

At a Meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

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

Also Present:-

Karen Alexander	Employment and Training Manager	Sunderland City Council
Dave Barber	14-19 Development Officer	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
Victoria French	Assistant Head of Community Services	Sunderland City Council
Keith Hamilton	Deputy Manager, Planning Implementation	Sunderland City Council
Julie Lynn	Area Officer	Sunderland City Council
Chris Marshall	Head of Operations	Gentoo
Sandra Mitchell	Head of Early Intervention and Locality Services	Sunderland City Council
David Noon	Principal Governance Services Officer	Sunderland City Council
Mark Overton	Consultant in Public Health	Sunderland TPCT
Alison Patterson	Scrutiny and Area Arrangements Manager	Sunderland City Council
Ken Robinson	Sergeant	Northumbria Police
Edna Rochester		VCS Network
Raj Singh	Lead Policy Officer for Families	Sunderland City Council
Vicki Smiles	Student	Sunderland University
Vince Taylor	Head of Strategy and Performance	Sunderland City Council
James Third	Community Relations Officer	Nexus
Karen Todd	Head Teacher	Richard Avenue Primary School
Nikki Vokes	Chief Executive	Sunderland North Community Business Centre

Chairman's Welcome

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

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Wilson and on behalf of Bill Leach, Lucy Malarkey and Peter Iveson.

Declarations of Interest

Members declared interests in the agenda items as detailed below:-

Item 3 – Job Prospects

Councillor Porthouse declared a personal interest as a Council appointed Member of the Management Committee of the Jubilee Centre.

Item 3 – Community Chest

Councillor A. Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Governor of East Herrington Primary School.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 21st September, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on a request from the Office for Civil Society for the City Council to help maximise the benefits of the new Community First programme providing neighbourhood grant aid to communities in Pallion and Silksworth over the next four years.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Julie Lynn, Area Officer presented the report informing Members that the delivery partner would be the Community Development Foundation (CDF), and the purpose of the funding was to help groups in these wards improve their area. The wards selected were based on communities that appeared to require additional support based on relatively high levels of economic deprivation and low levels of social capital.

It would be a community led programme to be accessed through the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The aim was to provide local communities with the means to address their own priorities and stimulate local interest and action. Funding was available from October 2011. Interested groups needed to register on line with CDF. To access the money wards must do the following:-

- Create a Community First Panel who would think strategically about their local area; bring people together to decide how funds should be used and promote the programme locally.
- Have an active on line presence through a community website or blog.
- Match funds for every £1 provided with their time, money or other resources on a 1:1 basis.
- Create a neighbourhood plan by year three which sought to improve the quality of life in neighbourhoods by involving everyone's voice in shaping their future. This should identify the resources and capacity already available to the neighbourhood.

Members whilst accepting that they would need to work with what was put in front of them, questioned the rationale and the selection criteria used to identify those areas chosen for support. Ms. Lynn having advised that she could circulate the allocation rationale if Members felt it would assist them, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the opportunity for funding to come into the West Area and the potential for the Council to offer support be noted.

Community Action in Sunderland West: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions – Crime and Community Safety

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on a proposal that Crime and Safety be added to the Committee's Work Plan as part of the 'Environment and Street Scene' priority.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Julie Lynn, Area Officer presented the report and introduced Sgt. Robinson of Northumbria Police who provided Members with a comprehensive update on the crime trends within the West Sunderland Area.

Members were informed that Peter Iveson, Station Manager from the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service had been unable to attend the meeting, however he had submitted a copy of the last performance information for the period 1st April to 6th November, 2011.

With regard to the proposal that the Committee may wish to engage in a regular informal dialogue with the Police, the Chairman believed that this be declined and that it was more appropriate that the Police continued to be invited to attend the formal meetings of the Area Committee.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the updates from Northumbria Police and the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be received and noted, and
- (ii) approval be given to the adoption of Crime and Community Safety as an action in the Committee's Work Plan, under the 'Environment and Street Scene' priority.

Community Action in Sunderland West: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions – Locality Working

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the operation of the Early Intervention and Locality Services within the Children's Services Directorate following a recent restructure to provide a sharper focus on improving key outcomes in response to changes happening at a local and national level.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Sandra Mitchell, Head of Early Intervention and Locality Services presented the report and introduced Simone Common who had been appointed as the West Locality Operational Manager.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted, and
- (ii) the West Locality Operational Manager be invited to attend future meetings of the West Area Committee.

