

**At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor D. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors Allan, Arnott, M. Dixon, P. Gibson, Gofton, L. Martin, Morrissey, Oliver, P. Smith, Tye, P. Watson, S. Watson, A. Wilson and T. Wright.

**Also Present:-**

Bill Blackett	ASB Strategy Manager	Sunderland City Council
Sal Buckler	Diversity & Inclusion Manager	Sunderland City Council
Kath Butchert	Youth Development Group Manager	Sunderland City Council
Graham Carr	Highway Maintenance Manager	Sunderland City Council
Neil Cole	Planning Policy Manager	Sunderland City Council
Jodie Collins	Communications Officer	Sunderland City Council
Trish Cornish	Deputy Chief Officer	Sunderland CVS
Kevin Douglas	Media Officer	Sunderland City Council
Alan Duffy	Head of Operations	Gentoo Sunderland
Julie Gray	Head of Community Services	Sunderland City Council
Keith Hamilton	Deputy Manager, Planning Implementation	Sunderland City Council
Dave Leonard	Area Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Lucy Malarkey	Head of Neighbourhoods	Gentoo Sunderland
Vivienne Metcalfe	Area Community Development Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Anne Morrison	Project Manager	St Mary & St Peters Community Project
John Ord	Manager Phoenix Project	Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Sam Palombella	Groundwork Director	Groundwork North East
K. Ramanathas	Project Manager	Young Asian Voices
Ken Robinson	Acting Inspector	Northumbria Police
Vince Taylor	Head of Strategic Economic Development	Sunderland City Council
Tom Terrett	Trading Standards/Licensing Manager	Sunderland City Council
Cheryl Warcup	Inspector	Northumbria Police
Derek Welsh	Housing and Renewal Manager	Sunderland City Council

**Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone present to introduce themselves.

## **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Old, J.B. Scott and A. Wright together with Ms. Nonnie Crawford, Director of Public Health and Mr. Peter Iveson, Fire Station Manager, North Moor Community Fire Station.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2009**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2009 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the deletion of Councillor P. Smith's apologies as the minutes were correct in showing that she was in attendance at the meeting.

## **Declarations of Interest**

Item 8 – Strategic Initiatives Budget

Councillors P. Gibson, P. Smith and Tye declared personal and prejudicial interests in the application from Plains Farm and Humbledon Residents Association as members of the Association and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the application.

Councillor Arnott declared personal and prejudicial interests in the above application and the application from Sunderland Floral Art Club and withdrew from the meeting before the Committee gave consideration to the applications.

Councillor T. Wright declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

## **Developing an Economic Masterplan for Sunderland**

The Head of Strategic Economic Development submitted a report (copy circulated) updating the Area Committee on the progress that has been made in developing an Economic Masterplan for Sunderland and seeking the views of the Area Committee on the economic vision that is emerging.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Vince Taylor, Head of Strategic Economic Development, provided the Area Committee with a presentation on the background to the Economic Masterplan, detailing the key dates in its development, the information gathered so far to develop the baseline report and the key elements of the draft vision as they relate to businesses, skills and jobs in the City.

Mr. Taylor highlighted the key propositions detailed in the presentation.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes).

Councillor L. Martin commented that the findings were rooted in reality and there were a lot of hard truths which resonated with his experience of working in the City.

Councillor Gofton welcomed the presentation commenting that there were interesting propositions and it was refreshing to have them all pulled together in this format.

Mr. Taylor agreed to circulate an electronic copy of the presentation for Members' reference.

Councillor Oliver commended the presentation. He enquired with regard to the University what needed to change for it to have more of an impact.

Mr. Taylor stated that the University did have a 'buzz' and was integrated in the City more than a lot of others. He pointed out that 50% of the students were local people. However, it needed to be taken to the next stage and have a stronger role in the City's economic programme and expand its interface.

Councillor Oliver commented that jobs in the motor manufacturing industry had replaced the traditional heavy industry type jobs and he asked what needed to be done to ensure that the high end, very highly skilled technical jobs at Nissan, for example, stayed in the City.

