



South Tyneside Council

item 2

**East Shields and Whitburn Community Area Forum
02 July 2026**

**East Shields and Whitburn Community Area Forum
Minutes**

28 May 2026

Present: Councillors: Barclay (Chair), Cain, Clifton, Fenwick, Humphrey, Medcalf, Mouat, Newman, Royal, Wildhirt.

Officers: Merrik Robertson (CAF Management Officer), Chloe Berston (Assistant Housing Manager), Caitlin Mullen (Housing Manager ESHW), Jonathan Ramanayake (Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue), David Heron (Northumbria Police), Emma Purvis (Senior Democracy Support Officer), Leah Stafford (Democracy Support Officer).

Voluntary sector representative: J Volante

There were 11 members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the Meeting 22 January 2026

There was no member present from the previous meeting to agree the minutes.

Agreed: The minutes of meeting held on 22 January 2026 be noted.

3. Community Partners Report

Submitted: Report of Community Safety Partnership

Nexus

No representative from Nexus attended the meeting. They had sent apologies and advised no updates were required.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Jonathan Ramanayake of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service was available to attend the meeting; provided highlighting the following data:

Deliberate Primary Fires – Excluding road vehicles

Ward	Incident Count
Cleadon Park	0
Harton	0
Horsley Hill	0
Whitburn And Marsden	0
Total	0

Primary Deliberate fires – Including road vehicles

Ward	Incident Count
Cleadon Park	0
Harton	0
Horsley Hill	2
Whitburn And Marsden	0
Total	2

Deliberate Secondary Fires

Ward	Incident Count
Cleadon Park	2
Harton	1
Horsley Hill	1
Whitburn And Marsden	2
Total	6

Total number of Deliberate Fires

Ward	Incident Count
Cleadon Park	2
Harton	1
Horsley Hill	3
Whitburn And Marsden	2
Total	8

A Member asked if there was anything that they could do to help the Fire Service and the Officer suggested that good communication was important. They encouraged all Members to get in touch with any issues and invited them to come down to the Fire Station for a tour.

The Fire Service had also utilised funding from the King's Trust for a project to help young people who were NEET (not in education, employment or training).

This was a 12 week course to help them find employment and the Service also ran a Fire Cadets for children and young people under 17 years old.

Northumbria Police

A written report had been provided for the latest 8-week period covering 23 March to 17 May 2026.

Within the East Shields & Whitburn area, a total of 895 incidents were recorded, which was consistent with the same period in 2025 and an increase from 869 in the previous period. It was noted that incident levels were expected to rise during the summer months, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour and the use of off-road and electric motorcycles.

There were 298 crimes recorded during the period, broadly in line with the same period in 2025 (296) and a reduction from 316 in the previous period. The most common offence types were violence against the person (without injury), theft and handling, criminal damage, violence with injury and public disorder.

The streets with the highest number of recorded crimes were The Nook/Prince Edward Road, Marsden Lane and Elders Walk. At The Nook/Prince Edward Road there were 17 offences, including theft, harassment, assault and arson. Marsden Lane recorded 12 offences, largely relating to shoplifting at Tesco, and Elders Walk recorded 10 shoplifting offences at the Co-op.

In relation to burglary, there were 7 residential burglaries and 2 commercial burglaries reported, representing a significant reduction compared to the same period in 2025. Offences were spread across the area with a small cluster in the Harton Moor estate, and entry methods were generally unsophisticated, commonly involving forced entry through doors or windows.

A total of 7 vehicle-related crimes were recorded, an increase from 5 in the same period last year but a notable reduction from 18 in the previous period. Offences mainly related to theft of or from motor vehicles, particularly motorcycles, with some incidents involving suspects known to the victim. Residents were reminded to ensure vehicles were kept secure.

There were 4 hate crimes recorded during the period, consisting of 3 racial and 1 homophobic offence, showing a reduction compared to previous periods. There were 77 incidents of anti-social behaviour reported, an increase from 69 in the previous period but a decrease from 101 in the same period last year. The main categories included nuisance behaviour, motorcycle disorder and neighbour disputes. It was noted that ASB levels tend to increase during the summer months.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team continued to carry out targeted patrols in hotspot locations under Operation Coastwatch and Project Shield/Guardian, working in partnership with South Tyneside Council.

It was also noted that Police were seeing a trend in keyless cars such as Fiestas and VW Golfs being stolen. An operation was in place to tackle this problem, as well as the illegal selling of vapes to children.

Members and residents were again encouraged to report anyone they believe to be in possession of an E. Bike or scooter since it was easier for police to locate and confiscate bikes from directly where they are being stored. The Police had also seen some success with shutting down cannabis farms and it was hoped this would encourage criminals to move activity outside the Borough.

