

Sunderland West Area Committee

7 April 2010

Report of the Chief Executive

Sunderland West Annual Report 2009/10

The work plan of the Area Committee was agreed in July 2009 and, within this, the April 2010 meeting would be dedicated to reflecting on the work delivered during 2009-10, via the Local Area Plans. To support this process the annual report has been produced focusing on the following areas:-

- The Area, people and place
- Safe theme and priorities
- Learning theme and priorities
- Attractive and Inclusive theme and priorities
- Prosperous theme and priorities
- Governance
- Finance and Funding Requests

Under the thematic headings a summary is provided outlining the achievements delivered and influenced by Area Committee, using practical examples.

The Area

Sunderland West covers six electoral wards: Barnes; Pallion; Sandhill; Silksworth; St Anne's; St Chad's. There are 18 Councillors who represent the Sunderland West Area.

The West area of the City is a mixture of the old and relatively new. South Hylton, for example, was once a thriving industrial village. Ford, too, has a lengthy history and a place in the record books. Thomas Routledge, who pioneered the use of esparto grass for the manufacture of paper and patented the product, bought Ford Mill in 1860. Thereafter paper was used on a large scale worldwide. The limestone hewn out of Pallion's quarries was sent to the kilns and used for the de-acidification of the land and for the manufacture of plaster and water resistant mortar. Thomas Oswald became one of the first shipyard owners to use steel as well as iron in his Pallion shipyard in the 1870s. Pallion's riverside was famous for the mighty ships it produced. In the depression of the 1880s the Doxford yard launched the 4,555-ton Grecian, the largest deadweight steamer afloat and another record was set in 1913 with the launch of the 10,150-ton San Jeronimo, the largest oil tanker to date built on the Wear. Sandstone from Springwell was used for the construction of the town's public buildings and many townspeople found their way to Grindon Hall, which was converted from a private residence into a sanatorium.

There are around 67,300 residents in Sunderland West, which gives it the largest population of Sunderland's five Areas. There are a number of district shopping centres serving local neighbourhoods and the area contains one of the city's major leisure facilities at the Silksworth Sports and Tennis Complex. These facilities include a brand new 25 metre swimming pool. There is also the groundbreaking walk in Primary Care Centre at Grindon, offering a wide range of treatments for minor injuries and illnesses.

There are a number of local neighbourhoods in the Sunderland West Area. You can find out more about what services are available in the area, such as the nearest library to your home, by visiting www.sunderland.gov.uk and using Sunderland directory.

1. Sunderland West: Safe Area 2009-2010

Key statistics (2008/9)

Ward	All Crimes (per 1,000 pop)	% change from previous year	Burglary Dwelling	Burglary Non-dwelling	Theft of Vehicles	Theft from Vehicles	Criminal Damage	Drug Offences
Barnes	59.1	4.73	10.2	4.4	3.0	8.1	16.4	1.9
Pallion	76.7	-10.44	10.0	7.3	3.3	2.9	23.5	4.8
Sandhill	60.8	-9.56	9.1	2.2	2.4	1.9	21.6	1.1
Silksworth	65.0	-15.75	7.6	5.8	3.0	4.1	18.4	1.2
St Anne's	62.0	-5.06	8.1	2.8	2.5	2.3	18.8	1.2
St Chad's	49.5	-13.77	5.3	2.6	2.2	3.0	14.4	0.8
Sunderland	82.5	-3.30	8.9	5.0	2.5	5.8	22.0	4.2

The rates for each ward have been compared with the City average and highlighted as Green – better than the City, Amber – equivalent to the City, and Red, worse than the City.

Whilst overall crime rates have fallen more than the City average, Barnes has seen an overall increase.

What we set out to do

The overall objectives identified were to: reduce anti-social behaviour and increase the level of police or Community Support Officers on the streets, including target underage drinking; provide more police or community support officers; strengthen relationships between the police, agencies and communities; provide better facilities for young people and promote an holistic approach to area problems.

At the July 2009 meeting the Area Committee discussed the objectives and allocated actions against them. Progress is monitored on all actions and reported under a standing agenda item, Sunderland West Area Action Plans, at each meeting of the Committee.

You Said

There is a need to raise the profile of a police presence on the streets in the community and strengthen relationships between Councillors, police and residents.

