

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors Allan, M. Dixon, P. Gibson, Gofton, Oliver, J.B. Scott, Tye, P. Watson, S. Watson, A. Wilson, A. Wright and T. Wright

Also Present:-

Keith Beardmore	Area Lead Executive	Sunderland City Council
Les Clarke	Head of Street Scene	Sunderland City Council
Jodie Collins	Employee Communications Officer	Sunderland City Council
Angela Cousins	Partnership Manager	Sunderland City Council
Stephen Dodds	Bus Service Manager	Nexus
Kevin Douglas	Media Officer	Sunderland City Council
Tobyn Hughes	Director of Strategy	Nexus
Peter Iveson		Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Norma Johnston	Assistant Head of Environmental Services	Sunderland City Council
Bill Leach		West Area Voluntary Sector Network
Dave Leonard	Area Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Rob Mills	Partnership Development Manager	Nexus
Sandra Mitchell	Head of Performance Improvement and Policy	Sunderland City Council
Anne Morrison		West Area Voluntary Sector Network
David Noon	Senior Democratic Services Officer	Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	Project and Service Development Manager	Sunderland City Council
Janet Snaith	Head of City Business and Investment Team	Sunderland City Council
Phil Spooner	Programme Manager	Sunderland City Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Allan, Arnott, Morrissey, Old and P. Smith and also on behalf of Lisa Theaker, Cheryl Warcup, Lucy Malarkey and Edna Rochester.

Change in the Order of Business – Item 7(iii) Financial Statement and Funding Requests – Community Leaders of the Future

The Chairman advised that in order to facilitate a smooth transaction of business he intended to withdraw the above item from the agenda for this meeting of the Committee as the number of Members indicating they would need to declare personal and prejudicial interests would result in the meeting becoming inquorate.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 4th February, 2010

Councillor Tye having advised that comments he'd made in respect of the XL Youth Villages had not been recorded it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4th February, 2010 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 7(ii) Statements and Funding Requests – Community Chest

Councillor Tye declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as Chairman of the Youth All Mighty Project.

Councillor S. Watson declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Council appointed member of Pennywell CA.

Councillor Gofton declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of St. Lukes Neighbourhood Trust and Pallion Neighbourhood Improvement Group.

All three Members left the meeting while the items were considered.

Questions to Area Committee

David Noon, Senior Democratic Services officer, having advised Members that no questions had been submitted for consideration by the Area Committee it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

West Area: A Prosperous Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which highlighted the following 'Prosperous Area' priorities previously identified by the Committee, key issues and their background, current activity delivered day to day by services, identified gaps in services together with options and proposals:-

- i) Provide comprehensive support in order to increase employment opportunities.
- ii) Provide access to educational activities for all adults.
- iii) Focus on community based informal learning.
- iv) Develop an holistic approach to raising the skills and aspirations of adults in relation to employability.
- v) Promote social inclusion engagement and well being to encourage participation in employment training.
- vi) Ensure a strong economic infrastructure.

Dave Leonard, Area Co-ordinator, presented the item and introduced Janet Snaith, Head of City Business and Investment Team, who complimented the report with a comprehensive Powerpoint presentation detailing work being undertaken by the Council and partners to support the Committee's priorities with regard to its prosperous theme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Gibson as to how local people would be made aware that talent scouts would be operating in their neighbourhood, Ms. Snaith advised that the scheme was being implemented via the 'Just the Job' organisation. Publicity in the form of posters, flyers and leaflets would be available in all civic buildings and community centres plus doctors' surgeries and the like.

Information was also available via the Council's website and adverts would be placed in the local press.

Councillor T. Wright welcomed that it appeared that partnership working was becoming more joined up. He expressed concern, however, that the full range of City of Sunderland College courses could not be accessed locally. For example, he advised that over a 40 year period he had undertaken and enjoyed a variety of courses at Swan Street, however, upon trying to access the European Computer Driving Licence he was advised that he would have to go to Shiney Row or Red House.

