

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY, 4th JANUARY, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Wares in the Chair

Councillors Ball, P. Dixon, Errington, M. Forbes, E. Gibson, T. Martin, Mordey, M. Smith, Vardy and Wood.

Also Present:-

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| Kath Butchert | - Youth Development Group Manager, Sunderland City Council |
| Matthew Jackson | - Democratic Services Officer, Sunderland City Council |
| Janet Johnson | - Deputy Chief Executive and Area Lead Executive, Sunderland City Council |
| Ray Leonard | - Chief Executive, Back on the Map |
| Vivienne Metcalf | - Area Community Coordinator, Sunderland City Council |
| Jane Peverley | - Marketing Manager, Sunderland City Council |
| Dave Richardson | - Interim Assistant Head of Environmental Services, Sunderland City Council |
| Nicky Rowland | - Local Environment Manager, Sunderland City Council |
| Phil Spooner | - Programme Manager, Sunderland City Council |
| Nicol Trueman | - Area Officer, Sunderland City Council |
| Jeremy Wicking | - Media Officer, Sunderland City Council |
| Graeme Wilson | - Assistant Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, Sunderland City Council |

Members of the East Area Community

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Paul Maddison, Peter Maddison and O'Connor and also Paul Gray, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 9th November, 2009

Councillor T. Martin stated that he had specifically mentioned Borough Road in front of the Museum as being unable to be accessed by taxis. He felt that if this road was opened up to allow taxis to access it then there would be better access to the city centre.

Councillor T. Martin then advised that he had not been contacted regarding the concerns he had raised regarding Hendon Beach.

The Chairman advised that there would be a response provided.

Councillor Wood queried when the reports regarding empty properties and private landlords, and Trinity Church and Fawcett Street were going to be presented to the committee.

Graeme Wilson, Assistant Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Manager advised that following the presentation given at the previous meeting on empty properties and private landlords an update report would be delivered to a future meeting.

Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, advised that Mike Lowe, Conservation Officer, had approached Trinity Church and had requested the report; there was currently progress underway on producing this report.

The Chairman asked that these reports be provided to Members as soon as possible.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th November, 2009 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 5 – Sunderland East a Healthy Area

Councillor Errington declared a personal interest as an employee of City Hospitals Sunderland

Councillor E. Gibson declared a personal interest as a family member was employed by the Teaching Primary Care Trust

Councillor M. Smith declared a personal interest as a family member was employed by the Teaching Primary Care Trust

Item 7 – Financial Statements and Funding Requests

Councillor Errington declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Community Chest application for Portland Judo Club as a governor of Portland School

The Chairman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application for funding for People Power as chairman of Ryhope Community Association.

Questions to Area Committee

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed the committee of the questions received to date and which sought the Area Committee's agreement to extend the pilot and for a review to be undertaken and reported to the March meeting of the Area Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Matthew Jackson, Democratic Services Officer, presented the report and advised that there would be a review of the process which would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

To date there had been questions received as follows:

Coalfield Area:	0
East Area:	3
North Area:	0
Washington Area:	7
West Area:	1

The questions submitted to the East Area Committee were in relation to the ongoing issues regarding safety and access at Hendon Beach; the concerns caused by empty properties in the Long Streets area of Hendon; and Street sweeping in the Long Streets Area.

Jane Peverley, Marketing Manager, advised that the response for the question regarding Hendon Beach had not been finalised and that this would be provided to the Members and Mr Moore, the resident who submitted the question, by 13th January, 2010. She apologised to the Members for not having the response available for the meeting.

Graeme Wilson, Assistant Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, presented the response for the question regarding empty properties. He advised the Committee of the powers available to the Council for dealing with empty properties including enforced sale, compulsory purchase and empty dwelling management orders. Owners were always contacted to discuss their intentions for the property and to advise them of the options available. Owners would be encouraged to work with the Council to bring the property back into use or to sell the property so that a prospective purchaser could bring the property back into use.

The use of Enforcement tools was always a final resort and they had been used successfully in the past.

From April 2006 there had been 272 properties in Hendon brought back into use and 81 of these had been located in the Long Streets Area.

With regards to the premises specifically mentioned in the question it was confirmed that the Council was working with the owners and the current position for the properties was:-

- No. 67 St. Leonard Street – legal procedures were being followed and it was hoped that very soon the owner would be in a position to follow up their intentions and place the property on the market for sale.
- No. 76 St. Leonard Street – the current owners intend to place the property on the market for sale and the Council was aware of a party that had expressed an interest in its purchase.
- No. 78 St. Leonard Street – the sale of this property had recently been confirmed and the new owners intended its refurbishment as soon as possible.

