



South Tyneside Council

item 2

**Riverside Community Area Forum
9 June 2026**

Riverside Community Area Forum Minutes

17 February 2026

Present: Councillors: Owens-Palmer (Chair), Brenen, Francis, Guy, Stonehouse, Yare.

Donald Wade (ASB and Neighbourhood Crime Co-ordinator), Andy McGill (Welfare Support Team Manager), Joshua Allen (NEWH), Jen Julien (NEWH), Michael Vasey (Senior Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Officer), Catherine Delaney (Housing Manager), Stuart Wright (Director of Place Strategy), Merrik Robertson (Community and Place Development Co-Ordinator), and Emma Purvis (Senior Democracy Support Officer).

There was 3 public and a member of the press also in attendance.

Apologies: Councillors Gynn, Proudlock, J. Taylor

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of 16 December 2025

Agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2026 be confirmed as a true record.

3. Community Partners Report

Submitted: Reports of Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and Nexus

Tyne and Wear fire and rescue service

Jonathan Ramanayake, Tyne and Wear fire and rescue service, provided the CAF with an update on incidents of fire within the CAF area since the previous meeting, including the following data:

Deliberate Primary Fires:

Incidents

Type of Incident	December 2025	December 2024
Deliberate Primary Fires (excluding Road Vehicles)	3	0
Deliberate Primary Road Fires	3	2
Deliberate Secondary Fires	3	4
All Deliberate Fires	9	6

Incidents – Ward Breakdown

Ward	December 2025
Beacon and Bents	3
Simonside and Rekendyke	2
West Park	4
Westoe	0

Incidents

Type of Incident	January 2026	January 2025
Deliberate Primary Fires (excluding Road Vehicles)	2	1
Deliberate Primary Road Fires	1	3
Deliberate Secondary Fires	1	5
All Deliberate Fires	4	9

Incidents – Ward Breakdown

Ward	January 2026
Beacon and Bents	2
Simonside and Rekendyke	1
West Park	0
Westoe	1

Northumbria Police

A representative from the police was not in attendance at the meeting, but a written report had been provided for the latest 8-week period. Within the Riverside area, a total of 1,270 incidents were reported, which was a decrease from 1,452 in the previous period. After a higher than average number of incidents in August, demand had dropped off and fallen below previous years in September through to December.

There had been 519 crimes recorded during the period, down from 599 in the previous period, representing a 13% overall decrease. Theft and handling offences made up 22% of all crime, followed by Violence Against the Person (37%), Public Disorder (10%), and Criminal Damage (8%). The streets with the highest number of recorded crimes were Dean Road, Ocean Road, and Chichester Road.

Dean Road:

A total of 35 crimes were recorded, including 33 theft and handling offences, mostly relating to shoplifting at Morrisons Daily, alongside one public disorder and one violence-related offence.

Ocean Road:

There were 33 crimes reported. These included 12 violence against the person, 6 sexual offences, 5 public disorder, 5 theft and handling, 3 criminal damage, 1 drug offence, and 1 other violence-related offence. Many of these occurred at Morrisons and the Ship and Royal.

Chichester Road:

There were 23 reported crimes, including 9 theft and handling offences, 3 public disorder, 3 other violence-related crimes, 2 criminal damage, 4 violence against the person, 1 burglary, and 1 vehicle-related crime. Shoplifting at Iceland and Aldi accounted for a significant proportion of incidents.

Burglary

There were 12 residential burglaries and 28 commercial burglaries reported. Offences occurred across the area with no repeat locations or discernible pattern. Entry methods were typically unsophisticated, often through unlocked doors or windows. Police had arrested a prolific burglary and theft offender, who had repeatedly breached bail conditions. A further file had been submitted requesting remand, and at the time of reporting the suspect remained in custody.

Vehicle Crime

A total of 13 vehicle-related crimes were recorded, including 6 thefts of motor vehicles. Vehicle crime remained low and was reported to be at its lowest level in five years. Residents were reminded to ensure vehicles were locked with no valuables on display.

Hate Crime

There were 19 hate crimes recorded: 7 race-related, 4 faith-related, and 8 homophobic-related. Three incidents occurred at the South Shields Interchange, where staff would receive follow-up support from the local Neighbourhood Team.