In addition Councillor T. Wright asked for clarification regarding the difference in rents between the downstairs and upstairs units at Pennywell Business Centre. Ms. Snaith advised that the matter was not within her purview and was the responsibility of Land and Property. She believed, however, that this would be because the upstairs office accommodation would be provided to a higher standard in terms of equipment etc. than the more basic workshop accommodation provided downstairs.

There being no further questions for Ms. Snaith, the Chairman thanked her for her presentation, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received and noted and that the following actions as identified in the report and its annexes be endorsed:-

- receive regular updates on measures to increase employment opportunities;
- review of learning provision;
- identify and support new learning providers;
- continue the development of an holistic approach to raising aspirations;
- promote more the development of more Voluntary and Community Sector learning providers;
- support long term grass roots employability services and community based first rung learning opportunities.
- results from the 'Visible Workspace' project to be provided, once available.
- Sunderland arc to provide progress reports/further information to Area Committee regarding current and future activities when available.

Thematic Feedback Report – West Area Action Plans

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an opportunity to discuss feedback on actions taken to date with regard to its priorities in relation to its Safe, Attractive and Inclusive and Learning Action Plans.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Dave Leonard, Area Co-ordinator, presented the report and advised that he would endeavour to answer any comments or questions that Members may have.

Councillor Gibson welcomed that the Youth Provision Performance Indicator was currently green but asked whether more detailed information was available with regard to the recent Citywide letting of contracts as part of the Youth Provision Commissioning process. Mr. Leonard advised that he would try to ensure that this information was circulated to Members.

Councillors P. Watson and Gofton expressed a degree of concern regarding the choice of performance measure in relation to some of the stated

objectives. Councillor Watson in particular cited the difficulty in relation to measuring the raising of the aspirations of children and young people. Councillor Gofton stated that many of the performance indicators were currently crude and failed to measure the objective. There was a need for greater sophistication in this regard.

She stated, however, that Members were able to be critical because the report was beautifully written and presented, enabling Members to easily read, access and understand the information provided. She thanked Mr. Leonard and his Team in this regard.

Councillor Tye referred to measures to target underage drinking and the proposal to submit a report to the Committee's March meeting. He advised that no-one had spoken to him about the issue and advised that Silksworth still had a huge number of problems concerning this matter.

With regard to the objective of 'raising aspirations of children/young people and the families', Councillor T. Wright referred to the performance measure (% of population aged 16-64 who have no qualifications) and asked who supplied the information provided. Mr. Leonard advised that he would find out for Councillor Wright.

4. RESOLVED that the updates, activities and actions in respect of the Safe, Attractive and Inclusive and Learning Area Action Plans as detailed in the report be received and noted.

Financial Statement and Funding Requests

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter which sought Committee approval for the following recommendations:-

- (i) to approve 25 proposals for funding from the Community Chest;
- (ii) to approve the following proposal for SIB funding:-
 - Community Leaders of the future;
- (iii) to note the financial statement for Area Committee funding for 2009/10;
- (iv) that consideration be given to Citywide Community Chest applications at the final meeting of each municipal year;
- (v) the use of SIB funding to meet the infrastructure costs of managing events and processions on the highway at an area level, in view of the statutory changes made in the safety management of such events.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members having noted that the Chairman had withdrawn the item in respect of the Community Leaders of the future, Councillor Gibson moved that an extra £500 be awarded to the Youth Almighty Project making a total grant of £1,200. This was agreed accordingly.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the financial statement for 2009/10 be received and noted;
- ii) approval be given to all 25 proposals recommended for support from the 2009/10 budget as detailed in Annex 1 of the report, as amended;
- iii) consideration be given to Citywide Community Chest applications at the final meeting of each year; and
- iv) approval be given to the use of SIB funding to meet the infrastructure costs of managing events and processions on the highway at an area level, in view of the statutory changes made in the safety management of such events.

Responsive Local Services

The Executive Director of City Services and Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the Committee with current standards for the services currently being provided as part of the Responsive Local Services Project.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Les Clarke, Head of Street Scene, presented the report highlighting in particular the service performance data for the period November 2009 to January 2010, the review of the City Services Street Scene Division, the communication of Responsive Local Services, enforcement activity and work undertaken with partners.