A Member asked how the police were tracking and locating illegal motorbikes. It was said that the police were able to utilise bespoke tactics and the Traffic Unit had access to drones. It was clarified that the police were not able to chase the bikes so information and intelligence from the public were vital for talking the issue. A Member asked if there was a reward to incentivise people to report, the Officer suggested that this was usually reserved for very serious and organised crime.

A Member raised the issue of ASB at the Seafront and it was said that Operation Coastwatch had been successful in reducing the number of incidents. The Officer acknowledged that South Shields had the only permanent fairground in the region which attracted lots of people from outside the area which sometimes aggravated the problem. He stressed that it was the responsibility of everyone to import good morals and values upon our young people in order to prevent this kind of ASB.

A member of the public noted that residents in the Horsley Hill ward had been dealing with issues of drug dealing which was starting to regularly impact their daily lives.

A member of the public suggested that even when criminals were caught nothing was done. The Officer stressed that was a matter for the courts and the Government.

A member of the public asked if parents could be prosecuted for buying illegal bikes for their children and it was confirmed that sanctions could be applied if the parent were a Council tenant. It was added that Temple Park had been used as a highway for these illegal bikes.

A Member complimented the Police on their speedy response time after they had reported motorbikes riding through the Marine Park.

ASB

Don Wade, ASB and Neighbourhood Crime Co-Ordinator provided a update on ASB but was not able to attend the meeting.

The figures for anti-social behaviour within the CAF ward area were as follows:

Ward	2024/2025	2025/26	Change	Percentage
Whitburn and Marsden	123	91	-32	-26%
Horsley Hill and Westoe Crown	377	265	-112	-29.7%
Harton	133	100	-33	-24.8%
Cleadon Park and Harton Moor	116	103	-13	-11.2%
Overall Total	749	559	-190	-25.3%

The report stated that the main area of focus remains Horsley Hill and in particular Horsley Hill Square and issues around youths causing damage and disorder to local buses.

The damage and assault crimes had been reported to Northumbria Police and CCTV had been shared by the bus company. Enquiries were ongoing.

Those responsible were also believed to be responsible for crime and disorder in South Shields town centre and Biddick. To tackle this the following has been undertaken:

- A joint working group focussing on this specific group involving South Tyneside Council teams and Northumbria Police. Don noted he was chairing this group;
- Responders and Police resources had been deployed to patrol;
- Don was liaising with the bus company to ensure all incidents were reported and acted upon;
- Once Police colleagues had taken their action, South Tyneside Council will follow up with action, including tenancy enforcement of those linked to South Tyneside Council housing.

Whilst Horsely Hill and Westoe Crown had the highest overall number of ASB incidents in the CAF area, over the past 12 months, 265 ASB incidents, it had also experienced the largest drop in ASB incidents, 112 incidents. A 29.7% drop in reported ASB.

The reduction in Horsely Hill and Westoe Crown was even greater when compared to 2023/24, when the ward experienced 549 incidents over 12 months. Over 3 years 2023 to 2026 reported ASB in Horsely Hill and Westoe Crown had fallen by 48.2%.

Sustained effort over a range of tactics had brought about this reduction:

- Joint Police and Council Patrols, particularly at weekends;
- Joint multi agency operations – Bonfire night week with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue. Half term and end of school year patrols;
- Tenancy enforcement action not only by South Tyneside Council, but other registered social landlords in the area against those identified as causing ASB;
- Youth diversion, e.g. The Friday night youth project at Temple Park which can see up to 150/170 young people attending;
- Closing shops involved in the sale of counterfeit tobacco;
- Joint action to tackle motor cycle disorder;
- The East Shields area experienced a 41.7% reduction in reported motorcycle ASB incidents in the past five months in 2026 compared to the same five-month period in 2025. This had been achieved through joint Police and Council action to identify the riders and locations where the bikes were being stored. If this was the house of the rider, then the occupant/ parents will also be subject of action, especially if they were council tenants and tenancy action will be taken. It was noted the Officers were fully aware that tackling motorcycle disorder was the number one priority of residents;
- The sustained efforts detailed above would continue in 2026.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

4. CAF Funding Report

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

Merrik Robertson, Community and Place Development Co-ordinator, presented the report.

The approved CAF budget for 2026/27 was £1,050 million. The funding allocated to East Shields and Whitburn Community Area Forum for 2026/2027 was £221,826 which comprised:

- Environmental Capital Funding £ 111,111
- Housing Capital Funding £ 77,382
- Local Neighbourhood Scheme £ 33,333

Members were asked to consider whether the Housing Capital funding should be split equally amongst wards or based on the number of council houses in each ward. Details of both options were provided. A vote was taken and the majority of Members agreed that the Housing Capital Scheme be split equally between the wards.

A Member asked for an overview of existing programmes and it was clarified that this would be provided in the following agenda item.

It was asked how residents were involved in the funding schemes and it was said that the CAF Management Officer, alongside Members, could go visit any potential sites to consult with residents.