Anti-Social Behaviour

There were 83 incidents of anti-social behaviour in the current period, down from 103 in the previous period. ASB remained a priority, with dedicated patrols

continuing under Operation Coastwatch and Project Shield in partnership with South Tyneside Council. Year-on-year ASB figures were 28% lower, and youth-related ASB remained at its lowest level in four years. Reports covered a range of issues including disorderly behaviour, vehicle nuisance and littering.

Community Safety, Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Crime Team

Donald Wade, ASB and Neighbourhood Crime Co-Ordinator, gave an update on activity within the CAF area. 2025 had seen an overall reduction in ASB within the Riverside area which constituted a 24% decrease in the Beacon and Bents ward, 11% in Simonside and Rekendyke, 42% in West Park and 16% in Westoe. There had been 353 less ASB incidents than the previous year.

Work was being undertaken to address street drinkers in South Shields Town Centre, and a working group had been set up to co-ordinate a partnership approach. Perpetrators had been served with community protection orders and notices, with some also appearing in court.

The Council had also been working with the police to address shoplifting concerns on Chichester Street and Operation Impact had been targeting community concerns.

A Member asked whether shoplifting offences on Dean Road could be attributed to a single offender. The Officer noted that there had also been an increase in burglary offences, as well as shoplifting, which were believed to be down to one person. The police were working with the shop manager to exclude the offender from the premises.

A member of the public reported that cars were speeding along Beach Road and the Officer promised to raise this with the Police who could deploy mobile cameras. It was also noted that large cannisters of nitrous oxide had been found in the Beach Road area, as well as Winchester Street car park. The Officer promised to have the Community Responders look at this and advised that cannisters could be disposed of safely at the Council's waste refuge.

A Member also reported that vehicle disorder around the Marine Parks and the Promenade had worsened. The Officer advised that there was a specific operation planned to address this.

Nexus

A representative from nexus was not present at the meeting but a written statement was provided regarding the review of car parking charges at Metro park-and-ride sites.

It was reported that the Tyne and Wear Metro operated as a public service and did not make a profit, relying on central and local government funding alongside income from fares and other commercial sources, which included car parking charges, to meet operating costs. Income generated from park-and-ride parking had been reinvested into the running of the Metro system. Car parking charges had been in place at several Metro park-and-ride sites since 2010, in line with practices used by other transport operators and local authorities.

Nexus had been reviewing its charging policy across all park-and-ride locations, including both sites where charges already applied and those where parking was currently free. It was further noted that the daily parking charge stood at £1.50 per day, with a proposed increase to £1.80 from April 2026. Parking permits were available for frequent users and free parking was provided after 5pm and on Sundays. Blue Badge holders were entitled to park free of charge at all times.

Members were advised that Nexus had been engaging with affected local authorities as part of the review. No final decisions had been taken at that stage, and further details were to be shared in due course.

Agreed: That the reports be noted.

4. CAF Funding Report

Submitted: Report of the Director Business and Resources and the Director of Governance and Corporate Affairs.

Merrik Robertson presented this report on Community Area Forum Funding for 2025-26. The report informed Members that the total budget allocated to the Riverside Community Area Forum for the financial year was £394,288. This comprised:

Environmental Capital Funding	£166,664
Housing Capital Funding	£72,508
Local Neighbourhoods Scheme	£57,776

Seven applications for funding were included in the report.

Agreed: That a) the report be noted, b) the applications for funding be dealt with as set out below.

Scheme (Ward) and Council Priority	Applicant and Purpose of Grant	Grant Sought (Project Cost if different)	Grant Awarded
Housing Capital Scheme / Environmental Capital Scheme Stronger Communities (Beacon & Bents)	Installation of new timber fencing at Chatsworth Court, Anderson Street and Blenheim Court. Proposed by Cllr Francis Seconded by Cllr Stonehouse	£22,464 (HCS) £3,183 (ECS) Total: £25,642	That the grant of £25,642 be agreed. Reason: The scheme represents a worthwhile contribution to the community.
Environmental Capital Scheme / Local Neighbourhoods Scheme	Plane off and resurfacing of the back lane to the rear of 46–54 St Aidans Street.	£3,029 (ECS) £6,844 (LNS) Total: £9,873	That the grant of £9,873 be agreed. Reason: The scheme represents a worthwhile

