

**At a Meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

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

**Also Present:-**

|                 |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Jemma Amer      | General Manager                          | Farrington Jubilee Centre                  |
| Bill Blackett   | Area Response Manager                    | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Nichola Bolton  | Employment Initiatives Manager           | Sunderland North Community Business Centre |
| Alan Caddick    | Head of Housing                          | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Angela Cousins  | Area Community Co-ordinator              | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Kevin Douglas   | Internal Communications Officer          | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Victoria French | Sports, Wellness and Partnership Manager | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Julie Gray      | Head of Community Services               | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Peter Iveson    | Station Manager                          | Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service      |
| Janet Johnson   | Area Lead Executive                      | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Lisa Ketley     | Empty Property Officer                   | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Trish Lynn      | Operations and Performance               | Sunderland North Community Business Centre |
| Sandra Mitchell | Head of PIP, Children's Services         | Sunderland City Council                    |
| David Noon      | Principal Governance Services Officer    | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Mark Overton    | Consultant in Public Health              | Sunderland TPCT                            |
| Richard Parry   | Area Officer                             | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Helen Peverley  | Area Response Manager                    | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Joan Reed       | Strategic Change Manager                 | Sunderland City Council                    |
| Edna Rochester  |  | VCS Network                                |
| James Third     |  | Nexus                                      |
| Lisa Webb       | Partnership Officer                      | Sunderland Partnership                     |
| Sarah Woodhouse | Senior Partnership Officer               | Sunderland Partnership                     |

## **Chairman's Welcome**

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

## **Declarations of Interest**

Item 2 – Community Action: Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps – Job Prospects

Councillor Porthouse declared a personal interest in the matter as Chairman of the Jubilee Centre.

Item 2 – Community Action: Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps – Youth and Play Provision

Councillors S. Watson and T. Wright declared personal and prejudicial interests in the item as members of Pennywell Community Centre. Councillor Wilson declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of the Lambton Street Fellowship Centre. Councillor Tye declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of A690 and Youth Almighty. Councillor T. Wright also declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Member of St. Thomas's Youth Club. All the above left the meeting room during consideration of the matter. Councillor Porthouse declared a personal interest as a Member of the Jubilee Centre.

Item 2 – Community Action: Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps – SIB Allocation – Pennywell and Tansy Community Centres, Development Officer Project

Councillor T. Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of the Pennywell and Tansy Centres, Development Officer Project as a member of both organisations and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor S. Watson declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of Pennywell Community Centre and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

Item 2 – Community Action: Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps – Community Chest

Councillor A. Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter as a member of the Sunderland Cardiac Support Group.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **Community Action in Sunderland West – Progress Review – Job Prospects**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the establishment of a Jobs Prospects Task and Finish Group to deliver the Committee's key issues of:-

- (i) increasing employability,
- (ii) support to increase the job skills of the most vulnerable and hard to reach, and
- (iii) accredited training for volunteers to improve skills and confidence.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer presented the report and drew the Committee's attention to a proposal to commit £180,000 SIB funding over a two year period, to support a local network of specialist, niche provision. This £90,000 per year compared to current job linkage expenditure, in excess of £350,000 per year and would provide bespoke niche provision for the most vulnerable in the local community. This would equate to £15,000 per ward per year and would support a local network of specialist provision across the six wards.

Consideration was given to the report. Councillor Allan stated that he believed the report needed re-working especially to include reference as to how hard to reach groups could be provided for. Accordingly it was:-

2. RESOLVED that consideration of the matter be deferred to a future meeting pending further consultation on the detailed proposals including consideration of how harder to reach groups would be catered for.

## **Community Action in Sunderland West – Progress Review – Health and Wellbeing, focusing on areas of Concern and Risk Taking Lifestyle Behaviour**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed the Committee on the issues arising through its Health and Wellbeing Task and Finish Group.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer presented the report and introduced Mark Overton, Consultant in Public Health who updated Members on developments in relation to the 'Health Champions' project.

Members having endorsed what they believed to be an extremely pleasing report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the progress of the Health and Wellbeing Task and Finish Group and that of the Health Champions Project be noted.

