

Item 7b

SEDFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

AREA 1 FORUM

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Monday,
6 November 2006

Time: 6.30 p.m.

- Present:** Councillor J.M. Khan (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and
- Councillor A. Gray – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor M.T.B. Jones – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor B.M. Ord – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor Mrs. C. Sproat – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor A. Smith – 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
 - M. Fordham – County Durham PCT
 - G. Darkes – Greenways Residents Association
 - A. Lamb – Greenways Residents Association
 - A. Stapleton – Eden Residents Association
 - E. Croft – Neighbourhood Watch
 - C. Todd – Sedgefield Borough Learning
– Co-ordinator
 - B. Abley – Spennymoor Settlement
 - P. Storey – Spennymoor Settlement
 - M. Welsh – Spennymoor Settlement
 - W. G. Wheaton – Spennymoor Settlement
 - V. Williams – Spennymoor Settlement
 - S. Dobson – Spennymoor Settlement
 - L. Edgar – Spennymoor Settlement
 - M. Marsden – Spennymoor Settlement
 - Councillor Mrs. M. Smith – Spennymoor Town Council
 - Councillor Mrs. E.Maddison – Councillor for Spennymoor Ward,
Spennymoor Town Council
 - L. Aunger – St. John’s Ambulance, Spennymoor
 - B. Argyle – Local Resident
 - E. Hodgson – Local Resident
 - F. Ryder – Local Resident
 -
- Apologies:** Councillor Mrs.A.M.Armstrong – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor Mrs. B. Graham – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor E. Foster – Durham County Council
 - Councillor Ms. S. Armstrong – Spennymoor Town Council

AF(1)15/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors indicated that they would be declaring an interest in the following items:

Councillor A. Gray :	Item 4 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme – The Spennymoor Settlement	Personal Interest – Member of Spennymoor Settlement
Councillor A. Smith :	Item 4 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme – The Spennymoor Settlement	Personal Interest – Member of Executive Committee – Spennymoor Settlement
Councillor W. Waters	Item 4 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme – The Spennymoor Settlement	Prejudicial Interest – Member of Sedgefield Borough Council Cabinet

AF(1)16/06 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(1)17/06 SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - THE SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members’ Code of Conduct Councillors A. Gray and A. Smith declared a personal interest in the above item and remained in the meeting.

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members’ Code of Conduct Councillor W. Waters declared a prejudicial interest in the above item and left the meeting for the duration of discussion on the item.

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Regeneration regarding the above. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the Forum were reminded that £836,000 had been allocated over three years to 2008/09 for the Local Improvement Programme in Area

1 to tackle the issues as outlined in the Council's Community Strategy. The allocation for 2006/07 was £278,800.

The role of the Area Forum was to provide a view as to the priority of the project within the area. The project would then be considered by the Council's Management Team and Cabinet. The latter would decide whether or not to allocate funding tot the project.

Spennymoor Settlement Regeneration Project

D. Acock, Spennymoor Settlement, was in attendance to present the application.

The project involved refurbishing 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 was used to its full extent and safeguard it for the future. The theatre was built in 1939 and was a Grade II Listed Building.

It was pointed out that if the Heritage Lottery Fund did not agree to provide the required match funding for the scheme, other possible sources of funding had been identified.

The Forum noted that the scheme would not proceed without match funding being available. The project met all the Local Improvement Programme criteria and would link in very well with the planned development of Spennymoor Leisure Centre.

The Forum agreed to support the project.

AF(1)18/06 REVIEW OF AREA FORUMS

The Forum was informed that a Scrutiny Review Group had been established to examine the operation of Area Forums to determine their effectiveness to identify changes that could be made to strengthen community involvement. A copy of the Group's report had been included in the agenda. (For copy see file of Minutes)

The Forum's attention was drawn to the following recommendations of the Review Group:

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 to 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.

A questionnaire seeking views on the above recommendations was circulated at the meeting for completion.

It was reported that the views expressed at the Area Forum meeting, the community consultation event on 22nd September 2006 and in the questionnaires, would be analysed by the Council's Regeneration Section and reported to Cabinet for consideration.

AF(1)19/06

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 September were as follows:

<u>Type of Crime</u>	<u>September 2006</u>
Total Crime	136
Dwelling Burglary	6
Burglary Other	7
Criminal Damage	37
Violent Crime	38

The crime detection rate as a percentage was 28.7%.

Specific reference was made to the launch of Operation Dark, which was aimed to tackle those criminal activities that were aided by darkness.

It was reported that a PCSO had just commenced in post and it was anticipated that either one or two additional PCSOs would be appointed either before or after Christmas.

Specific reference was made to recent press reports that Durham Constabulary was to lose approximately 300 officers, which would obviously impinge on the Force's ability to tackle crime.

It was explained that Durham Constabulary had a projected shortfall of £10m, which could necessitate reducing the number of police officers. It was pointed out that Durham Constabulary was classed as a 'rural force' and Government funding was being directed towards the inner cities.

Members of the Forum expressed concern regarding the time spent by police officers transporting people under arrest to the cells at Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe Police Stations. It was explained that it was not cost-effective to keep the cells at Spennymoor Police Station continually open. Reference was made to the national drive to have one cell block to cater for the whole of the County.

Concern was expressed regarding the large number of taxis in the vicinity of The Cube on a Friday night, which often led to the highway being obstructed.

A question was raised on whether The Cube made any contribution to the cost of policing Spennymoor. It was reported that The Cube employed more than the required ratio of door staff and any anti social behaviour incidents in the High Street should not automatically be attributed to patrons of The Cube as there were a number of public houses in Spennymoor, with extended opening hours.

Concern was also expressed regarding the difficulties in contacting the Police using the non-emergency number and the slow response to some calls. It was pointed out that a graded response system had been introduced. Some non-urgent matters could be referred to beat officers and therefore not responded to for 2 – 3 days.

AF(1)20/06

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

This page is intentionally left blank