



South Tyneside Council

item 2

Riverside Community Area Forum 14 July 2026

Riverside Community Area Forum Minutes

9 June 2026

Present: Councillors: Stonehouse (Chair), Brown, Fascione, Leather, McKeown, Perry, Tooley.

Peter Maloney (Hospitality and Hope), Shane Jenness (Northumbria Police), Donald Wade (ASB and Neighbourhood Crime Co-ordinator), Sandra McGurk (Community Safety and Tenancy Enforcement Manager), Kerry Wales (Community Safety and Tenancy Enforcement Assistant Manager), Catherine Delaney (Housing Manager), Merrik Robertson (Community and Place Development Co-Ordinator), and Emma Purvis (Senior Democracy Support Officer).

There was 9 members of the public and a member of the press also in attendance.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of 17 February 2026

Agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 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:

Contact Officer: Emma Purvis (Senior Democracy Support Officer) Tel. 424 7559

community area forum

Incidents

Type of Incident	April 2026	April 2025
Deliberate Primary Fires (excluding Road Vehicles)	0	1
Deliberate Primary Road Fires	2	0
Deliberate Secondary Fires	9	38
All Deliberate Fires	11	39

Incidents – Ward Breakdown

Ward	April 2026
Beacon and Bents	6
Simonside and Rekendyke	5
West Park	0
Westoe	0

Incidents

Type of Incident	May 2026	May 2025
Deliberate Primary Fires (excluding Road Vehicles)	0	2
Deliberate Primary Road Fires	0	2
Deliberate Secondary Fires	2	18
All Deliberate Fires	2	22

Incidents – Ward Breakdown

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

Northumbria Police

The Committee received a report from Northumbria Police which provided an update on activity in the Riverside area for the preceding 8-week period. Members were advised that a total of 1,530 incidents had been recorded, representing an increase from 1,327 in the previous reporting period, but broadly in line with the same period in 2025 (1,553).

It was reported that 528 crimes had been recorded during the period, an increase from 471 in the previous reporting period but an 18% decrease compared to the same period last year. The majority of offences related to theft and handling

(38%), followed by violence against the person (32%), criminal damage (9%) and public disorder (7%).

The Committee noted that the highest concentrations of crime were recorded on Dean Road, Mortimer Road and Keppel Street. Dean Road accounted for 70 offences, largely shoplifting incidents. Mortimer Road recorded 24 offences, also predominantly theft-related, and Keppel Street recorded 22 offences, including incidents of violence and public disorder linked to the Interchange.

Members were advised that burglary levels had reduced, with 7 residential and 5 commercial burglaries recorded during the period. There was no identifiable pattern to offences. It was reported that a prolific offender had recently been arrested and charged in connection with a number of burglary and theft offences. Vehicle crime remained low, with 14 offences recorded, consistent with the previous reporting period and below levels seen in the same period last year.

The Committee noted that 9 hate crimes had been recorded, a reduction from the previous period. The majority related to race, and several incidents had occurred at South Shields Interchange. Ongoing engagement with affected premises was reported.

Anti-social behaviour continued to be a priority, with 156 incidents recorded during the period, an increase on the previous period but remaining low in comparison to longer-term trends. It was noted that 39 incidents were youth-related. Targeted patrol activity had been undertaken under Operation Coastwatch and Operation Guardian, focusing on identified hotspot areas.

A Member noted that ASB levels tended to increase during the summer months, particularly involving young people and activity in areas such as Ocean Road. The Officer responded that not all ASB was youth related and the majority of people acted in a responsible manner, but one cohort was responsible for most of the ongoing issues. The warm weather and the permanent fairground at South Shields attracted a lot more people into the area and therefore increased the risk of ASB. Targeted operations and patrol activity were ongoing, including deployments to identified hotspot areas. However, police visibility was risk-based, and activity was directed through intelligence-led approaches.

Concerns were raised regarding motorcycle-related ASB and the Police advised that pursuit activity was governed by strict legislation, with only trained officers permitted to engage and only where safe to do so. Identification of offenders remained challenging, and additional tactics, including the use of drones and specialist resources were being utilised. The Police were looking to acquire more drones, and it was said that different kinds of drones were used depending on weather conditions. A Member asked if the Police used E-Bikes themselves to chase down offenders and it was confirmed that they did not. It was also noted that tenancy enforcement action, including warnings, had been used in response to such activity and more could be done to advertise the successes to the public.

