

**At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held at the ROTUNDA, MONKWEARMOUTH ACADEMY, TORVER CRESENT, SUNDERLAND on 23 MARCH, 2023 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Wilson in the Chair

Councillors Bond, Butler, Doyle, Foster, Hartnack, McKeith, Samuels, Usher and Vera

**Also in Attendance:-**

Mr. Lee Bell	-	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Ms. Judith Britton	-	Sunderland Community Action Group
Ms. Joanne Coulson	-	Community Support Worker, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Peter Curtis	-	Area Network Representative
Mr. Richy Duggan	-	Area Network Representative
Mr. Will Garrigle	-	Project Support Officer, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Steven Gordon	-	Head of Neighbourhoods, Gentoo
Mr. Mike Grummet	-	Headteacher, Monkwearmouth Academy
Mr. Neil Guthrie	-	Development Director (Residential), Sunderland City Council
Ms. Vivienne Metcalfe	-	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council
Insp. Stephen Prested	-	Northumbria Police
Ms. Joanne Stewart	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Ms. Ruth Walker	-	Area Network Representative
Ms. Leanne Wilson	-	NE Sports

**Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made; acknowledging that this would be the last meeting that some Officers and Councillors would be attending as they moved on to other areas or retired from the Council. The Chairman thanked them for their contributions and wished them well in the future.

## **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Chequer, Chisnall, Johnston and A. Smith and also on behalf of Mr. Peter McIntyre.

## **Declarations of Interest**

North Sunderland Area Budget Report

Councillor Foster and Wilson made a DPI in the application for funding in relation to the Hylton Castle Battle Re-enactment project and left the meeting during consideration of the application.

Councillor Butler having proposed, and it being duly seconded by Councillor McKeith, it was agreed that Councillor Samuels be appointed Chairman for consideration of that application.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **North Sunderland Area Neighbourhood Delivery Plan 2020 – 2023**

The Chairman of the North Sunderland Area Committee Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the North Sunderland Neighbourhood Delivery Plan 2020-2023 and provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan and which also provided an update on the Neighbourhood and Community Board Governance Arrangements for 2022-23.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Foster took Members through the report providing a summary of the key areas of action and/or progress of the Board, with greater detail set out in the annex to the report.

The Committee also received a presentation from Mr. Peter Curtis on the Fulwell Ward's Raising Aspirations project. This provided key updates to the Committee and detailed the partners involved and the program of delivery. The presentation highlighted the work that had been undertaken to date and gave case study's from young people who had attended some of the youth and sports sessions to the Committee. In addition, the Committee also heard from one of the apprentice youth workers, a young person who used the services and a parent of a child who attended the provision.

Ms. Ruth Walker also gave a presentation to the Committee on the Southwick Ward's Raising Aspirations project. Ms. Walker advised that this project had brought together three organisations, SNYP, Thompson Park CA and Southwick Community Centre.

The project had been based around four common aims to provide support to the most vulnerable people in Southwick, creating a health and wellbeing programme, reducing digital isolation and providing spaces and opportunities for people to interact. A video snapshot was shared with the Committee providing testimonials and anecdotal information from those who had accessed the project.

Councillor Samuels thanked the Area Committee for the support in the development of the project at Thompson Park and commented that she had visited and viewed the concept for the Park and it was going to be a massive project.

Councillor Butler thanked Ms. Walker for the work she undertook in the Southwick Ward and commented that she was a great community asset to the Ward and how good they were in keeping the community momentum.

Councillor Hartnack echoed the sentiment and commented that it was good to see voluntary groups within the Wards working closely together and offering opportunities to young people across the neighbouring wards, being more visual and helping to change perceptions in the communities.

In relation to a question from Councillor Hartnack regarding detached youth work, Ms Walker advised that SNYP were leading on a project for the North Sunderland area and was core to the work they did across the five ward areas. They were also working on providing detached youth work in the city centre.

Councillor Bond asked if a report could be made available as to how many people were attending sessions, Ms. Metcalfe advised that all projects complete robust data logs so Officers have all of the information around young people accessing provision and is then provided within the annual report which is submitted to the Council. She also advised that quarterly monitoring reports are submitted to the Board providing information on what is being delivered by each project.

Councillor McKeith advised that he had emailed some amendments to the streets within the St Peter's ward for works in the Highways Maintenance Programme to Mr. Graham Carr but that they had not been changed in the report. Ms. Metcalfe advised that she would ensure the proposed changes were picked up and the schedule amended accordingly.

The information in the report and presentations having been fully considered, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- The progress and performance update with regard to the North Sunderland Neighbourhood Delivery Plan for 2020/23 be received and noted and the proposals for future delivery as set out in annex 1 to the report be agreed;
- The presentation on the Fulwell and Southwick Raising Aspirations projects be received and noted; and
- The Highways Maintenance proposals be agreed; subject to the changes proposed for the St. Peter's Ward.

## **Change to the Order of Business**

At this juncture, it was agreed to change the order of business on the agenda to allow presenting officers to leave after submitting their item to attend prior commitments.

## **Partner Agency Reports - Gentoo Update**

Gentoo submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update with regard to the work done by Gentoo between December, 2022 and March, 2023.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Gordon, Head of Neighbourhoods, Gentoo, presented the report advising that regular updates would be presented to enable Members to be up to date on Gentoo current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities. Members of the Committee were given an update on Neighbourhood Services and were provided with information on investments and renewals in the North Sunderland Area.

In closing, Mr. Gordon advised Members that he could share the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) once they had been collated and published in Autumn 2024.