We Did

Promoted and continue to encourage attendance of local people at PACT meeting (police and communities together); increased the number of Officers in the Neighbourhood Teams and revisited the roles of Court Custody Investigation Officers, Offenders Managers and Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, freeing up more time for Officers to be more visible on the street and attend meetings to engage with communities.

A series of Community Communication actions have been identified with two Communication Link Officers from Corporate Communications who attend Area Committees and help identify key news stories and information at a ward level.

Items from meetings have been fed into the Sunderland West Area Newsletter. This two edition trial saw its first edition published and distributed in November. The second edition was published and distributed in March.

You Said

There is a need to promote a holistic approach to area problems.

We Did

Over the last 12 months the first phase of the “Responsive Local Services” Project has been established, which focuses on tailoring five key service areas relating to crime and grime: graffiti removal, refuse collection, litter, dog fouling and grass cutting services.

You Said

We need to provide better facilities for young people

We Did

Area Committee reviewed the ‘Phoenix Project’, which works with young people who offend or are at risk of offending, and provided funding to extend the provision of courses over a 12 month period, which has proved to have made a substantial difference to behaviour.

You Said

We need to target under age drinking and to identify and target hot spot areas

We Did

Area Committee helped to initiate a series of joint operations between the Police and Trading Standards to target illegal sales of alcohol. The committee has also initiated measures aimed at tackling ‘drinking dens’.

Other achievements delivered

- The purchase of 3G CCTV cameras to use as a preventative and intervention tool to address ASB hotspots.
- Area Committee can refer projects into the Community Payback Scheme which is delivered by Youth Offending Service.
- Two Local Multi Agency Problem Solving groups continue to be effective in addressing a number of issues raised by agencies and recognised as a model of excellence in problem solving.

2. Sunderland West: Attractive and Inclusive Area 2009/10

Indicator	When was this last updated?	LAA Target?	City Wide	West
% of residents who feel the Council is making the area cleaner and greener	Place Survey 2008		66%	66%
% of residents satisfied with how well land is kept clear of litter and refuse	Place Survey 2008		54%	58%
% of residents satisfied with the recycling service	Place Survey 2008		70%	78%
% of residents satisfied with public transport	2008 mori Survey	No	66%	71%
% of residents who say they can influence local decisions	Place Survey 2008	NI4	30%	31%
% of residents who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	Place Survey 2008	NI1	67.2%	65.8%
% of residents who feel they strongly belong to their neighbourhood	Place Survey 2008		64.6%	64%

What we set out to do

The key aims of the Attractive and Inclusive priority areas were to invest in and improve housing and residential areas and to make the streets and environment more attractive.

At the September 2009 and the January 2010 meetings the Area Committee discussed the objectives and allocated actions against them. Progress is monitored on all actions and reported under a standing agenda item: Sunderland West Area Action Plans, at each meeting of the Committee.

You Said

We need to make estates and residential areas more attractive.

We Did

Plans are currently being drawn up to implement a programme of tree planting, greening and environmental improvements across the area. These plans will include tackling areas of waste and unsightly land. These areas have been identified with member involvement and resident consultation.

You Said

We need to encourage more private landlords to sign up to the accreditation scheme, bring empty properties back into use and take measures to prevent disrepair.

We Did

Interventions are currently in place to tackle problems associated with the private rented sector. A recent Private Landlords Fair was held, which agreed to reinstate the Private Landlords Forum on a quarterly basis to act as a focal point to promote the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

As a result of this issue being raised at Area Committee, it was developed across the City and was escalated to Scrutiny to review the need for a dedicated area team to: investigate cases of ASB within the private rented sector; carry out enforcement activity associated with housing standards; inspect the City's 1,500 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to ensure they provide a safe and healthy home for tenants; Tenant/landlord vetting; Empty Property Officer and Empty Property Strategy review. These proposals are currently at Cabinet.

You Said

We need to improve the environment by ensuring the opportunities for the area from the Green Space Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy are realised.

We Did

The plans currently being drawn up to implement a programme of environmental improvements will be tailored and complementary to the strategies.

You Said

We need to ensure environmental services can respond more effectively to the needs of local people.

We Did

Area Committees will be involved in identifying the level of services required for graffiti removal, refuse collection, litter, dog fouling and grass cutting services as part of "Responsive Local Services".