Mr. Taylor stated that Sunderland would be a logical place to have Research and Development and would result in the City having a technical leading edge. There would be high interest in developing this and it would be a real attraction which would result in a cluster of jobs around it.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Taylor for his attendance and the presentation and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the content of the report and the comments and issues as detailed above be noted and that Mr. Taylor return to the Area Committee at key stages of the development of the Economic Masterplan.

### **Questions to Area Committee**

The Chairman notified the Committee that a question to the Area Committee had been received.

Mr. K. Ramanathas from Young Asian Voices was present at the meeting and the Chairman invited him to proceed to ask the question he had submitted. Mr. Ramanathas commented that in the Barnes Park and Eden Vale area there was a lack of facilities for young people to use at evenings and weekends and that schools were not supportive in letting the local young people have the opportunity to use their facilities. It was nearly three years since an enquiry had been made for something to be provided in the area,

particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings and he asked why these young people were still on the streets and schools in the area could not be opened up so they could use the facilities.

Ms. Kath Butchert, Youth Development Group Manager, thanked Mr. Ramanathas for coming to the meeting and asking the question.

Ms. Butchert advised that the Extended Services core offer had recently appointed School Cluster Managers. Part of their role was to liaise with schools to develop the use of school facilities and to explore issues such as caretaking arrangements and school letting agreements which were often identified as barriers to community use. The School Cluster Manager for the area was Chris Heskett based at Hudson Road School (553 7675) and he was available to help to discuss issues on this matter.

Ms. Butchert went on to say that the Youth Development Group was planning to develop a mobile youth facility that could target specific hot spots, groups or areas of need. The aim was to reach those who were most vulnerable and not already engaged in positive activities in areas where there was little or no provision. Operational groups compiled of key partners (Police, Elected Members, Gentoo, Voluntary Sector and Children's Services etc.) had been set up in each area including the West to help identify potential sites for both XL Villages and Mobile services. It would be beneficial for Young Asian Voices to attend the next meeting. Ms. Butchert invited Mr. Ramanathas to contact Andy Neal who would provide details.

Members of the Committee welcomed the question from Mr. Ramanathas and were in agreement that the matter needed to be looked at to see whether a solution could be found.

Councillor P. Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City, briefed the Committee on the development of XL Villages advising that the two pilots undertaken in the Thorney Close and North Moor area had proved successful. Councillor Smith advised, however, that there was a need to recruit more youth workers. She thanked Mr. Ramanathas for the question and stated that she appreciated the input he had given.

Mr. Ramanathas acknowledged the value of XL Villages which provided activities for specific times. However, in the Barnes area there were about 45 young people just hanging around in the street during these times and Young Asian Voices was keen to provide activities for them.

Councillor Allan stated that youth development was an important issue for the whole City. He stated that there was detached youth work being undertaken and that there were some resources targeted to address the situation which Mr. Ramanathas had raised.

Inspector Cheryl Warcup, Northumbria Police, confirmed that groups of young people hanging around on the streets was a neighbourhood problem in the Barnes area and that the Police welcomed continued diversion work.

Members having discussed the matter fully it was:-

3. RESOLVED that :-

- i) a written reply to the question raised be provided to Mr. Ramanathas containing the information provided at the meeting; and
- ii) a report be submitted to the next Area Committee meeting on the steps taken to try and address the issue of a lack of facilities for young people in the area.

### **Variation of Agenda**

The Chairman asked that the Agenda be varied so that consideration be given to item 7 – The Thematic Feedback Report at this point in the meeting to allow those officers who needed to leave to attend another meeting the opportunity to report to the Committee.

4. RESOLVED that the Agenda be varied accordingly.

### **Thematic Feedback Report**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with feedback for each of the five thematic priorities the Area Committee had agreed and considered as set out in the Work Plan for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Richard Parry, Area Officer, proceeded to take Members through the report, referring the Committee to the update on the key actions from the safe theme considered at the last meeting in July detailed at paragraph 3.

Councillor Gibson commented in relation to bottle tracing and illegal alcohol sales that the Licensing Section had powers to remove the licences from shops selling alcohol to persons under age and that more work was needed by Trading Standards to try and catch those shops selling to under age persons by carrying out test purchases.