Community Action in Sunderland West, Progress Review – Child Poverty

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought to update the Committee on the progress to date in respect of the Sunderland Child and to Family Poverty Strategy, set out the current position in relation to poverty levels and consider how the Committee could engage in the programme to reduce Child and Family Poverty through a neighbourhood model for the West Area of Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Raj Singh, Lead Policy Officer for Families presented the report, highlighting:-

- (i) the recently released Child Poverty figures from HMRC,
- (ii) the development of a neighbourhood model to tackle child and family poverty,

- (iii) the early products developed through the model,
- (iv) the Improving Futures Big Lottery Bid to tackle child poverty submitted by the Sunderland AFC Foundation, and
- (v) the next steps to be taken.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Singh for his detailed report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the updated Child Poverty figures published by HMRC for 2009 in relation to the West Sunderland Area be noted,
- (ii) the progress to date with regard to the Southwick Neighbourhood Model and the Big Lottery Improving Futures Bid be noted, and
- (iii) further reports in respect of Child and Family Poverty be submitted in due course.

Community Action in Sunderland West, Progress Review – Environmental and Street Scene Improvements

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

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Bill Blackett, Area Response Manager and Julie Lynn, Area Officer presented the report and drew Members attention to Annex 5 which comprised a report from the Executive Director of City Services, highlighting proposals made by the Task and Finish Group for consideration by the West Area Committee.

With regard to the application from the Friends of Tunstall Hills Group for funding to renovate a redundant changing room facility to provide a community and educational facility, the Chairman reiterated that any approval would be provisional subject to the satisfactory conclusion of negotiations to fulfil all legal requirements.

Councillor P. Watson referred to the Essen Way railings improvements and expressed surprise that the Area Committee were being asked to fund something that should be contained within the Highways base budget.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor S. Watson, Mr. Blackett confirmed that the position regarding the railings had been identified during one of the Committee's Ward Walks. Councillor S. Watson suggested that if this was the case, then funding should be sought from the Walk and Talk improvement programme budget.

Councillor Porthouse having advised of the need to link Mr. Blackett's section into the Members Ward Bulletin Service, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the allocation of £2,000 SIP funding in respect of the Humble Tree Bays as detailed in paragraph 1 of Annex 5,
- (ii) approval be given to the allocation of £36,000 SIB funding in respect of the 'Walk and Talk' improvement programme as detailed in paragraph 4 of Annex 5,
- (iii) approval be given to the allocation of £5,310 funding from the Walk and Talk Improvement Programme budget in respect of the Essen Way Railings improvements project,
- (iv) the progress in respect of the Green Space Infrastructure Strategy be noted and that further reports on the Strategy be submitted in due course, and
- (v) the allocation of £34,500 SIB funding to the Friends of Tunstall Hill Group to renovate a redundant changing room facility to provide a community and educational facility be agreed in principle subject to the successful undertaking of formal negotiations between Land and Property and the Friends Group to fulfil all legal requirements and the submission of a full SIB application for consultation and appraisal.

Community Action in Sunderland West, Progress Review – Job Prospects

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

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Karen Alexander, Employment and Training Manager advised that since the circulation of the agenda, the contents of the report had been overtaken by further discussions at a wider Council level.

The Chairman advised that in view of the announcement made by the Government that day with regard to Apprenticeships he was recommending that further consideration of the report be deferred pending the establishment of a Task and finish Group to investigate the sole issue of Apprenticeships for Young People.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Alexander and her Team for all their work in respect of the matter, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that consideration of the report be deferred and that a Task and Finish Group be established to consider the sole issue of Apprenticeships for Young People.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) Interim Report – April to September 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with feedback in respect of the projects it had funded through its SIB and SIP budgets during the period April to September 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Julie Lynn, Area Officer presented the report and introduced Karen Todd, Head Teacher of Richard Avenue Primary School and Keith Hamilton, Deputy Manager, Planning Implementation who provided the Committee with feedback on the Richard Avenue Primary School Community Learning Centre and the Hasting Hill Path Improvements projects respectively.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Todd and Mr. Hamilton for their presentations, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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).

Julie Lynne, Area Officer, presented the item highlighting the financial statement for 2011/2012 together with details of two applications for SIB funding and 22 proposals for support from the Community Chest budget.

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Community Chest application from Grindon Young People's Project in respect of a Christmas Party. He informed Members that the Sandhill Ward Panel had been unable to reach agreement on the matter and the application had therefore been referred to the Area Committee. He moved that the request for £480 be amended to £300. Upon being put to the Committee this was approved accordingly.