You Said

We need to improve local parks and look at parks and green spaces to provide linked networks of green infrastructure.

We Did

Area Committee has provided £60,000 of funding to improve the stream and habitat at Barnes extension and is considering options for the path at Hastings Hill, part of a joined up approach to improvements.

You Said

We need to improve local shopping centres.

We Did

A 'Retail Needs Assessment' has been undertaken and this will guide proposals for complementary street scene and environmental improvements.

Other achievements delivered

- Area Committee provided a total of £10,000 as a contribution to deliver improvements to the sea front.
- The Committee have been involved with Nexus regarding the accessibility of public transport throughout the city, focusing on the West area, as part of the Accessible Bus Network Design Project.
- We are making the most of our natural assets by promoting the river corridor. New proposals are being put forward which will be captured under aim 3 of the Economic Master Plan - Connecting Water Front to the City Centre.

3. Sunderland West: Learning Area 2009/2010

What we set out to do

The key objective identified was to provide better support for children and young people, more youth and play services and greater encouragement to continue into further education.

At the September 2009 meeting the Area Committee discussed the objectives and allocated actions against them. Progress is monitored on all actions and reported under a standing agenda item: Sunderland East Area Action Plans, at each meeting of the Committee.

You Said

Develop youth provision to meet local need

We Did

Members of the Committee took part in the development of ward based contracts for youth provision. The new contracts will be implemented from April 2010 and will be more needs led. Now each ward has a guaranteed youth provision of a minimum of three sessions per week, over the next three years, ensuring young people from all wards have equal access to services.

You Said

Provide more weekend and evening activities.

We Did

An additional £300,000 was secured to establish Xcel mobile youth villages across the City, which run specifically on a Friday and Saturday nights. This also enables additional mobile youth provision targeted at evening hotspots. An Operational Group, consisting of multi agencies and elected members oversee the planning of the Xcel villages.

You Said

Adult learning is important to the area. We need provision which is accessible and relevant to local residents.

We Did

A review of Family Adult and Community Learning (FACL) was requested to explore new ways of identifying and appointing providers of family learning to meet the needs of local communities. Procurement systems are now being reviewed to ensure the provision meets local demand.

You Said

Review apprenticeship opportunities

We Did

The 14-19 Partnership are undertaking a review of the current approach and exploring the potential to increase opportunities for apprenticeships within the City Council.

Also Achieved

- The Area Committee has been involved in developing the youth commissioning framework.
- Youth Almighty Project has been successful in securing the youth provider ward contracts for Barnes and Silksworth until 2013.
- Lambton Street Youth Centre has been successful in securing the youth provider ward contract for Pallion until 2013.
- A690 Youth Initiative has been successful in securing the youth provider ward contract for Sandhill until 2013.

- Pennywell Youth Project has been successful in securing the youth provider ward contract for St Anne's until 2013.
- The Box Youth Project has been successful in securing the youth provider ward contract for St Chad's until 2013.

4. Sunderland West: Prosperous Area 2009/10

Key statistics

Table 4.1. Sunderland West: Unemployment (JSA Claimant Count)

	Working Age Population	Jan '05	Jan '06	Jan '07	Jan '08	Jan '09	Jan '10
Barnes	6,667	137	163	157	188	279	339
Pallion	7,016	351	351	363	348	528	622
Sandhill	6,604	284	301	368	321	500	542
Silksworth	6,802	187	207	256	259	350	439
St Anne's	6,844	277	293	289	333	425	481
St Chad's	5,548	139	165	179	181	298	320
WEST AREA	39,481	1,375	1,480	1,612	1,622	2,380	2,743
Sunderland	175,831	5,340	5,941	6,391	5,994	9,159	10,793

Table 4.2. Sunderland West: Unemployment Rates (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Barnes	8.8	4.2	6.7
Pallion	18.8	7.3	13.6
Sandhill	17.4	5.4	12.0
Silksworth	12.0	4.7	8.5
St Anne's	14.4	5.5	10.3
St Chad's	11.3	3.8	7.7
WEST AREA	13.7	5.1	9.7
Sunderland	11.8	4.3	8.4

Unemployment has increased in all the wards of Sunderland West, within the last two years. This peaks in Pallion, which has gone from a rate of 10.1% to its current level of 13.6%.