## **Community Action in Sunderland West – Progress Review – Environmental and Street Scene Improvements, Including Shopping Centres**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed the Committee on issues arising via its Task and Finish Group on Environmental and Street Scene Improvements.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Bill Blackett, West Area Response Manager briefed the Committee on issues considered at the Task and Finish Group for Environmental and Street Scene improvements including, the Green Space audit and responsive local services issues. With regard to the Thorndale Road improvements, Members were advised that these had now been completed and the planters would be arriving during the next week. In response to an enquiry from Councillor Gofton, Mr. Blackett confirmed that the Environmental Apprenticeships were full apprenticeships and last two years resulting in a qualification. Mr. Blackett also briefed Members on a planned series of Ward walks and advised that he would be available to undertake them at any time convenient to Members.

With regard to the operation of Task and Finish Groups in general Councillor Allan expressed concern that their recommendations would be driven only by those Members who were able to attend meetings of the group. This disenfranchised Members who were unable to attend because of other commitments especially as the Task and Finish Groups tended to hold day time meetings. There was a danger that the recommendations would be subjective rather than objective, failing to represent the views of the Committee as a whole.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Community Action in Sunderland West – Youth and Play Provision**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on the outcomes of the Youth and Play Provision Task and Finish Group meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2011 which focused on school holiday activity provision.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer presented the report advising that the Task and Finish Group proposed that activities in the West would be co-ordinated and subject to a single publicity and funding regime. It was further proposed that the programme of holiday activities should include all age ranges from play provision for 8-12 year olds and youth provision for over 13s. The activities were being organised on a ward basis, across the age ranges and were being co-ordinated at an area level. Transport and other resources would be shared and existing services, such as mobile provision and XL Youth Villages would be part of the activity programme.

To deliver the holiday activity programme, it was proposed to allocate up to £7,000 per ward, to be funded from the Strategic Initiatives Budget and that a single collaborative bid be approved in principle. This would enable the Committee to allocate the Children's Services funding approved at the last meeting to other positive activities for children and young people.

The Chairman advised that he had Chaired the Task and Finish Group and had been very impressed with the proposals. It was unfortunate that it had not been possible to provide Members with a programme at this stage.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Gofton, Mr. Parry advised that as it was SIB funding a bid would need to be agreed and it was felt that the best way forward was for one organisation to support a collaborative bid in this case through the Jubilee Centre. In response to a further enquiry from Councillor Gofton, Mr. Parry confirmed that all youth groups had been invited to take part in the programme.

In response to an enquiry from Janet Johnson, Area Lead Executive regarding timescales given the impending summer holidays, Mr. Parry advised that the bid would be drawn up, appraised and dispatched to Members for a full consultation during the next week.

Councillor L. Martin urged members to support the recommendations. He stated that the bid amounted to only £42,000 from the Committee's SIB budget and that assurances had been given that it was to be spent equally across all the West Area Wards. He believed that Officers should be left to deliver the programme on the proviso that a full report on how the money had been spent was submitted to a future meeting.

Councillor Porthouse stated that he had also attended the Task and Finish Group and had been overwhelmed by the number of facilities and organisations in the West Area that catered for Youth and Play provision. He agreed with the Chairman that it had been unfortunate that the proposed programme had not been available to assist Members in making their decision.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the work of the youth and play provision Task and Finish Group be noted, and
- (ii) approval be given to the allocation of up to £42,000 SIB funding (£7,000 per ward), subject to full consultation and appraisal, for the delivery of the West Sunderland Area Holiday Activities Programme.

### **West Area Committee 2011/12 Work Plan**

At this juncture Members gave consideration to the West Area Work Plan for 2011/12, as detailed in pages 14 to 16 of the agenda.

Councillor A. Wright referred to various highways proposals which the Traffic Section had claimed could not be carried out as there was no core budget to fund them. This included speed activated signs at the North Moor Lane junction and the installation of white plastic bollards to prevent parking on roadside verges. He had been advised that perhaps the Area Committee could be approached for funding.

