

**At a Meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY, 2012 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Allan, Essl, Gallagher, Gofton, L. Martin, Morrissey, Porthouse, Tye, Waller, P. Watson, S. Watson, Wilson, A. Wright and T. Wright.

**Also Present:-**

Simone Common	West Locality Ops Manager	Sunderland City Council
Bill Blackett	Area Response Manager	Sunderland City Council
Angela Cousins	Area Community Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Kevin Douglas	Media Officer	Sunderland City Council
Alan Duffy	Head of Operations	Gentoo
John Fisher	Housing Options Manager	Sunderland City Council
Julie Gray	Head of Community Services	Sunderland City Council
Bill Leach		VCS Network
Chris Marshall	Head of Operations	Gentoo
Keith Moore	Area Lead Executive	Sunderland City Council
David Noon	Principal Governance Services Officer	Sunderland City Council
Julie Parker		Sunderland TPCT
Richard Parry	Area Officer	Sunderland City Council
Alison Patterson	Scrutiny and Area Arrangements Manager	Sunderland City Council
Edna Rochester		VCS Network
Cheryl Warcup	Inspector	Northumbria Police

**Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Chairman informed Members of the receipt of a letter of thanks from the Pennywell Community Centre and the Tansy Centre in respect of funding granted by the West Area Committee.

## **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Gallagher, Gofton and P. Smith and on behalf of Lucy Malarkey and James Third.

## **Declarations of Interest**

Item 3 – SIB Allocation, Plains Farm Primary School

Councillor Essl declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Governor of Plains Farm Primary School and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

With regard to Resolution 6(iii) Bill Blackett, Area Response Manager advised that the £5,310 funding requested in respect of the Essen Way Railings improvements, would not now be funded from the 'Walk and Talk' Improvement Programme Budget. The repairs had been funded from mainstream budgets however funding for the painting had still to be secured.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **Community Action in Sunderland West: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions – Community First**

The Chairman advised that the report in respect of the Local Area Plan review process was being withdrawn from the agenda to enable a more detailed report to be considered by the Committee in March 2012. Various discussions were taking place on the further development of area arrangements and by which time there should be more to share with the Committee which would help inform Members' approach to agreeing priorities.

2. RESOLVED that the withdrawal of the report in respect of the Local Area Plan be noted.

## **Community Action in Sunderland West – Progress Review Work Plan 2011/2012 Update on Priorities**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of outstanding issues from the 2010/11 Work Plan with regard to:-

- (i) Job Prospects
- (ii) Crime and Community Safety
- (iii) Youth and Play
- (iv) Health and Well Being
- (v) Environment and Street Scene

(For copy report – see original minutes).

With regard to the Job Prospects item, Richard Parry, Area Officer referred to paragraph 3.3 and advised that the Cabinet report on apprenticeships expected in January had now been delayed. He had undertaken talks with the City Business and Investment Team who advised of the potential use of substantial ERDF 50/50 matched funding to assist people moving into self employment. Mr. Parry suggested that the Member only 'Task and Finish' group meet with the Enterprise Manager to progress the issue.

With regard to the Crime and Community Safety item, Inspector Warcup provided the meeting with the current crime statistics together with the percentage increase or decrease on the previous year.

<b>Offence</b>	<b>No. Incidents</b>	<b>% Age + or -</b>
Criminal Damage	86	- 2.3%
Violent Crime	550	- 5.3%
Vehicle Crime	337	- 8.4%
Burglary from dwellings	140	+ 2.9%
Theft other than handling	701	+10.0%
Youth Anti Social Behaviour	2065	-36.7%

All crime across the West Sunderland Area had decreased by 4.6% over the course of the year. The increase in cable was a key determinant in the rise in Theft other than Handling.

There had been 3 offences of vehicle fires in Grindon over 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 2 of which were linked. 3 arrests had been made and the suspects had been bailed until April. There had been an increase in drug offences over the year in the West Sunderland Area. 11 warrants had been issued in total with a further 3 pending.

Eden Vale and Silksworth had been targeted as two key areas of anti social behaviour. Incidents had decreased from 376 to 223 in Eden Vale this had reflected the work undertaken by the youth intervention workers and the Police and Crime Partnership. In Silksworth the incidents of anti social behaviour had dropped from 194 to 102. This figure however did not include the events of the previous weekend when there had been numerous incidents.

In conclusion Inspector Warcup advised that Sgt Ken Robinson who had regularly attended West Area meetings had retired from the Force the previous week. He would be replaced in the West Area by Sgt Colin Stephenson.

