

25<sup>th</sup> April 2013

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE**

**Annual Report 2012/13**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To approve the Washington Area Committee's Annual Report as part of the combined Area Committees Annual Report 2012/13 to be presented to Full Council.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 This will be the second year that all Area Committee reports have been brought together in one combined report and presented to Full Council.
- 2.2 The combined report will provide an update on how Area Arrangements have developed over this last year in addition to an overview of all 5 Area Committee Achievements during that period and in line with agreed Work Plans for 2012/13.

**3. Annual Report**

- 3.1 The Annual Report for Washington Area Committee is attached as **Annex 1**.

**4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 Members are requested to consider and approve the Washington Annual Report for inclusion in the combined Area Committees Annual Report for 2012/13.

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**Annual Report 2012/13 Washington Area Committee**



**Cllr Bernie Scaplehorn  
Chair of Washington Area Committee**

At the beginning of this financial year Washington Area Committee set out its priorities for the year ahead and produced a plan detailing proposed activity. The key priorities where Area Committee wanted to focus work and resources and bring real benefits to the local community included developing networks and links between the villages, local activities and events, supporting young people into education, employment and training, health projects, improved access to information, advice and guidance, and support the voluntary and community sector.

The Committee has worked hard this year to ensure the best outcomes from its resources, and has allocated over £320,000 to projects to deliver these priorities. Partnership working has been key to ensure value for money and maximum benefit. A lot of excellent work has taken place over the last 12 months and key achievements have included:-

- Influencing local Street Scene services, such as street cleaning, winter maintenance and grass cutting. An approach to prioritising the redirection of council resources for pruning and maintenance of shrub beds and plantations has been developed through the Place Board.
- Influencing services for children and young people and providing funding for activities for young people of all ages. The Committee has influenced new youth contracts by shaping the service in terms of how, when and where activities will be delivered locally.
- Residents have helped to create an attractive and cared for environment, maintain high standards and display real pride in their area. This includes organising local litter picks and clean ups with groups tackling specific issues and participating in events such as Northumbria in Bloom and the 'Love Where You Live' campaign.
- The illegal dumping of shopping trolleys has long been a contentious issue for Washington, particularly for those neighbourhoods close to the Galleries. Through the Place Board, partners have worked to find solutions.
- There has been a lot of work to understand the impact of flooding in Washington and to help local people. Members have worked with the Council, the Environment Agency, Northumbria Water, and Gentoo to identify solutions.
- The Council, companies, and landlords are working together to help to improve dilapidated industrial estates.
- The Area Committee has been involved and consulted on 2 key projects – a new £11m Leisure Centre, and a £5m Managed Work Space on the Turbine Business Park

- A range of events and activities to celebrate tradition and culture have taken place. The Area Committee has already set aside £34,000 to ensure the Heritage Festival in Albany Park and the Washington Illuminations Switch On will happen again in 2013.
- Local young people were given as many opportunities as possible to access employment and education, and building on last year's successes through the Youth Opportunities Project the Committee has invested £100,000 in the School Opportunities Project, which works in the local secondary schools targeting young people at risk of leaving without going into further education, employment or training. The Youth Opportunities Project has engaged with more than 90 young people and has seen 53 young people moving into employment or an apprenticeship this year
- The Community has always been at the heart of the Committee's work. The Washington Trust has been supported to help partners work together to bring additional resources and services to the area.

In summary, Washington Area Committee has encouraged, adopted and embedded partnership in everything we have delivered this year and will continue to keep local communities at the heart of what we do. This has resulted in real and meaningful successes for Washington's communities and we are committed to improving on the successes we have seen this year.

The overall achievement of the Washington Area Committee is to be credited to the commitment of the Members and the teams I have been honoured to work with. Washington councillors have played a key role in moving the Area Committee forward and enabling our reputation to grow.

My thanks go to the members of the Area Committee, partners, officers and residents for their work and support throughout the year in helping to achieve such positive results and better services for local people.