Likewise the Chairman advised that agreement had failed to be reached at the Barnes Ward Panel in respect of Sunderland Men's Probus Club's application for £250 Community Chest funding. Upon being put to the vote, 3 Members voted in favour of granting the application and 3 Members voted against. The Chairman having exercised his casting vote it was resolved that the application be declined.

Councillor Gofton referred to the Hope 4 Kidz application in respect of a Christmas party and suggested that recognition of the Council role in funding the event should be made at the party.

Accordingly it was:-

9. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee's funding statement for 2011-2012 be received and noted,
- (ii) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £1,500 to Sunderland University in respect of the Great North Big Band Festival,
- (iii) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £10,000 to Tunstall Allotments Association in respect of the Community Allotments project,
- (iv) the application for £250 Community Chest funding received from Sunderland Men's Probus Club be declined,
- (v) approval be given to the granting of the amended amount of £300 Community Chest funding to Grindon Young People's project, and
- (vi) approval be given to the granting of the remaining 20 Community Chest applications as detailed in Annex 9 of the report.

Influencing Practice, Policy and Strategy – City Village Concept

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed Members on the concept and development of City Villages and their potential application within Sunderland via the Economic Masterplan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Vince Taylor, Head of Strategy and Performance presented the report which provided background to the City Village concept, progress made to date and the next steps to be taken. Members were informed that a Project Management Team was in place and working with the appointed consultants Genecon to:-

- Identify data sets and indicators to enable a robust assessment of the City's 65 statistical neighbourhoods, in line with the City Village characteristics.
- To consult with residents to assess what makes a good neighbourhood and what is important to people about where they live.
- Engage Elected Members, partners and service providers in the process and utilise the in-depth local knowledge of neighbourhoods to inform investment planning and service delivery and development.
- Develop a practical approach which uses the City Village criteria and the sustainable communities concept commencing with a pilot in a small number of neighbourhoods with specific issues that can be addressed in the short term and a plan for key physical changes to be taken forward in the longer term. This will lead to establishing goals for each 'pilot' neighbourhood as well as a methodology, and framework for evaluation.

Members having highlighted the inherent difficulties in defining neighbourhoods given the variety of ways in which people identified with the areas in which they lived, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted, and
- (ii) the Committee continue to be engaged and consulted on the development of City Village pilot areas and the potential benefits for area arrangements.

Influencing Practice, Policy and Strategy – Sunderland in 2012

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought to brief the Committee on the proposed Sunderland in 2012 programme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Victoria French, Assistant Head of Community Services presented the report highlighting that the 2012 Olympic Games had the potential to have a clear and lasting impact on every aspect of Sunderland life and the ability to positively affect the physical and social health of the City's communities.

The potential existed to improve health, tackle exclusion and isolation, engage those who had disengaged from certain areas of society, and empower and inspire individuals and communities to come together and therefore improve community cohesion.

The 2012 Games would present an opportunity for all sport and activity providers, arts and cultural providers, as well as community groups to capture the imagination of residents and engage people within a Sunderland celebration programme. The Olympic and Paralympics were not just about sport, they were an opportunity to enjoy and participate in a major cultural celebration. In addition, they also provided an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the Games through other 'windows', including libraries, heritage, dance, music, theatre, the visual arts, film and digital innovation and leave a lasting legacy for the arts in the UK.

In concluding her presentation, Ms. French screened a brief video which highlighted the City's aspirations in this regard.

Councillor P. Watson welcomed and embraced the opportunity to empower and enable the people of Sunderland to celebrate the event. It was something that people in 50 years time would remember and would still be talking about.

Keith Moore, Area Lead Executive noted that it was interesting to see how schools were starting to engage with and take ownership of the celebrations.

Councillor Gofton particularly welcomed the inclusion of the arts and cultural aspects of the celebrations to provide a way for people not interested in sport to feel part of the event.

Members having enthusiastically welcomed the presentation, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted,
- (ii) Members be invited to inform and shape the Sunderland in 2012 programme at a Task and Finish Workshop to be held on 22nd November, at 5.00 p.m. in Committee Room 1, and
- (iii) approval be given to the contribution of £10,000 from the West Sunderland Area Committee SIB budget to support the delivery of the Sunderland in 2012 programme subject to the submission of a full SIB application for consultation and appraisal.

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

(Signed) P. GIBSON,
Chairman.