What we set out to do

The main objective within the prosperous theme was around educational provision for adults to raise skills and aspirations and improve employment opportunities. Support for local business in order to increase employment opportunities was also identified as a priority within the area. There is also an emphasis on informal learning and social inclusion to promote engagement in employment training.

You Said

We need to provide relevant community learning opportunities for adults to improve their skills and employment opportunities

We Did

A review of locally based adult learning is being undertaken via the Learning theme. The Economic Prosperity Group representative will also escalate the issue via the Prosperous theme.

You Said

We need a more detailed action plan and to review our priorities to focus on areas where the Area Committee can make a difference.

We Did

The Economic Prosperity representative has provided more detailed employment related data and an analysis of what support is already in place. This information will be presented to Area Committee at the work planning meeting in June 2010 to inform the review of priorities.

You Said

We need to provide comprehensive support in order to increase employment opportunities.

We did

We connected into the Working Neighbourhood Fund programme, which brought approximately £30m of funding to the City over three years from 2008/9 and encouraged an area perspective to be considered when commissioning projects. This resulted in an initiative called Enterprise Talent Scouts and Business Start Up in the West and throughout the City, being funded via WNF. This involves the Scouts targeting new potential entrepreneurs and supporting them on the route to setting up in business.

You Said

We need to promote social inclusion, engagement and well being to encourage participation in employment training.

We Did

The Community Development Team was restructured and allocated an Area Community Co-ordinator per area to support the VCS sector in establishing five Area Networks. The West Area Network now has three representatives who present the collective voice of the VCS at meetings, ensuring a two way communication process between Area Network and Area Committee.

Also Achieved

- Visible Workspace Project, via WNF, is a demand survey being carried out to look at all opportunities to develop workspace across the city. Results will propose localities for premises/workspace.

5. Area Committee meetings

Membership

The meetings are chaired by Councillor David Forbes and Cllr Susan Watson is the Vice Chair.

Each Area Committee has a Sunderland City Council Executive Director as its Area Lead Executive (ALE). The ALE reinforces the strategic importance of the area dimension to the Council's policy and planning framework, and in particular will reinforce the importance the Council places on enhancing community governance, aligning resources and activity and improving public service delivery at a local level. The ALE for Sunderland West is Keith Beardmore (Director of Financial Resources).

There are named representatives from each of the Local Strategic Partnership Delivery Boards. This is to ensure a consistent, two way flow of information between Citywide and Area based working under each of the five thematic areas.

Partner organisations represented at the Sunderland West Area Committee are:

- City of Sunderland College
- Gentoo
- Northumbria Police
- Sunderland arc
- Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

Three members of the Sunderland West VCS Area Network have been nominated to represent the VCS at Area Committee.

There are a number of nominated officers from Council Directorates, at a Head of Service level who attend Area Committee, along with key contacts in each Directorate who act as linkages between Area Committee and Directorates.

Meetings

The Committee met six times during 2009-10, this being its seventh. The first meeting of the year (June) was designated as a workshop and priorities were agreed at the July meeting, which established the delivery plan for 2009-10. At each of the five business meetings Area Committee agreed to adopt a standing agenda for each meeting to ensure that only issues which are of importance to the Sunderland West area come forward for discussion. Information only items are not formally presented and do not form part of discussions. The thematic agenda item, which addresses the area's key priorities, was therefore given priority and more time allocated to it. Other regular items discussed were: Questions to Area Committee; Feedback of the Area Action Plans; Finance and Funding Requests and Items for Consultation. Although the time management of agendas has improved it is important to ensure it is focused and to involve non elected members throughout the agenda process.

There has been an average attendance of 14 out of 18 members at each meeting. Officers' attendance has been strong, with an average of 14 Officers attending each meeting. Partners' attendance has fluctuated depending on the agenda, with an average of six per meeting. Attendance from the public has been poor; although we've had the public attend two of the meetings, with three attending the last, the levels of residents attending remains low.

Standards for Area Committees have been developed and a set of guidelines are available for those presenting reports or carrying out consultation, along with a report template. As a result there are fewer pages and reports are tailored to reflect information at an area level. Before every meeting a pre meeting is held, between the Chair and presenting Officers to discuss the running order of the meeting, outlining roles and timing of each item. The average numbers of committee papers this year was 41, compared with 85 for last year. This has resulted in the agenda being adhered to, bringing the average timing of the meeting down to 1h 30mins.