A Member highlighted issues relating to ASB including reports of damage to the fairground. The Police confirmed that these incidents were being investigated.

Concerns were also raised about alcohol-related behaviour, incidents of violence and youth disorder, with some residents expressing reluctance to report incidents.

The Officer emphasised the importance of public reporting and encouraged residents to report incidents through official channels. It was noted that information shared through social media may not always be reliable and could slow down investigations if misinformation had been spread.

A Member of the public asked whether the Street Angels initiative was ongoing as they had struggled to find volunteers. The Officer did not think they had been able to continue but would be open to working with them if they were able to restart.

A Member emphasised that reports of ASB should be taken seriously, including those made by a witness and not just a victim. They suggested that there should be a follow up after a report had been made but the Officer confirmed that this was not current practice. They offered to discuss any specific cases of concern with the Member.

Community Safety, Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Crime Team

Donald Wade provided an update on anti-social behaviour (ASB), crime trends and partnership working across the Borough. Partnership working remained a key priority, with continued collaboration between the Council, police, housing providers and community partners. Work was ongoing with partner organisations to focus activity on key issues and develop longer-term solutions, supported by improved information sharing. The Officer also offered to work with a member of the public around their social media page which was being utilised by residents to support ASB.

It was reported that ASB incidents had reduced by 21% over the past 12 months, decreasing from 1,270 to 942 cases. Overall crime levels had also fallen by approximately 11.2%. Further reductions in ASB were noted across all areas, including a 26% reduction in Beacon and Bents, 5% in Simonside and Rekendyke, 41.8% in West Park (supported by tenancy enforcement activity), and 5% in Westoe, which had the lowest levels in the borough.

Members noted that shop theft in the West Park ward remained an area of concern, with targeted work being undertaken alongside the police. It was also highlighted that youth-related incidents had reduced by 36% across the Borough. Partnership work had also continued to tackle street drinkers in South Shields Town Centre and neighbourhood priority meetings looked to identify and manage repeat victims and offenders.

An overview was provided of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs), including the escalation process and conditions that could be imposed. It was advised that breaches constituted criminal offences and could result in prosecution. These powers had replaced ASBOs and were being used alongside other enforcement measures to address issues such as persistent street drinking. Members were informed of the borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to alcohol misuse, and that enforcement activity was supported by partner organisations, including drug and alcohol services offering support to those willing to engage.

it was reported that partnership and prevention work remained ongoing, with continued collaboration between Neighbourhood Officers, the Tenancy

Enforcement Team and wider partners. Youth Justice and diversionary services continued to support efforts to reduce youth-related ASB and offending. Positive engagement activity was being delivered through local youth projects, including initiatives in the Ocean Road area and football-based programmes, supported by patrol officers and community partners. Despite limited resources, the youth diversion team remained active in working with young people and families, with a focus on early intervention and parental education.

Work to identify and manage repeat offenders was ongoing. CCTV evidence and intelligence were being used to support investigations, with information shared across partner agencies to enable appropriate interventions and enforcement action.

Over the past 12 months, a number of closure orders had been secured against repeat offenders by the Tenancy Enforcement team. Approximately 30 house visits had been carried out prior to Christmas as part of preventative and enforcement work. Residents were encouraged to provide information regarding suspected breaches of tenancy agreements or illegal use of properties. It was highlighted that individuals involved in serious nuisance behaviour, including motorcycle-related disorder, could be subject to enforcement action which may ultimately place their tenancy at risk.

A member of the public advised that it was positive to see the level of partnership working and things posted on social media could be embellished. They also commented that police were restricted by funding and needed public support. They are stressed that public perception was key. The Officer agreed, noting that good work had been done in the past to tackle gang crime in the area and Northumbria Police had lost thousands of officers and staff to budget cuts.

Community Safety and Tenancy Enforcement

The report of the Community Safety and Tenancy Enforcement Manager provided an update on performance for Quarter 4 2025/26. The report outlined the number of new cases opened during the year, the majority of which related to South Tyneside Council properties. Cases were categorised as urgent and standard, although comparisons with the previous year were not available due to the transition to a new case management system.

