward 9 at Bishop Auckland General Hospital.

They requested that a representative from the Trust be invited to a future meeting to discuss the proposals.

AF(1)32/06 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2nd April 2007 at 6.30 p.m. at Middlestone Moor Community Centre

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

This page is intentionally left blank