

At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held at the BUNNY HILL CENTRE, NORTH HYLTON ROAD, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 8TH JANUARY, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Foster, G.Hall, Leadbitter, Shattock, Stewart, J. Walton, L. Walton and D. Wilson

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Copeland, Francis, Howe, Symonds and N. Wright.

Minutes of the last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 30th October, 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest, however in relation to Item 5 – Regeneration Issues Report – Feedback on Projects Previously Funded through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB), Councillors Charlton, Foster and Shattock requested that it be placed on record that they had previously met with Elite Family Specialists who had provided them with an overview of their work.

Presentation from Northumbria Police on Crime Rates Relating to the North Sunderland Area and Minutes of the Meetings of the Local Multi - Agency Problem Solving Group

At this juncture the Chairman raised the issue of nominating a substitute from Members to sit on the LMAPS Group. Inspector Musgrove advised that before a nominee could sit on the Group they would need to be registered and receive the appropriate training. It was agreed that the item would be brought back formally to the next Committee to propose a nominee.

Chief Inspector Brian Walker, Inspector Lisa Musgrove and Joanne Dowling, Business Assurance Team gave an update regarding the Workforce Modernisation Programme. Sunderland North was one of thirteen police forces, known as 'demonstration sites' that were testing ways of working aimed at increasing police capacity and capability. After reviewing business processes, the demonstration sites will look at how they match skills to tasks. This work will be evaluated and made available as examples of good practice. Where benefits were identified, improvements could be introduced to maximise police effectiveness.

Ms Dowling advised that the objectives of the Programme were to improve the service given to victims and witnesses within the Southwick sector and improve sanction detections.

The Project would be evaluated externally (by Deloitte) and internally using quantitative data (measurements of performance, e.g. response times) and qualitative data (e.g. feedback from victims, Councillors, partners, police officers and staff).

Ms Dowling circulated a feedback questionnaire to all Members of the North Area which focused on response, interaction, visibility, confidence levels, involvement with the force and overall impression.

In response to a question from Councillor Shattock in relation to funding, Chief Inspector Walker advised that by engaging with the concepts of Workforce Modernisation, the efficiency savings were already being made meaning that the project would ultimately be self funded.

Inspector Musgrove then presented recent statistics illustrating crime detection and arrest management information for the North Sunderland area.

The current detection rate stood at 38.7% which was a 5% increase on the same period last year. Arrests were up by 28.7% compared to last year.

The Committee were updated on other crime rates as follows:-

Criminal Damage	3.1% reduction	30 less incidents
Violent Crime	16.9% increase	114 more incidents
Violence against a person	8.9% increase	40 more incidents
Robbery	100% increase	19 more incidents
Vehicle Crime	13.1% reduction	53 less incidents
Burglary Dwelling	50% increase	53 more incidents
Drug Offences	226% increase	147 more incidents

Members raised concerns with regard to the increase in burglary/ dwelling. Inspector Musgrove advised that the increase in detections had detrimental impact on the crime figures.

Councillor J. Walton queried when it was likely that more police officers would be seen walking the beat as it did not appear this was happening in Fulwell at present. Chief Inspector Walker advised that there was an aim to get police officers out and about instead of being tied to the office. Inspector Musgrove stated that there were more officers available to respond to incidents.

In response to a query from Councillor G. Hall, Inspector Musgrove advised that robbery was included in the violent crime statistics. Councillor Hall queried what the current staffing levels were like in relation to community policing in the north area. Inspector Musgrove advised that Community Support Officer (CSO) turnover could be frequent as many of them went on to join the police force and efforts were being made to look at a quicker replacement system. Members praised the work of the CSO's who were highly valued in the communities they served.

Councillor Shattock stated that it would be interesting to view the data regarding the movement of CSO's in the area.

Councillor D. Wilson queried to what extent alcohol featured in crimes. Inspector Musgrove advised that alcohol was often a contributory factor in certain crimes.

2. RESOLVED that the presentation be received and noted.

The Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with the report of the minutes of their meetings held on 14th October, 2008 and 18th November, 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor G. Hall referred to police cautions that were given to people for drugs misuse and commented that he felt people were unclear as to the seriousness of such a warning. There needed to be greater reiteration to individuals being cautioned as to the consequences of such a reprimand.