Councillor Butler commented that since Gentoo had began attending the Area Committee things had improved exponentially and that issues with damp and repairs reported by residents were now being addressed more efficiently. Mr. Gordon advised that Gentoo were one of only a few landlords in the country who took the decision to contact every tenant to get an understanding of where there may be issues with damp in housing. A specialist team had been set up to manage that area and the improvement that had been seen was massive.

Councillor Usher agreed that improvements had been immeasurable and was sad to see that Mr. Gordon was leaving and referred to meetings that had been held between Gentoo and the Council's Scrutiny Committees and now felt that the way things were moving forward was promising. Mr. Gordon agreed that the relationship between Gentoo and the Council now was the best he had seen and had made massive improvements.

In response to a query from Councillor Butler regarding the regeneration work in Southwick, Mr. Gordon advised that he could provide the full year's investment plan database which provided streets, estates and the dates for planned works.

Councillor Bond asked for more detailed information on those residents who were behind in paying their rent, i.e. how far were they behind? And how close to eviction were they? And was informed by Mr. Gordon that from a rental income perspective they had a very high income collection rate, with 100% of the rent due last year being collected. There were a number of reasons for this such as the level of support they provided for tenants and a range of things they could provide such as rent being paid direct from benefits.

With regards to evictions, out of 29,000 housing stock, last year he would estimate there were less than forty or fifty tenants evicted as it was very much a last resort, having exhausted all other options. He could not provide exact figures of those residents in arrears, or to what amounts, but that performance information could be provided to a future meeting.

Councillor Wilson commented that they could look to invite the new Gentoo CEO to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss these and other issues any Members may have in more detail.

Members having fully considered the report and information provided, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Partner Agency Reports – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service**

Mr. Lee Bell, TWFRS, presented the update report and provided the Committee with a verbal update on the current numbers for fires in the area. The date referred to figures from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2023 and he also provided some annual figures as a comparison.

There had been a total of 46 calls attended; with 101 being attended last year. There had been 20 deliberate fires in this quarter compared with 69 in the same period last year with the reduction being due to joined up working with the Environmental Enforcement Teams; spotting issues and reporting them so that materials could be removed. Year to date there had been 243 deliberate secondary fires against 238 the previous year. There had been 609 safe and well checks carried out in the community against a target of 600 to be undertaken.

Visits to schools were back up and running, allowing staff to engage with Key Stage 1 1 pupils. He also advised that there had been 17 reported attacks on firefighters; a reduction from 82; and of the 17 only 3 were in the North Sunderland area, with 2 being on bonfire night.

In closing, Mr. Bell advised that the figures from North Sunderland were reducing and moving in the right direction and he hoped this was a good news report for the Committee.

Members thanked Mr. Bell for his informative and positive report, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the update from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be received and noted.

### **Partner Agency Reports - Northumbria Police Update**

Inspector Stephen Prested, Northumbria Police, presented the update report and provided the Committee with a verbal update on the current numbers in relation to anti-social behaviour, burglaries, vehicle and violent crime in the North Sunderland Area.

He also provided Members with an update on the use of the drone in the North Sunderland Area advising that it had been used recently for the Sunderland v Middlesbrough football match and in Fulwell Quarry for the use of motorbikes and other off-road vehicles. He explained that the local authority currently only had a single member of staff trained as a pilot but two further pilots were now being trained so it could be used to provide a lot more coverage over varying times of day and night. With regards to the restructure, Councillor Samuels asked if the Area Committee could be provided with more information once it was available and Inspector Prested advised that meetings were continuing and once more detail was provided he could look to share that.

In relation to the drones, Councillor Vera asked how far they could travel and was advised that different models had differing limitations but they could travel across the river and beyond the Stadium of Light; approximately half a mile; but he could get further details on the exact limitations for Members.

In relation to concerns from Councillor Vera regarding the safety of staff at a local supermarket being approached by gangs of shoplifters who waited until security staff had left; Inspector Prested informed the Committee he could take that information away and speak with his staff and come back with further information for them.

Members having thanked Inspector Prested for his report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the update from Northumbria Police be received and noted.

### **Partner Agency Reports - Report of the North Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network**

The Voluntary and Community Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update with regard to the North Sunderland Area Voluntary and Community Sector network.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Richie Duggan, Area Network Representative, took Members through the report advising that the network had met on six occasions up to March 2023 and shared the agenda items that had been covered.

The Committee were advised that the warm spaces were being well used and were a real benefit giving them the opportunity to help build relationships with residents and allowing them to be able to share the day to day issues that they were facing.

In response to a query from Councillor Bond as to how the people using the warm spaces were being monitored, he was informed that a register was provided at each of the venues and data was collected on the number of people using the facility but that users were under no obligation to share any personal information with them. Mr. Duggan also advised that if a user was referred for more support from other services this would also be logged and Ms. Metcalfe confirmed that they did receive all copies of data collected so that this could be monitored.

Members having no further comments or questions, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **North Sunderland Area Committee 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 Neighbourhood Funds, Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme and Community Chest and presented proposals for further funding requests.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Metcalfe, Area Community Development Lead, presented the report drawing attention to the recommendations detailed within the report.

In relation to the Battle Re-enactment Project at Hylton Castle, Members raised the issue that the Sunderland Triathlon was on the same weekend and asked if the events team were aware of this and could ensure that all communications promoted both events in the city as visitors may wish to attend both.

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

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the financial statements as set out in tables 1, 2 and 3 be received and noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the allocation of £19,981 from the Neighbourhood Fund to the Sunderland City Council for the Thompson Park Event;
- (iii) approval be given to the allocation of £25,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund to Hylton Castle Trust for the Battle Re-enactment Project; and
- (iv) the approvals for Community Chest supported from 2022/2023 as set out in the report be noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) D. WILSON,  
Chairman.