Stronger Communities (Beacon & Bents)	Proposed by Cllr Stonehouse Seconded by Cllr Francis		contribution to the community.
Local Neighbourhoods Scheme	Energy-efficiency improvements at Edhill Gardens.	£8,623 (LNS)	That the grant of £8,623 be agreed.
Stronger Communities (Simonside & Rekendyke)	Proposed by Cllr Taylor Seconded by Cllr Guy		Reason: The scheme represents a worthwhile contribution to the community.
Environmental Capital Scheme / Local Neighbourhoods Scheme	Mitchell Gardens – resurfacing of Courts 1, 2 and 3.	£20,000 (ECS) £9,836 (LNS) Total: £29,836	That the grant of £29,836 be agreed.
Stronger Communities (Westoe)	Proposed by Cllr Owens-Palmer Seconded by Cllr Brenen		Reason: The scheme represents a worthwhile contribution to the community.
Environmental Capital Scheme / Local Neighbourhoods Scheme	West Park energy improvement measures based on EPC data.	£9,865 (ECS) £8,997 (LNS) Total: £18,862	That the grant of £18,862 be agreed.
Stronger Communities (West Park)	Proposed by Cllr Guy Seconded by Cllr Yare		Reason: The scheme represents a worthwhile contribution to the community.
Local Neighbourhoods Scheme Stronger Communities (West Park)	West Park – replacement lettering and decals at park entrances and dog exercise area signage. Proposed by Cllr Yare Seconded by Cllr Guy	£1,775 (LNS)	That the grant of £1,775 be agreed. Reason: The scheme represents a worthwhile contribution to the community.

Agreed: That the above applications be approved.

5. CAF Management Team Update

Merrik Robertson delivered this report which provided Members with an update on projects funded and agreed by the CAF as outlined in Appendix A, alongside an update on Streetscene.

With recent changes to the CAF management Team, a review of how the service was delivered and managed was being undertaken by Martin Gill, Head of Operational Housing and Homelessness. Merrik Robertson would continue his role as the CAF manager in the interim period whilst the review is being undertaken and was being supported by Julie McKeown.

It was noted that Streetscene Teams continued to perform general cleansing duties throughout all areas of work, including mechanical sweeping and manual removal of litter and detritus. Due to the changes in weather conditions, the team had been diverting as much of the mechanical sweepers time to heavy leaf fall, which had been difficult due to the volume of leaves that had fallen in a short space of time.

A member of the public suggested that another bin could be added to one of the playgrounds in the Beacon and Bents ward.

A Member noted that some areas of paving in the Westoe ward could warrant relaying. The Officer promised to arrange a walk about to look at this.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

6. North East Warm Homes (NEWH)

Members received a presentation outlining the North East Warm Homes programme, which provided free and impartial support to residents across the North East Combined Authority (NECA) area to help reduce energy bills and carbon emissions through energy saving home improvements. The service was delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust, Groundwork North East & Cumbria, Groundwork South & North Tyneside, Community Action Northumberland and Warmworks.

The Forum was informed of Homewise, a free digital advice tool developed by the Energy Saving Trust. It provided residents with a personalised plan which identified suitable home energy improvements, associated costs, and potential savings. The tool was quick and easy to use and could be customised to individual household needs.

Impartial in-home energy advice was also available to residents in all seven NECA areas, including South Tyneside. The service supported all households, with a particular focus on those struggling with energy bills, those living in hard-to-heat homes, and those in the private rented sector.

It was explained that Warmworks provided dedicated installation support for households, managing the full process from home assessment to installation and quality assurance. Where eligible and subject to availability, costs for assessments, surveys and EPCs could be reimbursed.

Members were informed of available promotional resources including a partner pack, newsletter article and social media templates. Referral routes were outlined, including a free phone number and online referral form for home visits.

A Member asked for further detail around home support. The Officer noted that the scheme worked to help people with their bills in the long term as it looked to improve efficiency and reduce costs over time. Child poverty was a key focus for NECA and the support available was dependent on access to funding. The Member asked if there was any work being done to identify specific houses rather than relying on referrals. Certain areas of need were being targeted by utilising community groups, social media and family hubs.

