

**At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held in THE MILLENNIUM CENTRE, THE OVAL, CONCORD, WASHINGTON, on THURSDAY, 14<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2024 at 6.00p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Warne in the Chair

Councillors Chapman, Fletcher, Guy, Jones, F. Miller, G. Miller, D.E. Snowdon, P. Walker 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
Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy	-	Police
Station Manager Kevin Montgomery	-	TWFRA
Jo Buckley	-	Area Network Representative
Mark O. Connor	-	Gentoo
Steve Lowther	-	Gentoo

And Members of the Press and Public

**Apologies for Absence**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Laws, D and H Trueman and M. Walker also apologies from Inspector Hewitt

**Declarations of Interest**

Washington Area Budget Report - Item 4 Annex 1 – Application No. 1 – NEET Project

Councillor Warne made an open declaration on this application as he had been asked to become a Trustee of ODYPP and that whilst this had not been made official, he would not take part in the deciding of this project.

Councillor Williams also advised that she was about to join their consortium and therefore also did not take part in the deciding of this project.

### **Minutes of the last meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record

### **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)

Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy was in attendance on behalf of Inspector Hewit to present the report and informed the Committee of a spike in ASB around the Galleries Shopping Centre area with assaults and public disorder offences. A number of young people had been brought into custody and dealt with.

In terms of shoplifting, a number of custodial sentences given to the perpetrators had seen a decrease in figures.

Councillor Williams welcomed the work going on around the Galleries Shopping Centre, hoping that this decrease in incidents would continue and commented that it was interesting to see how the funding provided by the Galleries for extra resources would operate in practice and if this meant that there would be a gap left elsewhere in Washington.

Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy confirmed that there would be no gaps as the funding was to provide two extra officers to deal with the Galleries area specifically, so this would result in the freeing up of the existing officers to cover the rest of Washington.

In response to Councillor F. Miller raising that there was more instances of vehicle crime in Teal Farm due to residents not reporting, Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy commented that he would check to see if anything had been raised and asked that all residents report instances as they wanted to know about crimes and they were here to support them and the more reports they had the better the idea of what was going on could be obtained.

In response to Councillor Fletcher's query, Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy advised that they were hoping to deploy Officers around Concord every weekend with some part of the plans to conduct license checks and to help the door security. He could not promise it would definitely be every weekend but it would certainly be much more often than currently.

Councillor Fletcher commented that Members had also been promised contact details of the team should they have an emergency and requested this be fed back for action. Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy commented that he was more than happy for his contact details to be circulated and he would provide these.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Neighbourhood Sergeant Duffy for his attendance.

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 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024, compared with the same period in 2022

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Station Manager Kevin Montgomery was in attendance to present the report to Members and was on hand to answer any queries.

Councillor D. E. Snowden commented that it was alarming in relation to the figures around Washington Central Ward and Princess Anne Park and that these could potentially rise once Summer came and suggested the need for some joined up work with the Police on this. Mr Montgomery advised that the Charts gave a trend over the times the incidents occurred and would help in giving them a strategy to tackle this.

Councillor Snowden commented that they really needed to work with the schools on this also. The Chairman informed that the Phoenix Project was due to target the Washington Schools. Sandra Stephenson Partnership and Community Resilience Manager (Washington), advised that hopefully they would start to see an impact from the activities of the Phoenix Project very soon.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr Montgomery for his attendance.

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 Jo Buckley, VCS Representative presented the report on behalf of the Network and advised there had been one meeting since the last Area Committee and had received information on the free Membership scheme with Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance and the support available along with sharing information and emerging issues they had faced over the recent weeks. These included increased numbers of home schooled children and level of need when attending sessions, working families affording school holiday childcare and recent changes in community banking requirements.

Councillor Williams commented that the number of children being homeschooled was a concern as it wasn't always in the child's best interests and suggested that Scrutiny was needed on this and there was a need to engage families and get these children back into school.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 3.6 of the report and cautioned that we could see an explosion of need by the end of the month with many more people being moved onto Universal Credit.

