

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held in THE MILLENNIUM CENTRE, THE OVAL, CONCORD, WASHINGTON, on THURSDAY, 14th DECEMBER, 2023 at 6.00p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Laws in the Chair

Councillors Chapman, Fletcher, Guy, Jones, F. Miller, G. Miller, D.E. Snowden, M. Walker, P. Walker, Warne and Williams

Also in Attendance:-

Sandra Stephenson	-	Partnership and Community Resilience Manager (Washington), SCC
Paul Wood	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Marc Morley	-	Director of Environmental Services, Sunderland City Council
Sylvia Copley	-	Area Network Representative
Bethan Wilkie	-	Gentoo

And Members of the Press and Public

Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Councillors D and H Trueman and also apologies from Inspector Phil Baker

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st September 2023

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 21st September, 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendment that Councillor Jones was in attendance.

Partner Agency Reports

a) Northumbria Police

Northumbria Police submitted a report which provided data on crime and disorder in the Washington area comparing 'Year to date' figures with the preceding year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Phil Baker was unable to attend therefore it was requested that Members consider the report and forward on any queries that they had via email.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

b) TWFRS

The Tyne and Wear Fire Service submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided performance-monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Washington Area Committee from 1st September 2023 to 25th November 2023, compared with the same period in 2022

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Sandra Stephenson, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager (Washington) advised that Martin Farrow had now retired and we were waiting on an Officer to be appointed as a representative for Area Committee attendance.

As there was no representation from the Fire Authority at this meeting, the report was noted.

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

c) Washington Area Community Voluntary Sector Network

The Voluntary and Community Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update with regard to the Washington Area Community and Voluntary Sector Network.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Sylvia Copley, VCS Representative presented the report on behalf of the Network and advised on the progress of the development of the Network to try and make it more inclusive and to make better use of its Members time at meetings and to link in to where the gaps were so they could work better.

Ms Copley informed that they had appointed the third Area Committee Network Representative which had been a vacancy and they felt that she would be a good addition to the Committee.

Councillor Williams wished to thank the Network for everything that they do and that she felt optimistic despite such difficult times and we were fortunate to have such a thriving VCS to help our residents.

The Chairman thanked Ms Copley for her report, and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the content of the report and the opportunities and issues raised by the Washington Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network be received and noted.

d) Gentoo

Gentoo provided a report to the Committee on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities for the period September 2023 to December 2023.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mrs Bethan Wilkie, Gentoo presented the report advising the Committee on Gentoo's Allocation process on empty properties, details of estate walks, bonfire night, the Gentoo Christmas Campaign and Investment and Renewal.

In response to Councillor Williams request to see the figures across the five areas, Ms Wilkie advised that she could look to provide the terminations figures as well as the turnaround times for re let figures.

Councillor Fletcher referred to turnaround times/allocations and raised the issue of those tenants that were having to pay for their old property at the same time as the new property allocated and that during these times, tenants just couldn't afford to be paying double the rent.

Ms Wilkie advised that the team always tried to get tenants in as quickly as possible but with high demands this created high need but Gentoo shouldn't be leaving empty properties so if Members were aware of this happening then please let them know. In terms of paying double rent, they did generally give a period of grace but this was usually Friday to Monday, to allow for removals etc however she would feed back Members concerns.

In response to Councillor F. Miller's query over transfers to properties that needed adapting, Ms Wilkie advised that it all depended upon the type of adaption required and these would be carried out in agreement with the Council. If it were for minor adaptations like handrails etc, Gentoo would carry these out but if wet rooms were required for instance then these came under the Councils remit and from their budget/funding therefore they would carry these out.

The Chairman thanked Ms Wilkie for the report

5. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan 2023 - 2026

The Chair of the Washington Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the progress against the Area Committee's Area Plan priorities, which would be the focus for the Washington Area Committee during 2023-2024.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Sandra Stephenson, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager (Washington), presented the report and was on hand to answer any queries raised by Members.

Councillor Williams referred to Page 40 of the report and advised of a typo within the document which should read House of Destiny rather than Density. Ms Stephenson advised that she would notify the relevant Service Lead.

6. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Considered the progress and performance update with regard to Washington Area Committee Area Plan 2023-2026; and
- ii) Considered the progress update with regard to Sunderland City Council Service Plans – Area Priorities, for information purposes only.

Washington Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided a financial statement as an update position on progress in relation to allocating Area Committee Funds, Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme and Community Chest as well as presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Stephenson presented the report, drawing the Committee's attention to the current financial position of the Area Committee Neighbourhood Fund 2023/2024 as set out in paragraph 2.1 and 3.2, and the Community Chest approvals in Annex 2.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Noted the financial statements set out in Section 2.1 and 3.2 of the report;
- ii) Approved £95,320 of the Neighbourhood Fund for the Enforcement and Streetwatch Project, as set out in (Application 1) Item 4 Annex 1 of the report;
- iii) Approved £21,500 of the Neighbourhood Fund for the Vehicle Activated Signage - Washington, as set out in (Application 2) Item 4 Annex 1 of the report;
- iv) Approved £4,350 of the Neighbourhood Fund for the Washington Feasibility, as set out in (Application 3) Item 4 Annex 1 of the report;
- v) Approved £20,000 of the Neighbourhood Fund for the ASB Officer, as set out in (Application 4) Item 4 Annex 1 of the report;
- vi) Approved £55,500 of the Neighbourhood Fund for the Phoenix Project, as set out in (Application 5) Item 4 Annex 1 of the report; and
- vii) Noted the Community Chest approvals supported from 2023/2024 as detailed in Item 4 Annex 2 of the report

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting

(Signed) S. LAWS,
Chairman.