

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 2ND JULY, 2009 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor S. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Allan, Arnott, M. Dixon, P. Gibson, Gofton, Morrissey, Old, P. Smith, P. Watson, A. Wilson, A. Wright and T. Wright.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors D. Forbes, L. Martin, Oliver, J.B. Scott, P. Smith and Tye.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 4th June, 2009

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4th June, 2009 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Minutes of the last Ordinary Meeting of the South Sunderland Area Committee held on 2nd March, 2009 and of the Extraordinary Meetings of the Committee held on 6th and 17th April, 2009

2. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last Ordinary Meeting of the South Sunderland Area Committee held on 2nd March, 2009 and of the Extraordinary meetings of the Committee held on 6th and 17th April, 2009 (copies circulated) be received and noted.

Developing Community Communications to Support Area Committees 2009-10

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought views from the Committee to help inform the development of a Community Communications action plan for the West Sunderland Area Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Verity Dodd, Senior Corporate Communications Officer, together with Rose Peacock, Senior Media Officer, presented the report and invited Members to help identify different ways to communicate with local residents and make suggestions for communications materials to support promotions and information provision in the area.

Councillor Gofton stated that if the aim was to engender real community engagement and to encourage people to re-engage with civic life then the material should be based at a ward level detailing what the Council had done and was doing at a local level.

Councillor Arnott stated that Councillors of his party produced newsletters on a regular basis informing constituents of local news/issues. He saw this as a duty of local Councillors that should not be a burden on Council Tax payers.

Councillor Gofton agreed that as party Members Councillors produced all sorts of newsletters and leaflets, however, what was being proposed was different. The Area Committee information would be apolitical and produced to help repair ruptured civic engagement. It was about positive promotion of the work being done by the Council and the Area Committee.

Councillor P. Watson stated the material would enhance the role of the Area Committee and show that its work was relevant to the people of the West Sunderland Area. It needed to provide an effective forum for communication at a local level. There was a need to encourage the public to attend meetings. The Committee should have an identity of its own and needed to be seen as a relevant part of the Council's governance.

Councillor Allan stated that there was an absolute need to communicate with the public and that the communication needed to be on a two way basis. What the Committee did not need were 'artificial publications filled with pictures of Councillors with smiles on their faces'.

Councillor Morrissey stated that a leaflet to cover the whole of the West Sunderland Area would probably be little more than useless. He believed that even at a ward level it would be problematic. He stated that the West Area comprised many longstanding communities that crossed the more artificial ward boundaries. He stated therefore that publicity etc. should be community rather than ward based.

Discussion ensued and the following suggestions were made with regard to the production of communications materials:-

- communications should be on a specific theme and not just replicate what was provided in Sunrise;
- could the number of local pages within Sunrise be increased?
- there needed to be a mechanism for the public to feed back on services provided by partners and not just those provided by the Council;
- discontinue Sunrise altogether and devote the resources to area based publications.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Dodd and Ms. Peacock for their report it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-
- i) the report be received and noted; and
 - ii) Members' comments be used to inform the development of a Community Communications Action Plan for the West Sunderland Area Committee.

Establishing a Local Area Work Plan

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented for approval the West Sunderland Area Committee Work Programme for the municipal year 2009/10.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that approval be given to the West Sunderland Area Committee Work Plan for the municipal year 2009/10 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report.

Questions to Area Committee

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on a proposal to introduce a Questions to the Area Committee Session at future meetings of the Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report advising Members that a pilot would be undertaken at the next two meetings of the Committee in September and November 2009. A review would then be undertaken to assess the success of the pilot in terms of the process and practicalities.

5. RESOLVED that the report be approved and that the Questions to Area Committee be piloted at the Committee's meetings to be held in September and November 2009.

West: A Safe Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which asked Members to consider and identify their main proposals for further development and action in relation to their safe priority theme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

To compliment the report, Richard Parry, Area Regeneration Officer, provided Members with a Powerpoint presentation which detailed the local area

delivery plan process and which highlighted the following 6 potential areas for action within the safe priority theme:-

- i) illegal alcohol sales/bottle tracing;
- ii) the Phoenix Project/Young Fire Fighters;
- iii) neighbourhood wardens;
- iv) community safety days;
- v) community pay back scheme;
- vi) neighbourhood watch schemes.

Mr. Parry advised that the theme Summary for the Safe Priority attached at Annex 1 to the report was a living document which would be reviewed and updated at each Area Committee meeting to allow Members to respond to needs as they were identified.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Arnott, Keith Beardmore, Director of Financial Resources, advised that a report was to be submitted to Cabinet at the end of July with regard to the Area Committee SIB allocation. The SIP for the West Sunderland Area was available and remained uncommitted. He advised that the theme Summary work was at a developmental stage, nothing was ruled in and nothing had been ruled out. Taking the list of current services and activities detailed in Annex 1, there would be ones that Members would just want to note while there may be others that they may wish to see enhanced and perhaps resourced.

Discussion ensued with regard to the activities detailed in Annex 1 with particular attention paid to the bottle tracing scheme and the Community Safety days. In response to enquiries from Members as to what steps could be taken to tackle anti social behaviour, Mr Bill Blackett, Anti Social Behaviour Strategy Manager, advised of work being undertaken through the A.S.B. Delivery meetings. Until recently there had not been a city wide approach in respect of the LAMPS, however evidence based systems were now being adopted which would allow best practice to be transferred across areas, for example in developing actions to combat the problems of drinking dens

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Parry and Mr. Beardmore for the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the report be approved; and
- ii) the following six activities from Annex 1 as highlighted in the presentation from Mr. Parry be adopted as potential areas for further development and action:-
 - illegal alcohol sales/bottle tracing;
 - the Phoenix Project/Young Fire Fighters;
 - neighbourhood wardens;
 - community safety days;
 - community payback scheme;
 - neighbourhood watch schemes.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) 2009/10 Ward-Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on 4 projects recommended for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest Scheme in respect of the Barnes, Silksworth and St. Anne's wards as detailed in Annex 1 and Annex 1A to the report.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman having advised that Annex 3 to the report had been withdrawn, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 4 projects recommended for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest budget with a total value of £5,000 as detailed in Annex 1 and Annex 1A to the report.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) S. WATSON,
Chairman.