With regard to the latter property it needed to be noted that the Council cannot force owners to have rear yard gates, doors or walls installed and it was the decision of the owners whether to undertake this work.

The Chairman then allowed a brief discussion of the issues raised.

Local Resident Mr Moore, who had submitted the question, stated that he had attended a meeting with Alan Caddick, Head of Housing, over a year ago and the condition of these properties had been raised then and there still had been no progress made in bringing the property back into use.

Mr Wilson advised that properties had been brought back into use and the Council did what they could do with regards to bringing the properties into use. There were plans to introduce selective licensing into the area which would assist in bringing more empty properties back into use.

A member of the public stated that there were a lot of residents who were thinking of selling their houses and moving away from the area because of all of these empty properties. If improvements were made then some of these residents may consider remaining in the area. Visual improvements to these properties would improve the whole area.

Councillor Wood commented that these properties had deteriorated over the last year and asked that a report be submitted to the next meeting to show what can be done.

Mr Wilson agreed to provide an update on the properties to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor T. Martin stated that while there had been progress made regarding the implementation of Selective Licensing, the residents did not have the impression of progress. Visual improvements to these three properties would help reassure residents that work was being undertaken.

The Chairman asked Mr Wilson to meet with the property owners to discuss making visual improvements to the properties.

Mr Wilson agreed to meet with the property owners.

Councillor Mordey commented that he hoped that in the near future people would be moving into the properties named in the report.

The Chairman commented that he understood the residents' frustration due to the time taken to bring properties back into use.

Dave Richardson, Interim Assistant Head of Environmental Services, presented the response to the question regarding street sweeping in the Long Streets area of Hendon. He advised that previously there had been additional funding for cleansing within the area however this funding had now ceased. The cleansing provision had been reviewed to ensure that there was an effective service in place. There was a street sweeper with a barrow, a weekly bulky waste collection and mechanical sweepers operating in the area. While the services were not as frequent as when the additional funding was in place the services had been rearranged to ensure their effectiveness. There was a late night litter removal team operated in the area and the teams were doing the best job they could.

In response to a query from Councillor Mordey, Mr Richardson advised that the street sweeper with the barrow visited the area on a weekly basis.

Councillor T. Martin commented that the additional resources had been provided by Back on the Map and New Deal for Communities. All areas were entitled to a cleansing service and there should be an effective service in Hendon. There were concerns that the mechanical sweeper did not do an adequate job.

Mr Richardson advised that Hendon still had more resources than some other areas in the city. Additional resources were not always the answer, sometimes there was a need for enforcement action. He introduced Nicky Rowland, Local Environment Manager, who was available to answer any questions regarding enforcement action.

Councillor M. Forbes commented that those responsible for the ongoing problem should be targeted and there should be heavy enforcement action taken against offenders.

Councillor Mordey asked Ms. Rowland how many prosecutions there had been.

Ms. Rowland advised that there were a number of prosecutions pending and there had been fixed penalty notices issued. There had been notices provided to residents advising them of how to deal with their waste. She agreed to provide a response detailing the figures for the number of prosecutions and FPNs. There was a zero tolerance approach taken and offenders were required to pay any fines.

A member of the public advised that the Enforcement Officers sometimes targeted the wrong people. The local residents were not always to blame for

the litter. Three Lambrini bottles had been picked up from outside of a house and these had not been left by residents.

Mr Richardson advised that enforcement action would only take place when there was sufficient evidence. Empty bottles were an Anti Social Behaviour issue and he would ensure that the problem was referred to the local LMAPS group.

Councillor Mordey expressed concerns over the lack of police attendance at the meeting. The Chairman agreed to find out why the police had not attended.

Councillor T. Martin commented that there had been two successful prosecutions for fly tipping in the area and that neither of the offenders had been residents of the area.

Ms. Rowland advised that the transporters of waste would be targeted.

Councillor P. Dixon commented that there was also a problem with fly tipping in Millfield and he was looking forward to seeing the benefits of enforcement action being undertaken in the area.

Councillor M. Forbes requested information detailing the number of litter bins and their locations.

Mr Richardson agreed to find information on this and provide a response to Members.

Councillor Mordey asked what steps would be taken to progress tackling this issue.

Mr Richardson stated that he had experience of similar problems in other areas. In his experience there was a need to change attitudes by using information and enforcement. Sending a waste collection truck weekly resulted in people believing that it was acceptable to dump waste.