Mr. Tom Terrett, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager, stated that he was aware of Members' desire to do test purchasing. In order to do this the Licensing Section would require intelligence to target resources to the establishments where complaints and allegations had been received. He advised that Council Officers and the Police were working on a plan in this respect and would provide a report back to the Committee on the work being undertaken.

Councillor Allan commented that there was evidence to show that it was not persons under 18 purchasing alcohol but that older people were buying it for them and then passing it on.

Inspector Cheryl Warcup reported that licensees were supportive of the Police operation and confirmed that it was her experience that it was older people buying alcohol on behalf of under age persons.

Inspector Warcup circulated an update for the period 14<sup>th</sup> August to 5<sup>th</sup> September in respect of Operations General. Inspector Warcup referred Members to the reduction in Sunderland South of 18.3% and 6.2% in Sunderland West in respect of incidents of anti social behaviour.

Inspector Warcup stated that the Police would continue to work with the Council and set up an operation for the October school holidays.

Inspector Warcup briefed the Committee on the neighbourhood watch schemes operating in the area and the development work the Police were doing in this respect to engage more with the community.

Councillors M. Dixon and Oliver asked that their thanks be conveyed to the two Police Officers who had attended the neighbourhood watch meeting. This had proved very helpful for people in the community to see what crime was taking place in their area and what action the Police were taking.

Councillor Gibson suggested further sites which were being used as drinking dens. In response Mr. Bill Blackett, Anti Social Behaviour Strategy Manager, stated that the list was not exhaustive and that he would take on board the sites Councillor Gibson had raised.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- i) approval be given to develop the proposal (identified in Annex 1 to the report), to allocate two year funding to deliver the Phoenix Project at £8,609 per year, to total £17,218; and
- ii) approval be given to the following proposals:-
  - a) Drinking Dens – the options within Annex 2 pending a further report on costs and appropriate youth work intervention;
  - b) Bottle tracing and illegal alcohol sales – the proposals within Annex 3 regarding use of cameras, more joint operations, retail watch schemes, better information, better publicity and licence reviews; and
  - c) the proposals in Annex 4 to provide further reports to the Committee on the following safe priorities:-
    - Neighbourhood Wardens;
    - Community Safety Days;
    - Community Payback Scheme; and
    - Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

## **Priority Theme West: An Attractive and Inclusive Area Summary, 'Invest more in Housing Programmes'**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) inviting Members to consider their main priorities for further development and action in relation to the Attractive and Inclusive priority.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Richard Parry, Area Officer, took Members through each of the four priority issues as detailed below:-

- Bring empty properties back into use;
- Address lack of parking provision in some residential areas;
- Make estates/residential areas more attractive; and
- Improve landlord's licensing and take measures to prevent disrepair.

Mr. Parry drew Members' attention to the recommendations detailed at paragraph 4 of the report.

Mr. Derek Welsh, Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, briefed the Committee on the current activities to bring back empty properties into use and the powers available to officers to tackle the problems. He stated that he proposed to submit the Empty Homes Strategy and targets to the Committee for consideration once complete.

Councillor Arnott stated that he would like to see the information split by ward.

Mr. Welsh confirmed that he would be able to produce the document to show empty properties on an area basis and also show the social sector. However, details of Registered Social Landlords were not available but would be contacted in order to gather this information.

Members having welcomed each of the priority issues it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the actions identified in Annex 1 to the report be approved; and
- ii) the following proposals identified in Annex 1 be developed:-
  - a) an application for SIB/SIP to enable all current outstanding highway and mainstream requests etc. to be developed (approx. £65,000 required to match mainstream budget of approx. £41,000);
  - b) prioritise neighbourhood improvements and engage with community;
  - c) develop 'Green Team' proposal;

- d) highlight hotspots of illegal/inconsiderate parking and develop proposals to tackle the problems;
- e) investigate the scope for further collaborative working to increase the effective use of the Empty Property Officer; and
- f) consider additional resources to enable more work to tackle the 410 empty properties in the area and to carry out more proactive work.

## **Financial Statements and Funding Requests**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with the protocols and emergency protocols for accessing Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) funding and 20 proposals for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the report, asking Members to formally approve and adopt the application process for SIB and SIP funding, as well as the protocols for accessing funds in an emergency, subject to paragraph 7.4 of the report being amended to read 'The Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman'.