There being no further questions or comments, The Chairman thanked Ms Buckley 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 December 2023 to March 2024.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Mark O'Connor, Gentoo presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

In response to a query from Councillor Champman regarding the District Heating system and issues residents were facing from massive bills being received and if they were to receive any support, Mr O'Connor advised that he would take this issue back and get an answer for the Member.

Mr O'Connor also advised that he would find out more info relating to the solar

panels and if any servicing was to be done in the near future as requested by Councillor F. Miller. With regards to certain properties in Harraton not being earthed, Mr Steve Lowther advised that an EICR Programme on each property was to be carried out and if residents had any concerns they should ring up and they would send out an electrician.

Councillor Williams referred to Gentoos chosen charity of Love Amelia and wished to congratulate them on their choice commenting that they were an amazing charity. Councillor Williams also referred to paragraph 4.5 XL Bullies and enquired as to how many tenants had these. Mr O'Connor advised that he did not have the exact figures and it wasn't a massive amount but he would find this out.

Councillor Fletcher questioned the 4-6 week completing timescale listed under paragraph 4.6 of the report -Concord/Usworth Roofing, commenting that these seemed most excessive to complete works and suggested this was a typo and should be 4-6 days. Mr O'Connor acknowledged that this did seem excessive and he would check to see if this was a typo.

Councillor P. Walker referred to paragraph 3.5 Site Garages and enquired if there was anything that could be done to ensure that those who had the garages kept up the maintenance as expected within the covenants. Mr O'Connor advised that he would investigate the covenants further and get back to Members.

At this juncture the Chairman introduced Mr Steve Lowther to provide a presentation on the works done by Gentoo in relation to Damp and Mould in their properties. A copy of the presentation had been circulated as part of the agenda papers.

Councillor Williams commented that overall, the work being done as shown in the presentation was really good however wished to raise that there had been two families that had now been dealt with but only due to Members intervention and going directly to the CEO and she was absolutely appalled by the standards of what these families had been living in. Councillor Williams commented that it shouldn't be the case that works were only done once the CEO had been approached and she really hoped that these works were going to improve the situation and we needed to get this right for future.

Councillor F. Miller advised of a Homelessness Working Group recently attended and wished to thank Gentoo for being the only ones to submit a presentation. Councillor Miller also referred to a couple within her Ward that had found spores upon obtaining loft insulation and enquired if this was a common occurrence. Mr Lowther advised that it was common with a programme in place for loft insulation that they found instances of mould during works and that it could also be a consequence of the types of roofs they had but he would take this on board.

Councillor Fletcher commented that it was refreshing to see that this issue was being tackled but also advised of occasions where she had to go to the

CEO also and it was so sad that it had taken a death (nationally) for social housing providers to take notice of the issue. Mr Lowther agreed and commented that it was not acceptable to suggest it was a lifestyle issue which had been used previously and Members could rest assured that Gentoo were taking a proactive and empathetic approach on this.

The Chairman thanked Mr O'Connor for the report and Mr Lowther for his presentation commenting that he really hoped they managed to get the situation of Damp and Mould tackled.

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

### **Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance**

Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an update from the Alliance on current SVSA developments, projects and priorities and to encourage collaborative working and two way communication covering the period of October 2023 – February 2024

(for copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and 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.

7. 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.
- iii) Considered and agreed the streets/schemes listed within the report for inclusion in the Highways Maintenance Capital Programme 2024-2025

## 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.

Ms Stephenson advised that the issue of the Washington West Community Chest application had now been resolved and therefore Area Committee consideration was no longer required.

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

8. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Note the financial statements set out in Section 2.1 and 3.2 of the report.
- ii) Approved £45,556 from the Neighbourhood Fund to Oxclose & District Young Peoples Project for the NEET Project as detailed in Annex 1 of the report;
- iii) Approved £3560 from the Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme to Donwell CA towards the Community Assets Project as detailed in Annex 1 of the report
- iv) 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) J. WARNE,  
Chairman.