2. RESOLVED that the questions and responses be received and noted and that approval be given to a review of the pilot scheme being undertaken.

Sunderland East a Healthy Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed Members to consider the Healthy thematic priorities and requested that Members agree the identified actions.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman advised that the presenting officer from the Primary Care Trust had been unable to attend the meeting and as such he moved that Members agree to defer consideration of the item until a later date.

3. RESOLVED that the item be deferred.

Sunderland East Area Action Plans

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed Members to receive feedback on the thematic priorities which had previously been discussed by the committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, presented the report and updated Members on the progress made on the Learning and Attractive and Inclusive City themes. She advised that Kath Butchert was available to respond to any queries regarding the gaps and needs for Youth Provision as part of the Commissioning Model for Youth Contracts.

The Members were also asked to consider ways to improve bus links throughout the area. Information provided by Members would be included in consultation on bus services.

There was also an update provided under the safe theme regarding the Community Payback Scheme being used to carry out works to improve quality of life in the area for local residents.

With regards to bus links and pedestrian access Councillors T. Martin and Mordey advised that the East End had very poor bus and pedestrian links into the city centre which restricted access to the city centre. They felt that this area should be looked at.

Councillor Mordey also advised that it had been requested that the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee would look at the issue of private landlords and there would be feedback provided to the Area Committee.

Councillor Errington commented that it would be good to have Nexus attend a meeting of the Committee however he felt that it would be more beneficial to have the bus companies attend. He felt that there would not be progress made on improving the services without consulting with the operators as well as Nexus.

Councillor E. Gibson stated that it was important to maintain youth centres in each ward. There needed to be provision within every ward so that the young people in the area had access to facilities without needing to travel into other areas.

Kath Butchert, Youth Development Group Manager, advised that the Youth Contracts would be finalised by the end of February. There would be a contract developed for each ward and there would be a minimum of three sessions of youth work in each ward.

4. RESOLVED that:-
- a. The feedback report be received and noted.
 - b. The new commissioning model for youth contracts across the city be noted.
 - c. Opportunities for potential improvements to public transport routes and walking access across the city be identified and the information be provided to Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, and Bob Donaldson, Transportation Manager.
 - d. Areas which would benefit from the Community Payback Scheme be identified.

Financial Statements and Funding Request

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed Members to consider the proposals for funding from the Community Chest, SIB and SIP budgets to provide support for initiatives and projects which would benefit the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, presented the report and advised Members of the applications received and the officer recommendations for each application. The officer recommendations had been made using the guidelines from consultation and feedback.

There were nine proposals for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest set out in Annex 1. These 9 proposals totalled £7451 and should they be approved then there would be funding remaining as follows:

Doxford Ward: £833

Hendon Ward: £0

Millfield Ward: £207

Ryhope Ward: £4,081

St. Michael's Ward: £2,029

There were three proposals for support from SIB funding with a recommendation to approve, totalling £70,722. These were:

1. People Power, Ryhope Community Association - £55,722
2. Miners Memorial Project, Sunderland City Council - £5,000
3. Seaburn Public Realm, Sunderland City Council - £10,000

There was one proposal with a recommendation to refuse:

4. Sunderland Dance - £11,645

There was one proposal with a recommendation to defer:

5. Education Business Connections - £11,453

There were two proposals for funding from the Ryhope Ward SIP budget totalling £31,995. These were:

6. Refurbishment, Sunderland Young Peoples' Bike Project - £19,000
7. Refurbishment, Olympians Boxing Club - £12,995

There were two proposals for funding from the Millfield Ward SIP budget totalling £4,562. These were:

8. Upgrade Security, St Marks Community Association - £2,762
9. Demolish Wall, Northumbria Police - £1,800

Councillors P. Dixon, M. Forbes and Wood expressed concerns over the proposal for the Miners Memorial Project and stated that they felt they could not support this application. As such the decision was put to the vote and with:

4 Members voting to reject the application, and

7 Members voting to approve the application,

the application was approved.

Councillors M. Forbes and Wood expressed concerns over the application for Seaburn Sea Front; they felt that as this was an application for a project with citywide implications it would be more appropriate to fund the project from mainstream funding. They also felt that as there were beaches within the east area which were in need of the funding. The application should be deferred until more information could be provided regarding the amount of match funding that would be provided to this project.

The decision was put to the vote and with:

3 Members voting to defer the application,

7 Members voting to approve the application, and

1 Members abstaining,

the application was approved.