Mr. Parry added that in future any affects on funding that applications for funding would have on the overall budget would be shown in the report.

Councillor Morrissey enquired whether the Area Committee would be given the option of splitting the SIP allocation to individual wards.

The Chairman suggested that a report on the options with regard to the allocation of SIP funding be submitted to the next Area Committee meeting.

Councillor P. Watson commented that it needed to be reflected in the report that the former South Area Committee had spent its SIP allocation prior to the introduction of the new area arrangements and the review of the Area Committee boundaries.

### **7. RESOLVED that:-**

- i) the approved SIB budget for 2009/10 as detailed in Annex 2 be noted;
- ii) the process for application and emergency protocols for accessing SIB and SIP funding be approved and adopted, subject to the amendment of paragraph 7.4 of the report referring to the emergency protocol as set out above;
- iii) approval be given to the 20 projects recommended for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest Budget with a total value of £7,779 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report; and



- iv) a report on the options for the allocation of the SIP be submitted to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

### **Update on Community Communications to Support Area committees 2009-10**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an update on the development of the Community Communications action plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Kevin Douglas, Area Communications Link Officer for the West Area Committee, presented the report to Members. He highlighted the activities to promote the Community Leadership role of Area Committees and to publicise their effectiveness in addressing local priorities identified by local residents which were detailed at paragraph 3.1 of the report. He pointed out that this included the production of area newsletters which would include good news stories.

In response to Councillor Tye, Mr. Parry confirmed that the West Area community magazine was no longer in existence.

Councillor L. Martin enquired whether it was intended that the area newsletters would contain pictures of Councillors and how it could be ensured that there was no political bias shown in the area newsletter and equal coverage. Finally, he asked how the Communications Department felt they would impact on local communities.

Mr. Keith Beardmore, Area Lead Executive for the West Sunderland Area Committee, stated that assurances had been given that the area newsletters were not about being political but were about promoting the work of the Area Committee and engendering civic pride. He invited all Councillors to feed into the content of the newsletters.

Councillor Martin asked whether there would be a protocol around the newsletters.

Councillor Gofton commented that a full discussion had been held on the issue of the area newsletters at the last meeting and that the Committee was now going over old ground. She added that the content of the newsletters would be subject to checks and balances.

Councillor Arnott suggested that an editorial board be established to oversee the content of the area newsletters to ensure a degree of liaison about what was to appear in the publications. He asked that this be considered and feedback be provided to the next meeting.

Councillor Allan stated that he thought it was totally inappropriate to have a political editorial board.

Councillor Oliver asked for a broader explanation of what was meant by 'good news stories'.

Mr Douglas reiterated that the publication was intended to promote the work of the Area Committee.

The Chairman stated that the matter had been fully discussed at the last meeting and a number of suggestions submitted to inform the development of a Community Communications Action Plan and he therefore moved that progress be made on the report.

Upon a vote being taken, the motion was carried, with 10 Members voting in favour of the motion and 5 against;

It was therefore:-

8. RESOLVED that the current Community Communications plan of work be noted.

### **Options to Change Committee Meeting Dates**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on the options available to change Committee meeting dates for the remainder of the municipal year as the dates diaried were proving difficult for all Members to attend and fully contribute.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Richard Parry, Area Officer, referred Members to the options available as set out at paragraph 3 of the report.

Members discussed the options and as a compromise were happy to support the option detailed at paragraph 3.4 and that for the meetings to be held at the later start time of 5.30 p.m.; to be held both out in the community in the spring and in the Civic Centre during the winter months. In addition to this, Members were of the opinion that the mixed seating arrangements adopted at this meeting whereby they and the partner representatives, officers of the Council and members of the public were seated at the table together, had worked well in promoting discussion and engagement.

Councillor Tye suggested that when meeting out in the communities the community groups be encouraged to show the Committee the activities and events they were delivering.

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

9. RESOLVED that arrangements be made for the remaining West Sunderland Area Committee meetings for the municipal year to be held on the following dates, commencing at 5.30 pm, with appropriate venues to be determined in the light of the discussion detailed above:-

Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2009  
Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2010  
Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2010  
Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2010.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would now be on  
Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

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

(Signed)      D. FORBES,  
                    (Chairman).