Councillor Tye welcomed the presentation from Inspector Warcup and highlighted the partnership approach with its reactive and proactive work, as the only successful means of tackling anti social behaviour. He believed the report in the agenda papers should have included a recognition of the work undertaken through youth provision and the XL Villages.

Councillor Porthouse referred Members to the Police UK website which he believed was an excellent resource.

Consideration was then given to the proposed re-assignment of the £9,750 underspend from Operation Freedom as detailed in paragraphs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 of the report.

Whilst not looking to curtail the proposal, Members expressed concern that it was another 'sticking plaster' used to address a serious issue that should not be tackled via a series of temporary measures. The view was expressed that the issue needed to be thoroughly investigated and appropriately resourced. Any decision should follow the Council's principles of decision making, including a crime and disorder impact assessment and compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. It was suggested that the matter could be referred to an appropriate scrutiny committee to investigate and draw up proposals for consideration by Cabinet.

Consideration was then given to the Fire Service performance monitoring statistics for the year to date (1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2012). Members being advised that Mr. Forster was not in attendance and having noted a number of errors in the report agreed that consideration of the figures be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

With regard to the Health and Well Being item, Mr. Parry advised that with regard to paragraph 6.2, the evaluation of the Health Champions project by Leeds University had been delayed and would not be presented to the Committee until April or May.

With regard to the Environment and Street Scene item the Chairman welcomed and introduced, Bill Blackett, Area Response Manager who briefed the Committee on the Walk and Talk timetables, the 'love where you live' springclean, and the short-listing of Sunderland in respect of both the Northumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom awards. With regard to the 'love where you live campaign', there had been an excellent response in September, 2011 with 13 events being held in the West Area. However because they had all been held on the same day a lot of good news stories had become lost. Mr. Blackett was therefore proposing to organise a rolling programme of events across the area commencing in the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> March in order that publicity could be maximised.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the progress updates and actions as detailed in the report and the Work Plan be noted,
- (ii) approval be given to the proposal from the Eden Vale and Thornhill Group to allocate unspent resources from 'Operation Freedom' as detailed in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.5, and
- (iii) consideration of the Fire and Rescue Service statistics be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

## **Community Action: Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps – Eden Vale and Thornhill Project Group**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of the progress against agreed actions in the Eden Vale and Thornhill Project Group Action Plan as detailed in Annex 3 and which appended a report from the Executive Director of City Services (Annex 4) which contained proposals for the allocation of £42,000 (SIP) funding in respect of environmental works to the former mineral line.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

With regard to the SIP funding application, Mr. Blackett, Area Response Manager stated that he had been advised that the works would now require planning permission. This would add a further £1,000 to the cost and delay commencement of the works by approximately one month. Mr. Blackett having provided a comprehensive briefing on the proposal, detailed discussion ensued with Members highlighting the following points:-

- the manner in which the issue had been reported to the Committee in the agenda papers had been confusing.
- young people and youth workers being allowed evening access to school facilities would help reduce the problem of anti social behaviour.
- the cost of the scheme appeared too high together with concerns as to whether SIP funding should be sought as opposed to mainstream funding.
- the claim that the Highways Section could carry out a scheme which would cost only £2,000 compared to the £43,000 being quoted by the Landscape and Reclamation Team.

Nevertheless the Committee acknowledged that a problem existed which needed to be addressed.

At the instance of the Chairman it was:-

4. RESOLVED that consideration of the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee and that, the relevant Portfolio Holder, appropriate Scrutiny Committee Chairman, together with representatives from the Highways Team and the Landscape and Reclamation Team be requested to attend the meeting to address any comments or questions from Members.

## **Community Chest, Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) – Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the item highlighting the financial statement for 2011/2012 together with details of three applications for SIB funding and 5 proposals for support from the Community Chest budget.

With regard to the Plains Farm Homing Society's Refurbishment project a concern was raised as to whether this was an appropriate use of SIB funding. Detailed discussion ensued following which it was moved by Councillor Morrissey that the Committee agree to grant 50% of the requested amount and that the organisation be signposted to the 'Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund' with a view to seeking the remaining 50% of the funding.

Accordingly it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee's funding statement for 2011/12 be received and noted,
- (ii) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £4,000 to Farrington Residents' Association in respect of the Community Shop project,
- (iii) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £11,000 to Plains Farm Primary School in respect of its 'Safe Play' project, and
- (iv) approval be given to the granting of £1,750 SIB funding (i.e. 50% of the requested amount) to the Plains Farm Homing Society in respect of its 'Refurbishment' project and that the organisation be directed to the 'Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund' with a view to obtaining the remaining 50%.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and wished them a safe journey home.

(Signed) P. GIBSON,  
Chairman.