Inspector Musgrove advised that an individual was told at the point of caution what the parameters of the caution were.

The Chairman referred to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's report which stated that a number of buildings had been damaged by fire on 5 November and had required intervention. He advised that partners had discussed the potential for an area community bonfire event in November 2009 in a controlled environment which should reduce the risk of emergency call outs. Councillor Wilson stated that members were having a meeting with the Council's Parks department to look at the feasibility of holding an event at Hylton Castle.

3. RESOLVED that the report of the LMAPS Group held on 14th October, 2008 and 18th November, 2008 be received and noted.

Regeneration Issues Report: Feedback on Projects Previously Funded Through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB)

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) providing information to the Area Committee on expenditure from SIB towards the following:-

- Elite Family Specialists who were awarded £30,000 in June 2008;
- Little Tiggers who were awarded £11,649 in June 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that the feedback reports be received and noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) Regeneration Issues Report

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining proposals for the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) to support the following new initiatives to benefit the area:-

- i) Southwick Primary School's 'Sports Hall Equipment' project

(For copy report – see original minutes).

At this juncture the Chairman introduced Pauline Hopper, who had recently taken up the post of Area Regeneration Officer for the North. Ms. Hopper presented the report advising that at its last meeting the Committee agreed funding for projects totalling £220,949 leaving a balance of £62,610 in the 2008/09 budget. Should the Committee grant the application for funding presented to the Committee requesting £13,990, £48,620 would be left to allocate with one committee meeting remaining this financial year.

Ms. Hopper directed Members to paragraph 2 of the report which stated that following the recent communication with Members, the Committee was requested to consider the principle of deferring commitment of expenditure from next year's SIB budget (subject to budget approval), except in cases of clear emergency. The Committee was further requested to defer consideration of Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) expenditure until the new financial year.

Discussion ensued in relation to the request. Councillor G. Hall raised concerns in relation to deferring payments. He stated that the SIB money was available to support and benefit projects in the area who were often working to financial deadlines or in urgent need of assistance. The Chairman stated that if projects needed emergency access to next year's SIB funding then this would not be denied. The deferral had no bearing on the current year's budget.

5. RESOLVED that it was agreed to defer commitment of expenditure from next year's SIB budget (subject to budget approval), except in cases of clear emergency. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) expenditure until the new financial year.

Mrs Trish Stoker presented the application in respect of Southwick Primary School's 'Sports Hall Equipment' project

The representative having answered Members' questions, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £13,990 from the 2008/9 budget as a contribution to the Southwick Primary School's 'Sports Hall Equipment' project

Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) to bring forward 16 proposals recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 16 proposals recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest with a total value of £6,639 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report.

Sport and Leisure in Sunderland North

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members of the North Area Committee with information relating to provision of sport and leisure services.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Michael Dodds, Aquatic Centre Manager presented the report giving an overview of the national, City and North area context for delivering participation in sport and physical activity. Mr Dodds also highlighted Sunderland's Play and Urban Games Strategy which had identified 28 sites citywide for development and improvement by 2010. The Committee was requested to provide feedback on locations they consider would benefit from future investment in play provision.

Councillor Hall referred to the Play Pathfinder project at Roker Park and advised that a site meeting was due to take place between residents and developers to iron out some issues concerning changes to the initial plans for the provision.

In response to a question from Councillor Stewart in relation to the work that would be carried out to the Community North Play Area, Amanda Cattle, Bunny Hill Manager, advised that the new play facility would be in a controlled area where the old bowling green was situated.

Councillor J. Walton queried whether the Aquatic Centre could be producing future Olympic standard athletes for 2012. Mr Dodds advised that there were four young athletes that had excellent potential for national and international success.

Having considered the report, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted and Members provide Officers with feedback in relation to content and specifically in relation to the issue highlighted around the play provision sites.

Festivals and Events in Sunderland

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an update regarding events activity that took place within the City, including North Sunderland Area, for the period 1 April – 31 August 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor J. Walton stated that he would like to see greater participation of brass bands at such events and was advised that the Culture and Leisure Review Committee were undertaking a review of music development in Sunderland in order to develop a strategy for Music. In line with this piece of work the music programme for 2009 was being reviewed.

9. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

Heritage Open Days

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to update Members on Heritage Open Days 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

10. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) R. BELL,
Chairman.