Agreed: That the Housing Capital Scheme funding be split equally amongst the wards.

5. CAF Management Report

Submitted: Report of the Assistant Director of Housing and Homelessness.

Merrik Robertson, Community Area Forum Manager, presented the report which provided Members with an update on CAF funded schemes and activity undertaken by the CAF Management Team.

Members were informed that a number of Environmental Capital and Housing Capital schemes approved by the Forum remained ongoing, with further detail and updates provided in Appendix A. The report also included information on projects that had not been completed at the time of the previous meeting.

It was noted that Merrik Robertson would continue in his role as CAF Manager, supported by Caroline Johnson. The role included working closely with ward Members to develop and progress current and future CAF schemes through to approval, and supporting the planning process for 2026/2027.

The Forum was advised that work was ongoing to review expenditure and ensure that CAF funding was allocated as effectively as possible, with a focus on progressing schemes in a timely manner.

The report usually contained a regular update from StreetScene; however it was suggested that StreetScene attend the next CAF meeting to give an overview of their work for the benefit of new Members.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

6. South Tyneside Housing Services Quarterly Report

Submitted: Report of the Housing Manager, East Shields.

Caitlin Mullen, Housing Manager, presented the report which provided Members with an update on Housing Services performance for Quarter 4 of 2025/2026 and a local update for the East Shields area.

It was noted that overall performance remained strong, with repairs performance exceeding targets and compliance across gas, fire, asbestos, water and lift safety checks at 100%. Members were advised that capital spend was slightly below target due to project delivery timescales, including consultation, procurement and regulatory approvals.

In relation to housing management, anti-social behaviour levels remained within target overall, although cases involving hate crime were above target. Partnership working with Police and other services continued to address issues and support residents. Performance relating to “behind the door” visits had improved during the latter part of the year, although East Shields remained slightly below target, with further work ongoing to increase access.

Income collection performance had improved, with rent collection exceeding target and arrears reduced to 2.62%, remaining within target. This was supported by early intervention and targeted assistance for tenants. Customer service performance remained strong, with high levels of calls resolved at first point of contact and complaints responded to within target timescales, including 100% compliance for stage 2 complaints.

The Welfare Support Team secured over £2.5 million in financial gains for East Shields residents, supporting households with benefits and financial advice. It was noted that housing demand remained high, with over 3,600 active applications, while homelessness prevention performance had improved through early intervention.

Void performance remained strong, with effective management ensuring properties were re-let efficiently, and work was ongoing to review allocation processes. The Health and Housing Team and Housing Plus services continued to provide support to residents, including wellbeing calls and assistance for those with complex needs.

A member of the public asked if Don Wade, the Council’s ASB and Neighbourhood Crime Co-ordinator, could attend STREF (South Tyneside Regional Equalities Forum). Officers promised to take this up with the relevant officers.

A Member asked how involved the Council’s social housing team were with new build houses in Whitburn that had been allocated as Council houses. The Officer advised that they had not been signed off yet so they had not been involved at this stage.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

7. End of Year Review

A presentation was provided outlining some of the schemes which had been completed using CAF funding, with the help of the CAF Management Team, over the last year.

Members were advised that during 2025/2026 the Team had facilitated over 150 ward meetings and site visits and attended 80 CAF and CAF business meetings. In total, 205 CAF schemes had been developed, with 128 taken through to approval, alongside 133 Local Neighbourhood Scheme applications processed.

It was noted that scheme development was Member-led, with officers working closely with ward Members and residents through site visits, gathering feedback and identifying local issues which informed project development across all wards. Images of some of the completed CAF schemes had been included for each ward.

Positive feedback from residents and community groups was noted, particularly in relation to environmental improvements, housing upgrades and projects supported through CAF funding, which had contributed to improved safety, parking, and community facilities.

A Member asked whether the removal of grass verges on Lincoln Road would affect drainage, but the Officer assured that Highways had assessed this would not be an issue. Some wards had also been trailing eco grid which would allow grass to grow through but would reinforce the verges for cars.

Agreed: That the presentation be noted.

8. Work Programme

Submitted: Report of the Director Governance & Corporate Affairs

The Democracy Support Officer presented this report to the CAF, with members of the CAF being asked to consider potential items for future meetings.

It was agreed that Streetscene would attend the next meeting to deliver a presentation.

A member of the public suggested that the Friends of Temple Memorial Park could attend a meeting of the CAF to introduce themselves and what they do.

A member of the public raised the issue of the Marsden Quarry as residents had been living with the issues which resulted from this site for a long time. The Ward Councillors assured the resident that they were aware of the issues and concerns of both residents and the National Trust and had a meeting had been arranged between them and the Site's management.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

9. Chair's Urgent Items

The Chair had no urgent items.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was announced as the 2nd of July. The CAF unanimously agreed that future meetings would continue to be at 6pm in St Gregory's Church for the rest of the 2026-2027 Municipal Year.

