

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors Allan, M. Dixon, D. Forbes, P. Gibson, Gofton, Oliver, J.B. Scott, P. Watson, S. Watson, A. Wilson, A. Wright and T. Wright.

Also Present:-

Keith Beardmore	Area Lead Executive	Sunderland City Council
Neil Cole	Planning Policy Manager	Sunderland City Council
Jodie Collins	Employee Communications Officer	Sunderland City Council
Angela Cousins	Partnership Manager	Sunderland City Council
Nonnie Crawford	Director of Public Health	Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
Kevin Douglas	Media Officer	Sunderland City Council
Julie Gray	Head of Community Services	Sunderland City Council
Keith Hamilton	Deputy Manager, Planning Implementation	Sunderland City Council
Sandra Kenny	Family, Adult and Community Learning Manager	Sunderland City Council
Lucy Malarkey	Head of Neighbourhoods	Gentoo Sunderland
Andy Neal	Youth Development Group Manager	Sunderland City Council
Gerry O'Hanlon		Academy 360
Richard Parry	Area Officer	Sunderland City Council
Ian Pearson	Principal Engineer	Sunderland City Council
Julie Raine		City of Sunderland College
Richard Reading	Principal Trading Standards Manager	Sunderland City Council
Jenny Scott	Policy Officer (Inclusion)	Sunderland City Council
Vivienne Scott	Lead Personal Advisor	Sunderland City Council
Tim Smith	Deputy Highway Maintenance Manager	Sunderland City Council
Phil Spooner	Programme Manager	Sunderland City Council
Cheryl Warcup	Inspector	Northumbria Police

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Arnott, L. Martin, Morrissey, Old, P. Smith and Tye and also on behalf of Inspector Ken Robinson.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 10th September, 2009

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 10th September, 2009 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Questions to Area Committee – Feedback Report of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in response to the question raised at the last meeting of the Committee by the Young Asian Voices Project regarding the lack of facilities for young people at weekends and evenings in the Barnes Park and Eden Vale area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Sandra Mitchell, Head of Performance Improvement and Policy presented the report and in addition to the short term solutions identified, highlighted the following longer term issues:-

- the possibility of making an application to National School funding streams;
- options to provide sessions after January 2009;
- options to utilise other premises for youth activities;
- options to review caretakers' terms and conditions;
- police discussions with local businesses re: funding and use of premises.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Allan, Andy Neal, Youth Development Manager, advised that all community contractors such as A690 and Youth Asian Voices had a requirement to work in an integrated way with regard to equalities and diversity.

Councillor P. Watson having commended the report as a brilliant response to the question asked and congratulated those officers concerned, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the report be received and noted; and

- ii) a further report be submitted to a future meeting on the longer term solutions for provision and funding.

Priority Theme West: A Learning Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which highlighted the 'Learning' priorities identified by the Area Committee, key issues and their background, current activity delivered day to day by services, identified gaps in services together with options and proposals.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the report and introduced Andy Neal, Youth Development Manager, and Sandra Kenny, Family Adult and Community Learning Manager, who provided Members with presentations on priorities in relation to Youth Development and Adult and Community Learning respectively.

With regard to the proposal that the Committee consider receiving an SIB application from the Youth Development Group (as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report), to enhance evening and weekend youth services with increased XL Youth Village and mobile neighbourhood provision, concern was expressed by Members as to whether it would be appropriate to fund a potentially city wide project from the Committee's own Strategic Initiatives Budget. Accordingly it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the reports on Youth Commissioning and family, adult and community learning provision provided by Mr. Neal and Ms. Kelly be received and noted;
- ii) the LSP be requested to review apprenticeship opportunities including the commitment of the public sector to the creation of more full apprenticeships either by seeking to provide opportunities within statutory sector organisations or the possibility of providing financial incentives to other employers;
- iii) the Committee receive a report on current family, adult and community learning including partners and learning providers, types of courses, community needs, gaps in provision, times and venues;
- iv) the request that the Committee consider receiving an SIB application from the Youth Development Group to enhance evening and weekend youth services be deferred pending the submission of a full report on the matter given Members' concerns regarding whether it was appropriate to fund a potential City wide project from the Committee's own Strategic Initiatives Budget.

- v) the Committee receive a report from the Youth Development Group, in light of youth work commissioning, on the range of services and providers for children and young people to enable an integrated approach to meeting needs and the planning and delivery of services

Thematic Feedback Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an opportunity to discuss feedback on actions taken to date with regard to its priorities in relation to the themes of 'Safe' and 'Attractive and Inclusive'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, introduced the report which provided feedback on:-

- i) illegal sales of alcohol to persons under 18 years of age; and
- ii) the current position with regard to empty properties and anti social behaviour across the City.

In response to the presentation provided by Inspector Warcup and Richard Reading, Principal Trading Standards Officer, Councillor Oliver referred to the advanced notices given in respect of surveillance/test purchase exercises. He asked what could be done to overcome the problem of businesses tightening up for the period of the exercises then resuming under age sales at the conclusion? Mr. Reading replied that he was unable to give a guarantee that this would not be the case. 68 premises had been written to but only a small sample had received a visit. Dates of inspections were not specified; the letter referred only to the possibility of test purchases being undertaken within the next few weeks. If sufficient intelligence had been collected about a particular establishment then covert surveillance could be undertaken.