The main case types continued to be noise nuisance, harassment and intimidation, and violence, consistent with wider anti-social behaviour trends. Seven hate crimes were recorded during 2025/26, with none reported in Quarter 4. A number of full and partial closure orders had been secured during the year to address issues relating to drug and alcohol use, criminality and exploitation.

Members were advised that the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy had been approved by Cabinet in May 2026, setting out a clearer approach to prevention, early intervention, victim support and proportionate enforcement.

An internal audit of the service had also been completed, with findings to be reported in Quarter 1 2026/27. Training continued throughout the year, including system training and preparation for legislative changes arising from the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Communication activity was ongoing, including social media

updates and publicity following enforcement action to raise awareness of anti-social behaviour.

Emerging issues included cases where access had been refused for safety and compliance works, which had resulted in legal action. There was also ongoing multi-agency work to address youth disorder and street drinking in the town centre. Members were advised that there had been an increase in complex cases, particularly those involving mental health and substance misuse, with a continued focus on a trauma-informed approach and partnership working.

A Member asked if there were any quicker methods to gain access to a property than legal enforcement. Council tenants were bound by their tenancy agreement which required them to provide access for electrical and gas safety work. Property condition could also warrant an injunction which would allow officers access to work with the customer.

It was asked what the threshold was for evicting someone from a Council property and it was clarified that this was dependent on the individual circumstances.

Agreed: That the reports 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 Riverside Community Area Forum for 2026/2027 was £202,829 which comprised:

- Environmental Capital Funding £111,111
- Housing Capital Funding £58,385
- 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. Members unanimously agreed that the funding should be split by the number of council houses.

Agreed: That the Housing Capital Scheme funding be split by the number of council houses.

5. CAF Management Team Update

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 also gave an update on Streetscene services. Members were advised that the service continued to deliver cleansing and grounds maintenance functions across South Tyneside in preparation for the summer period, including street cleansing, park management, coastal services and mechanical road sweeping. The service was also managing external contractors delivering grounds maintenance, including grass cutting, horticulture, weed control and beach levelling.

Beach levelling works had recently been completed at Littlehaven and Sandhaven beaches. This work had been undertaken to address the impact of winter storms, improve access for visitors and support the natural coastline ahead of the summer season. It was reported that work would continue throughout the summer to clear sand from walkways to maintain safe and accessible routes.

A member of the public asked how the grass cutting contractor was being monitored as cuttings were being left strewn across pavements which did not leave a good impression of the Borough. They also suggested that street cleaning hadn't been as thorough and the Officer stressed that any street cleanliness issues should be reported and the service had lost six staff to retirement. In terms of the grass cuttings, it was not in the contract for the provider to clear away the cuttings as this came at significant additional cost.

A member of the public highlighted that elected Members in the previous year had convened a committee sub-group to look at the grass cutting and grounds maintenance contracts in great detail. They highlighted the funding constraints and stressed that the officers had worked hard to get the best contract possible.

Another member of the public noted some paving slabs which were raised and could be a trip hazard. It was reported an inspector from Highways could come out to assess the pavement and see if a repair was required. Another member of the public raised that cars parking on the pavement was causing damage and asked if the Council could prosecute for this. A Member responded that this was best dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

6. South Tyneside Housing Services Quarterly Report

Catherine Delaney, Housing Manager for Riverside, presented a report which provided an update on Housing Services performance for Quarter 4 2025/26. Members were advised that overall performance had remained strong across a number of key areas.

Repairs performance continued to exceed targets, with 99.79% of emergency repairs and 99.08% of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescales. Performance was also strong in relation to jobs completed right first time at 87.32%, and appointments where there was no answer remained below target at 5.90%. It was noted that compliance across all areas, including gas, fire, asbestos, water and lift safety, remained at 100%.

Anti-social behaviour case levels were within target overall at 32.20 per 1,000 properties. However, cases involving hate crime had increased to 4.01 against a target of 0.6, reflecting national trends. Partnership working with Police and support services to address this was outlined. Progress in delivering “behind the door” visits was reported, with 754 visits completed during the year. Although below target due to staffing pressures earlier in the year, performance had improved significantly in Quarters 3 and 4.