A Member asked if the Scheme was being funded by the UK Prosperity Fund and it was confirmed that it had been, however it was now funded by NECA.

A Member noted the value of the Scheme as it could be difficult for residents to identify where they were eligible for grants since the criteria could change frequently.

A Member raised concern that a landlord could use grant money to improve a property then sell afterwards. The Officer clarified that this was an advice service only and they did not have the ability to decide who was awarded the grant. They clarified that there was very little support for landlords, but the Government had set requirements that all homes should have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least a C by 2030. It was added that these grants could be beneficial to both tenant and landlord as demand had increased for good quality rental accommodation and landlords would be required to meet certain standards in alignment with the new regulations. It was assured that any grant offered would be determined by the person living in the rented accommodation rather than the landlord.

A Member thanked the Green Doctor team as their face to face advice had been useful and had received positive engagement.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

7. Tenancy Agreement Consultation

The Officer who had been scheduled to deliver this presentation was not able to attend, however Members had received the presentation in advance of the meeting. Any questions were to be answered after the meeting and included in the minutes.

The presentation outlined the purpose of the Council's Tenancy Agreement, which was described as a legally binding contract between the landlord and tenant setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. It was important that the Agreement clearly defined expectations during the tenancy period.

It was explained that updates were required due to new consumer regulation, building and fire safety requirements, policy changes, the transfer of South Tyneside Homes, and general good practice to ensure improved safety for tenants and staff.

Members were informed that consultation activity had taken place, including a review of the current Tenancy Agreement and engagement with involved tenants. All tenants would receive a booklet outlining proposed changes, and a series of drop-in sessions would be held between the 26th January and 20th April, with staff available to answer questions.

The key proposed amendments included: clearer rights relating to the Right to Buy, access requirements for essential repairs and maintenance, permissions relating to major changes or adaptations, updated expectations for communal block living, mutual exchange processes, and clarification of existing clauses already included in the Agreement.

The Forum was advised that feedback would be analysed before finalising the new Tenancy Agreement. Cabinet approval would be sought prior to promotion and tenants would not be required to sign a new agreement. An updated Tenants' Handbook would also be produced.

Agreed: That the report be noted

8. South Tyneside Housing Service Spotlight Session – Welfare Support

The Welfare Support Team Manager gave a presentation outlining support available to residents.

It was noted that the Welfare Support Team consisted of 26 advisors and assistants providing specialist support. The team operated across South Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn and local social hubs as well as offering telephone appointments and home visits.

The services offered by the team were briefly outlined as support around benefits and casework, debt and local welfare provision including food and fuel vouchers and provision of household items. Social Navigators would work with vulnerable residents and had achieved over £1.7 million in financial gains since the scheme began, in addition to non-financial outcomes such as sustaining tenancies and accessing community support.

Recent service improvements included a new, streamlined referral form, additional service provision to reach more residents and reduce waiting times, and the introduction of Lightning Reach, an online portal connecting residents to over 2,500 support organisations.

Some case studies were included to highlight the breadth of support and positive outcomes for residents.

It was explained that the team could be contacted via an online referral form, the Lightning Reach portal, calling 0191 4246040 or emailing welfaresupport@southtyneside.gov.uk.

Members congratulated the Team on their work as every referral had made a real difference to the lives of residents.

A Member enquired as to how the amount of money saved had been calculated. This data was collected using a bespoke system which gathered data from every case and awarded benefits would be inputted manually. The service was currently undergoing a review to assess what resources should be maintained and what could be streamlined.

It was also noted that Students at Northumbria University had done a piece of work on the Social Navigators and determined that for every £1 invested into the project £3 was brought into the Borough.

The Riverside CAF area had seen the second highest amount of savings made for residents with £2.5 million.

Agreed: That the report be noted

9. Work Programme for the Forum 2025-26

This report presented the Work Programme for 2025-26 which outlined standard reports and detailed topics which could be carried over in the next municipal year.

Agreed: That the 2025-26 Work Programme be noted.

10. Chair's Urgent Items

There were no Chair's urgent items.

Chair's Signature 9/6/26