Councillor P. Watson believed the work undertaken by Mr. Reading and Inspector Warcup represented a valiant attempt to tackle the problem and was extremely welcome. He was pleased that all agencies and partners concerned took the problem seriously.

Councillor Allan congratulated Mr. Reading and Inspector Warcup on their endeavours but stated that alcohol was still getting to young people. Groups of often intimidating young people still congregated outside retailers asking adults to buy alcohol on their behalf. Others sometimes engaged in 'steaming' to steal alcohol from stores.

There being no further questions, it was:-

- 3. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the feedback reports on illegal alcohol sales and empty properties and anti social behaviour be received and noted;
- ii) approval be given to the actions identified in Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the report;
- iii) a feedback report be submitted to a future meeting on the test purchase exercises held on 28th October and the weekend of 7th/8th October, 2009.

Barnes Park Regeneration Update – Appointment of Contractor and Commencement of Works on Site

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated the West Sunderland Area Committee on the appointment of the contractor to undertake the regeneration works within Barnes Park and the subsequent commencement of works on site, following approval by Cabinet at its meeting held on 3rd June, 2009.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Les Clark, Head of Street Scene Services, presented the report advising Members of:-

- i) the background to the development;
- ii) the current position;
- iii) consultations undertaken as part of the application process;
- iv) the Barnes Park Centenary Event; and
- v) key milestones for the future.

Mr. Clarke advised that he had only been in post for 3 days and therefore did not have a detailed knowledge of the project, however, he would follow up in writing any Members' questions he was unable to address at the meeting.

Councillor Allan thanked Mr. Clark for a 'tremendous' report which was the ongoing result of decisions previously taken by the Committee. He paid tribute to the work undertaken by the officers and Portfolio holder in delivering the project to date.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Review of the Local Area Plans (LAP)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with details of the process and principles underlying the LAP review.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, having presented the report and encouraged Members and partners to take part in the self assessments and Members' surveys, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Responsive Local Services

The Executive Director of City Services and the Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) on the Responsive Local Services Project which had been designed to satisfy the service delivery element of the Community Leadership Programme ensuring that in delivering its day to day services, the Council was more responsive to the needs and expectations of its customers and engaged with citizens more effectively.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Phil Spooner Community Leadership Project, Programme Manager presented the report advising of the rationale behind the initiative, the current position, reporting arrangements for the Area Committees, together with the establishment of local problem solving groups and the need to communicate the linking of service improvements with Community Leadership.

Councillor P. Watson stated that the project was 'massive'. It amounted to double devolution bringing decision making into people's homes. The public would be able to contact their elected representative to describe their experiences who would bring these views directly to where services were devised, enabling the public to shape and influence them. The project was about empowering people and putting Councillors at the cutting edge. At the moment the Council was more reactive in nature. Councillor Watson believed that the scope of the scheme would only be limited by how active Councillors were in their wards.

Councillor M. Dixon welcomed the report and advised that in his experience the Council's response to feedback from Members had been good. He thanked officers for the work they had undertaken in this regard.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Financial Statements and Funding Requests

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter which sought Committee approval for the following recommendations:-

- i) to approve the 27 proposals for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest as detailed in Anne 1 of the report;

- ii) to note the financial statement for 2009/10 as detailed in Annex 2 of the report;
- iii) to approve the proposal for support from the 2009/10 SIB in respect of the TWFRS Phoenix Project as detailed in Annex 3 of the report;
- iv) to approve the recommendations for the allocation of SIP as detailed in Annex 4 of the report;
- v) to note the SIB project update as detailed in Annex 5 of the report.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the report and advised Members that following the September meeting a balance of £332,634 remained to be allocated from the 2009/2010 budget. Should the Committee approve the application before it in respect of the Phoenix Project, the remaining balance would be £314,814.

Councillor Oliver referred to the application for £950 Community Chest funding in respect of the purchase and planting of bulbs and trees in the St. Chad's Ward and requested that the Committee give consideration to an additional application of £550 in respect of shrubbery.

In accordance with Section 100(B) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman agreed that the request would be treated as a matter of urgent business at this meeting to allow the timely planting of the purchases.

The Chairman then put Councillor Oliver's request to the Committee and it was agreed accordingly.

Councillor M. Dixon referred to the West Live Project Update at Annex 5 and asked for an update with regard to the A690 Christmas Light Project. Julie Gray, Head of Community Services, replied that she would pick up the issue and ensure Councillor Dixon received a written reply.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- i) approval be given to the 27 proposals recommended for support from the 2009/10 budget as detailed in Annex 1 of the report to include an additional £550 in respect of the St. Chad's ward purchase and planting of bulbs and trees project;
- ii) the financial statement for 2009/10 as detailed in Annex 2 of the report be noted;
- iii) approval be given to the granting of £17,820 SIB funding from the 2009/10 budget to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service as a contribution to the Sunderland Phoenix Project;

- iv) the SIB project update as detailed in Annex 5 of the report be received and noted.

Area Committee Handbook

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval for an attached copy of the draft Area Committee Handbook.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, referred to Protocol 3 in respect of the SIB/SIP Governance and advised that an extra box would be included in the flow chart to indicate that Members would receive and be consulted on any application prior to its submission to the Area Committee.

8. RESOLVED that approval be given to the adoption of the Area Committee Handbook 2009/10.

(Signed) D. FORBES,
(Chairman).