Janet Johnson, Area Lead Executive advised that she would speak to the Executive Director of City Services to obtain a clear overview of the issue prior to any discussion of the appropriateness of seeking Area Committee funding.

Councillor Allan concurred and advised that the Area Committee would need to be wary of approaches from Directorates claiming a lack of money given the current financial restraints.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor T. Wright regarding the Eden Vale Project Group, it was confirmed that it was a group comprising Members of both the West and East Area Committees, 4 Councillors from the West and 3 from the East. In response to an enquiry from Councillor L. Martin, the Chairman advised that the West representatives were himself together with Councillors Morrissey, Tye and Essl.

Councillor T. Wright referred to the audit of derelict/neglected land and requested that once a draft list had been collated that a copy was sent to all Members of the Committee.

6. RESOLVED that the Work Plan be received and noted.

### **Barnes Park Regeneration – Final Report**

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the completed works undertaken within Barnes Park and the highly successful celebration event held on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2011 which marked the re-opening of the park following a £3.6 million regeneration scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Peverley, Area Response Manager presented the report highlighting the background to the redevelopment project, the work carried out in Phase 2, communication and community engagement aspects together with the celebration event held on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2011.

Members whole heartedly welcomed the report and congratulated the project team and all involved in the restoration of the park.

Councillor T. Wright suggested that as a means to encourage residents from other parts of the City to visit, schools from across the City should be invited to perform Saturday concerts in the park.

7. 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).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the item highlighting the financial statement for 2011/2012 together with details of seven applications for SIB funding and 26 proposals for support from the Community Chest budget.

Consideration having been given to the report and the funding requests, it was:-

8. 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 £5,000 to Farringdon Detached Football Club in respect of its Mini Bus project,
- (iii) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £42,000 to Pennywell and Tansy Community Centres as a contribution to their Development Officer project,
- (iv) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £19,000 to Plains Farm Community Youth Centre as a contribution to its Structural Improvements Project subject to the satisfactory completion of a building condition survey,
- (v) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £18,000 to Richard Avenue Primary School as a contribution to its 'Community Learning Centre' project,
- (vi) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £3,000 to Sunderland City Council in respect of the Houghton Feast project,
- (vii) approval be given to the granting of SIB funding of £14,700 to the Red Machine Allotment in respect of its 'Wild Patch' project,
- (viii) approval be given to the granting of £6,000 SIB funding to St. Mary and St. Peter's Community Project as a contribution to its heating project, and
- (ix) approval be given to the granting of the 26 Community Chest applications as detailed in Annex 1b of the report.

### **Influencing Practice, Policy, Strategy – Empty Property Action Plan 2011-12**

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which highlighted the success of the Empty Property Strategy to date and the operation of the Empty Property Action Plan for the West Sunderland Area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Alan Caddick, Head of Housing having presented the report and addressed questions and comments from Members, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Influencing Practice, Policy, Strategy – Information, Advice and Guidance Service**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which introduced Liz St. Louis, Head of Customer Service and Development who was present to provide Members with a briefing on the Council review of its services providing information, advice and guidance.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Liz St. Louis, Head of Customer Service and Development advised that customer surveys had shown that many people would like to continue to access Council services via telephone. 60% of customers felt it important that they could speak to someone face to face. 37% of customers used the internet to access Council services and would like to continue to do so.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor L. Martin regarding private sector projects to drive customers away from phones and onto the internet, Ms. St. Louis advised that the review would look at changing behaviour both locally and nationally and the approaches being taken by other organisations such as banks. Opportunities available via social networking sites such as twitter and Facebook would also be considered.

Councillor Essl referred to one particular area of the Council's advice service which had been dramatically changes and which he felt had not been for the better, namely the Tourist Information Centre. He believed the City had lost an award winning Tourist information office in return for half a desk on the second floor of the City Library. The Members of the Committee endorsed Councillor Essl's comments. Ms. St. Louis replied that she was aware of the number of complaints regarding this and assured the Committee that the matter was being investigated.

10. RESOLVED that the verbal report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) P. GIBSON,  
Chairman.