

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL on MONDAY, 25th MARCH, 2024 at 5.30p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Herron in the Chair

Councillors Curtis, Dixon, Fagan, Gibson, Leonard, Mordey, Morrissey, Potts, Reed and Scanlan.

Also Present:-

- Lee Bell - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Steven Gordon - Gentoo
- Matthew Jackson - Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
- Fiona Kelly - Partnership and Community Resilience Manager, Sunderland City Council
- Julie Maven - East Area VCS Representative
- Gerry Taylor - Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities and Area Lead Executive, Sunderland City Council

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received on behalf of Councillors Graham-King, Hodson and Wood.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 11th December 2023

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th December 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

VCS Area Network Progress Report

The East Area VCS Network provided the Committee with a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the work of the East Area VCS Network.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Maven introduced the report and informed the meeting of the presentations received by the network at the three meetings which had taken place since the last area committee meeting.

There being no questions from Members it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the update from the East Area VCS Network be noted.

Northumbria Police Update

Neighbourhood Inspector Jamie Southwell submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the crime statistics for the East area and of the work done by Northumbria Police.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Members expressed concerns that this was the third meeting in a row where there had not been a representative from Northumbria Police in attendance.

Councillor Gibson commented that the figures were encouraging to see; he noted that there had been an increase in shoplifting however there were no figures for the number of offences. He also noted that there had been an increase in burglary, violence and drug offences and questioned whether the increases in burglaries and violence were due to drugs.

Councillor Reed questioned whether the work of the SAIL team in the area around Park Lane covered the housing in the area as well; he felt that the housing area needed to be covered by the SAIL team.

3. RESOLVED that the update from Northumbria Police be noted.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Update

Lee Bell, Station Manager Sunderland Central Fire Station, submitted a written report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the work of the fire service for the period 1st December 2023 to 6th March 2024.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Bell introduced the report and advised that although there was a high percentage increase in the number of deliberate fires it was important to note that it was a small number of fires. There had been proactive work done alongside the police in relation to vehicle fires.

Councillor Fagan stated that there had been a number of fires around the trees on St Lawrence Place in Doxford, the rubbish around the trees had since been removed. Mr Bell stated that these could be the same fires listed as Doxford Park Way and that there had not been any more incidents reported since the rubbish had been removed.

4. RESOLVED that the report of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be noted.

Gentoo Update

Steve Gordon, Gentoo Group presented a report, (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Gordon introduced the report and delivered a presentation providing an update on the work done by Gentoo to tackle the issue of damp and mould.

Councillor Leonard queried where the furniture for CSS came from and whether residents could donate furniture to the scheme. Mr Gordon advised that there were a number of providers and that donations were welcomed.

The Chairman referred to the rent increases and the removal of the cost of living support; he was concerned that these combined would lead to tenants falling into arrears. Mr Gordon advised that the government guidelines had been followed when determining the rent increases and that the money matters team had been expanded to allow additional support to be provided to any tenants who were struggling financially.

Councillor Gibson expressed concerns that the communication with tenants regarding damp and mould was via electronic methods; some residents were digitally excluded and the council had passed a motion regarding residents not being excluded from services due to not being digitally aware.

Councillor Dixon expressed concerns that other housing providers in the city may not be taking such a proactive approach to dealing with the issue of damp and mould. Gerry Taylor advised that she had written to all of the housing providers about this matter and most had provided a response.

Councillor Curtis asked whether there had been any issues raised regarding damp and mould in council owned properties and Ms Taylor advised that

there had been some issues and that there were systems in place to ensure that they were addressed.

5. RESOLVED that the report from Gentoo be noted.

Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance Update

The Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the work done by the Alliance during the period October 2023 to February 2024.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the update from Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance be noted.

East Sunderland Area Committee Delivery Plan 2023 - 2026

The Chair of the East Sunderland Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on progress against the priorities within the East Sunderland Area Committee Area Plan for 2023/2026.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Dixon introduced the report as Chair of the Area Board and drew Members attention to the priorities set out in the delivery plan.

In reference to the Glyphosate trials Councillor Reed stated that the alternative weed control options had not worked and asked whether the trial streets had subsequently been treated with Glyphosate. Ms Kelly asked for the locations to be provided so that she could investigate this and report back.