To compliment the report, Mr. Clarke provided Members with a Powerpoint presentation highlighting the usefulness of the GIS visual mapping tool in relation to service performance analysis.

Councillor Gibson advised that he had twice recently driven up Tunstall Hope Road and had been shocked by the amount of litter. He speculated that this could have only been thrown from car windows. He also referred to the number of pot holes and in particular one outside the butchers in Seaham Street, which when traffic splashed through, regularly flooded the shop. Mr. Clarke advised that the schedule of planned maintenance was about to be agreed at the end of March. He would break the schedule down on an area basis and circulate to Members.

Councillor Tye advised that the pot hole on Seaham Street had been caused by a Contractor working on the nearby Extra Care Housing Scheme. He had

been informed by the Contractor that they did not intend to carry out any reinstatement work as they believed this to be the responsibility of the Local Authority.

Councillor Gofton welcomed the Project in relation to land ownership and thanked Mr. Clarke for the ward based information. With regard to the tabled Members' log, she asked if contact details could be provided. Helen Peverley, Project and Service Development Manager, confirmed that this could be added to the log. Councillor Oliver asked if the log could also include litter bins as well as dog waste bins.

Councillor Oliver referred to the good record of the Council in clearing litter from the roads for which it had responsibility but expressed concern that the Highways Agency appeared reluctant to tidy the roads within their purview. He asked if pressure could be brought to bear in this regard.

In conclusion Councillor P. Watson welcomed the report and stated that Mr. Clarke and his Team delivered what was perhaps the Council's most citizen-centric service. The service was massively popular and this was reflected in the complaints log. He offered his congratulations to the staff concerned and asked Mr. Clarke to relate to his Team how much they were valued by the Committee. Councillor Dixon concurred with Councillor Watson's comments.

There being no further questions the Chairman thanked Mr. Clarke and Ms. Peverley for their report, and it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that further reports be submitted in due course.

Accessible Bus Network Design Consultation (Local Bus Links)

The Director of Strategy, Nexus, submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with details of the proposals for the bus network in West Sunderland in response to the Integrated Transport Authority's new Bus Strategy which aimed to better meet the aspirations of local people.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Tobyn Hughes, Nexus Director of Strategy, provided Members with a detailed commentary on the report and advised that the overall consultation process in Sunderland was in two stages:-

- Elected Members (February 2010);
- General Public (15th March – 4th June, 2010).

The main public event planned for Sunderland West would be at Sandhill Library on 11th May from 10.30 am – 4.30 pm.

In addition, all materials would be made available from 15th March via the Bus Strategy link on the Nexus website (www.nexus.org.uk), as well as printed copies available from local venues and on request from Nexus.

There would be a questionnaire for feedback also available from 15th March or comments could be emailed directly to bus.strategy@nexus.org.uk or posted to Bus Strategy, Strategy Department at Nexus. The comments and feedback needed to be received by Nexus no later than 4th June, 2010.

Once the consultation was complete, final recommendations will be presented to the Executive Management Team for approval. It was possible that a number of different costed options would be presented: one option which would be achievable within current levels of funding, and one or more additional options which may require sources of additional funding in order to be deliverable.

There would then be a communication programme with all consultees on the outcomes of the consultation.

Mr. Hughes then addressed the following issues raised by Members:-

- there were no direct bus links to Sandhill Library where the public consultation event was planned;
- branding should include a statement that the service was supported by funding supplied by Sunderland City Council;
- the role for local Councillors in the process;
- the cost to Sunderland in funding services and would they deliver value for money.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Following the conclusion of the formal business, Councillor Gofton welcomed and introduced Bill Leach and Anne Morrison, the newly appointed representatives from the Voluntary Sector Network who were attending their first meeting of the Committee. She hoped that they had enjoyed the experience.

The Chairman then drew the meeting to a close having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) D. FORBES,
(Chairman).