Rent collection performance remained strong at 100.18%, exceeding the 99% target. Rent arrears in Riverside stood at 3.58%, slightly above the 3.50% target, with a continued focus on early intervention and tenant support.

Customer contact performance was reported as exceeding targets, with 99.56% of calls resolved at first point of contact and abandoned calls reduced to 3.81%. Complaint handling performance also remained strong, with 92.22% of Stage 1 complaints and 100% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales.

The report advised that £2.49 million in financial gains had been secured for Riverside residents, including £487k during Quarter 4, supporting tenants through welfare changes and financial pressures.

Performance in homelessness prevention was highlighted as a key strength, with 60.85% of cases prevented against a 50% target, representing a significant improvement on the previous year. A total of 553 households had been prevented from becoming homeless.

It was reported that 3,655 housing applications were currently active. Void levels remained stable, with 20 general needs voids and 2 Housing Plus voids at year end.

Health and Housing performance also remained strong, with 99% of tenancies sustained for at least 12 months, and assessments commencing within 18 days against a 28-day target. Housing Plus services had continued to provide daily wellbeing calls and maintained full delivery of safety and support checks.

The key challenges for the service were noted, including demand pressures, staffing capacity in some areas, and rising complexity of cases.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

7. Hospitality and Hope

Members and residents were given a presentation from Peter Maloney, the CEO of Hospitality and Hope, outlining services offered and their impact locally. It was explained that the key priorities of Hospitality and Hope were reducing food insecurity, reducing homelessness, and improving community wellbeing.

Services offered included:

- Food and data bank
- Housing support
- Debt and welfare advice
- Community shops
- Wellbeing activities
- Food hub
- Charity shop

Further detail was provided on the community shops, highlighting that these aimed to offer a sustainable alternative to foodbanks for those within a 1.5-mile radius. The shops were located at Horsley Hill, Simonside and Rekendyke, and Beacon and Bents, with a £5 weekly membership to receive £25 worth of goods including fruit, vegetables, bread, tinned and frozen items.

A slide was also included which outlined the impact of Hospitality and Hope which included £887,667 returned to the local economy in benefit and debt advice. On housing support, it was explained that this was open to male residents in need, and 39 had been supported, with a 90% success rate for independent living. It was clarified that there were additional requirements for a service for homeless women and facilities for this were in existence.

Additional initiatives included the Wellbeing Hub, offering free activities to promote confidence, and the Food Hub, focussing on food education, skills and affordability.

Copies of a recent research project, In Our Own Words, were available for Members and residents to take away, this project highlighted the positive impact that Community Shops had had on the community and featured testimonials from service users.

A Member thanked Peter for his presentation and noted that they had not been aware of the breadth of work undertaken by the Charity and asked if there was anything Members could do to help. Members were invited to come along to one of Hospitality and Hope's premises and were asked to advocate for the service and raise awareness.

A Member asked where the charity obtained funding and it was said that it was sourced from the Council, foundations and trusts such as the Postcode Lottery, as well as the Household Support and Crisis Resilience funds.

A Member asked what were the challenges in relation to housing rough sleepers. It was said that it could be difficult to get people through the doors as some were used to being housed in a hotel which was a different experience. It was noted

that education was important and not everyone wanted to engage with professionals.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

8. 2025/26 CAF Management Team 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.

It was asked whether there were any schemes which would continue into the new municipal year. It was confirmed that this was not the case, although some were still to be completed, funding had already been allocated from the previous year.

Agreed: That the report be noted

9. Timings of Future CAF meetings

The Democracy Support Officer explained that the Forum needed to make a decision to determine the CAF meeting times for the 2026/27 municipal year. In accordance with the Council's constitution, at least 50% of the meetings needed to be in the evening.

Agreed: That the remaining CAF meetings for 2026/27 be scheduled for 5:30pm.

10. Work Programme for the Forum 2026/27

This report presented the Work Programme for 2026-27 which outlined standard reports and detailed proposed topics for the year.

Agreed: That the 2026/27 Work Programme be noted.

11. Chair's Urgent Items

There were no Chair's urgent items.

Chair's Signature