5. RESOLVED that:

- a. The 9 proposals for funding from the 2009/10 Community Chest be approved.
- b. The applications for SIB funding from the 2009/10 budget for People Power, Miners Memorial and Seaburn Public Realm be approved.
- c. The application for SIB funding for Sunderland Dance be rejected.
- d. The application for SIB funding for Education Business Connections be deferred.
- e. The applications for funding from the SIP budget be approved.
- f. The financial statement for Area Committee funding for 2009/10 be received and noted.

Area Review Process: - Introduction of a Referral Criteria and Process for Dealing with Issues of Local Concern Incorporating a Revised Mechanism for Councillor Call for Action – Initial Proposals

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the development of the new Area Governance arrangements and the introduction of a Referral Criteria and requested Members support of the introduction of the referral criteria.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, presented the report and advised Members that any comments received would be referred to Cabinet along with the revised procedure for approval and would be implemented and included in the Area Committee Handbook. Members had until 18th January, 2010 to make comments.

Councillor T. Martin commented that the administrative processes needed to be correct. There were problems caused when documentation was sent to the wrong people or was unread and this could result in no progress being made.

Councillor Mordey stated that he had seen these procedures when they had been presented to the scrutiny committees. Originally there had been an additional layer where all Councillor Call for Action referrals were referred to the Management Scrutiny Committee; he had been opposed to this as it added an extra level of bureaucracy. It should be the responsibility of the Member to seek guidance for where the call for action should be referred.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that Members comments be referred to Cabinet for inclusion in the revised procedures and Area Committee Handbook.

Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Networks and Volunteering in Your Area

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (Copy circulated) which informed the Members of the progress and proposed future development regarding the involvement and representation of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) within the new Area Arrangements. The report also informed Members of the intention to celebrate the contribution of volunteers within the five Areas of the City and sought feedback from the Committee on the arrangements for area based celebrations.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Vivienne Metcalfe, Area Community Development Co-ordinator, presented the report and advised that there would be an Annual Volunteer Celebration taking place during National Volunteers Week, 1st – 7th June, and to complement this event it was proposed that there would be area based

celebrations held to endure that volunteers across the city would be recognised for their contribution. She asked that Members provide any nominations for volunteers who should be recognised during these celebrations by 5th February.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that Members pass any nominations to Vivienne Metcalfe.

Responsive Local Services

The Executive Director of City Services and the Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the current Service Standards for the services currently being reviewed as part of the Responsive Local Services project.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Phil Spooner, Programme Manager, presented the report and advised that there was a lot of work to be done and these reports would be used to show the progress being made. The service standards were currently standardised across the city and the Committee would be able to influence the service standards for the area.

The Chairman stated that the Committee should use this opportunity to improve the services in the area.

Councillor Wood asked that when the future reports were received that an update was included on the future of recycling in the city as the current Kerb it system was to be phased out. He also queried the number of collections and missed collections each month.

Mr Spooner agreed to contact the relevant department to ensure that an update was provided on the Kerb it scheme.

Dave Richardson, Interim Assistant Head of Environmental Services, advised that the figures were for the number of bins emptied in a month and that if a bin was emptied weekly then this would be classed as four bins emptied in a month.

Councillor P. Dixon commented that there were figures for bin collections but not for recycling collections, considering that recycling was encouraged he felt that there was a need for there to be figures available. He also congratulated the Council for their work on removing graffiti but expressed concerns that the utility companies were not doing as good a job.

Councillor Mordey added that bus stops and telephone boxes were often vandalised.

Councillor M. Forbes commented that there had been 144 missed bin collections and 8 missed assisted bin collections, was there any information available as to why these collections had been missed and was there any information on ways to reduce the number of missed collections.

Mr Richardson advised that each bin lorry had a list of assisted collections however access to properties could sometimes be difficult and this would lead to missed collections.

Mr Spooner added that if there was a pattern to the missed collections then there would be an investigation to find the reasons for the missed collections.

A member of the public advised that there was a problem in Hendon with broken glass in front gardens. The Council had said that they were unable to act as the glass was on private property. Some of this glass had been there for over two years and it was a safety hazard for children and pets.

Mr Spooner advised that there were problems with entering private property to carry out cleaning; permission was required from the owner of the property.

Councillor T. Martin stated that it was easy to clean up glass and the Council employees should be able to perform this task. If the cleaning was left for too long then it was possible for there to be an environmental risk and the potential for rats.

The Chairman asked that officers look into this to see if there was anything that could be done about this.

Mr Spooner agreed to look into this issue.

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that the Committee receive further updates.

(Signed) D.R. WARES,
Chairman.