Councillor Scanlan referred to the Go Online project stating that more information had been requested at the last meeting. Ms Kelly replied that there had been a presentation to the last meeting of the Area Board and that Members would receive a quarterly update report; there was no further information available at this time.

7. RESOLVED that:-
 - i) consideration be given to the progress and performance update with regard to the East Area Committee Area Plan 2023-2026
 - ii) consideration be given to the progress update with regard to Sunderland City Council Service Plans – Area Priorities, which were provided for information purposes only.
 - iii) approval be given to the locations to be included in the Highways Maintenance Programme for 2024/25 as contained in Annex 3.

East Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided financial statements in respect of the Area Committee's delegated budgets and presented proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Fiona Kelly, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager, presented the report highlighting the Committee's financial statement, the Neighbourhood Fund had a starting balance of £408,817 for the 2023/24 year. Following approvals at the previous meetings and underspends from previous projects being returned to the budget, as set out in table one at paragraph 2.1, there was a remaining balance of £125,577. There were 6 applications in respect of the East Park and Street Rangers project extension which were recommended for approval at this meeting which totalled £47,740 of which £45,000 had previously been aligned to the project. Additionally there were three proposals for alignment of funds and should these be agreed then the remaining balance would be £0.

Each ward had been allocated a Community Chest budget of £10,000; the approvals were set out in annex 2 with the remaining balances shown in the table at paragraph 3.2.

Councillor Scanlan queried whether there was more information available on the Fancy a Day Out project. Ms Kelly advised that there had been a meeting to discuss this project and that it would follow a similar programme to the previous Fancy a Day Out project; it was important to ensure that the project did not duplicate the work of the HAF programme. Further detail on the project would be able to be provided at the next meeting of the Area Board.

In response to Councillor Dixon, Ms Kelly advised that the Can Do project was based on a project which had been running in the Coalfield Area; it involved young people in the area developing projects based on their ideas and receiving small grants to support their projects. The young people would then present an update on their projects to the Board meetings.

Councillor Curtis stated that he had spoken with Councillors from the Coalfield Area and they had advised that the Can Do project had been a success in their area.

Councillor Dixon then asked Ms Kelly to provide an update on the position of the In Bloom project which had been discussed at the Board. Ms Kelly advised that the idea had been to repeat the previous project however it was considered that a more meaningful project was required and as such this would be looked at again at a future meeting.

Councillor Dixon expressed his thanks to Ms Kelly for all of her hard work.

Members gave consideration to the applications and it was:-

8. RESOLVED that:-
- i) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1, and 3.2 of the report be noted;
 - ii) approval be given to Neighbourhood Funding of £10,260 to Friends of Doxford Park – East Park and Street Rangers Extension; as detailed in annex 1;
 - iii) approval be given to Neighbourhood Funding of £7,500 to International Community of Sunderland – East Park and Street Rangers Extension; as detailed in annex 1;
 - iv) approval be given to Neighbourhood Funding of £7,480 to The Box Youth and Community Project – East Park and Street Rangers Extension; as detailed in annex 1;
 - v) approval be given to Neighbourhood Funding of £7,500 to Blue Watch Youth Centre – East Park and Street Rangers Extension; as detailed in annex 1;
 - vi) approval be given to Neighbourhood Funding of £7,500 to Back on the Map – East Park and Street Rangers Extension; as detailed in annex 1;
 - vii) approval be given to Neighbourhood Funding of £7,500 to Groundwork NE and Cumbria – East Park and Street Rangers Extension; as detailed in annex 1;
 - viii) approval be given to the alignment of Neighbourhood Funding of £10,000 to Can Do (young people's small grants programme);
 - ix) approval be given to the alignment of Neighbourhood Funding of £78,047 to Go Online;
 - x) approval be given to the alignment of Neighbourhood Funding of £34,790 to Fancy a Day Out (Summer 2024);
 - xi) the Community Chest approvals from the 2023/24 budget as detailed in annex 2 be noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the Meeting.

(Signed) M. HERRON,
Chairman.