There has been one 'Question to Area Committee' presented. The process is currently being reviewed by Democratic Services. Under consultation items, nine policies were brought forward for discussion, allowing the opportunity for the Committee to shape services.

Building the infrastructure of meetings

An Area Committee Handbook has been developed to outline the aims and objectives of the Committee, and also individual roles and responsibilities. The Handbook will be published in June 2010.

The 'Councillor Call for Action' mechanism came into force on 1 April 2009 namely through the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Such provisions provide Members with the opportunity to ask for discussions on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted. At the same time work was also being undertaken to develop the Area Committees links with both Scrutiny Committees and the Sunderland Partnership, one of which was the ability to signpost and escalate local issues to the most appropriate body for resolution where appropriate as referred to in the current Area Review process. On a practical level a 'referral and criteria' mechanism will be considered by Cabinet for implementation in the new municipal year. This will enable escalation / re-direction of issues of local concern either raised by an Elected Member/Committee, member of the public or external partner to the appropriate body namely the Area Committees, the City Council's Scrutiny and Sunderland Partnership.

A thematic feedback report is presented to give updates on themes previously discussed. Performance updates are reported during this part of the meeting. However, this has been an area of weakness and work is ongoing with the Performance Improvement Team to introduce a more meaningful performance framework in the new municipal year.

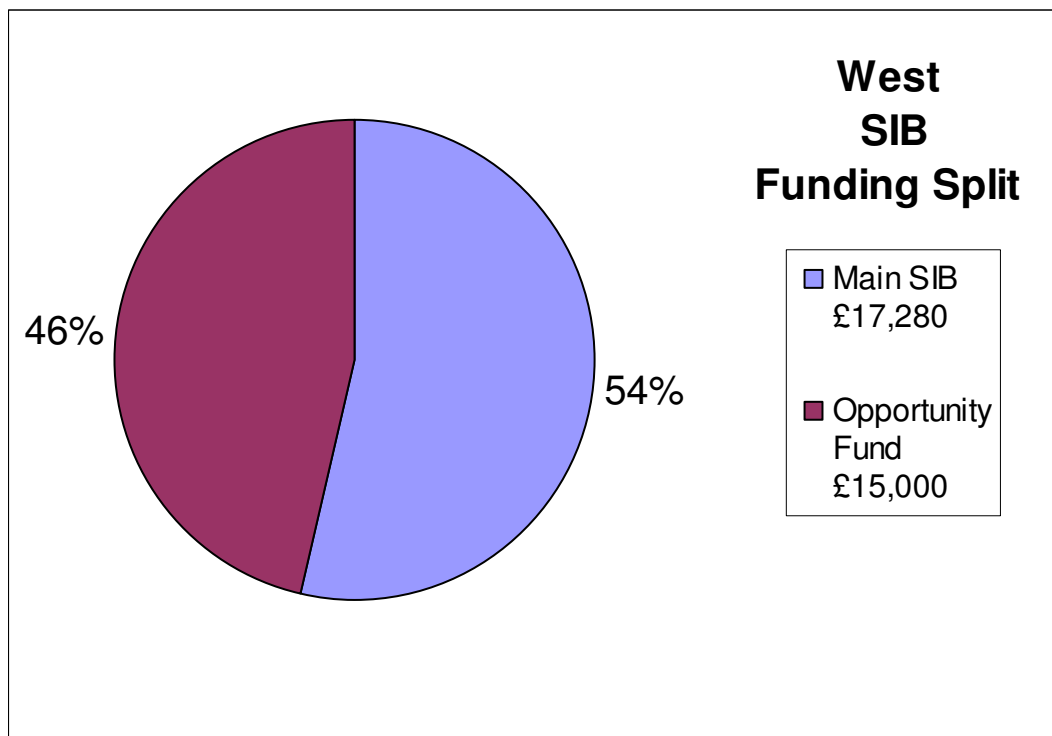
An Area Team has been established to support the work of the Area Chair/Vice Chair and Area Committee. The team consists of:-

- Area Officer
- Area Community Development Co-ordinator
- Communications Link Officer
- Democratic Services Officer
- Policy Officer (Inclusion)

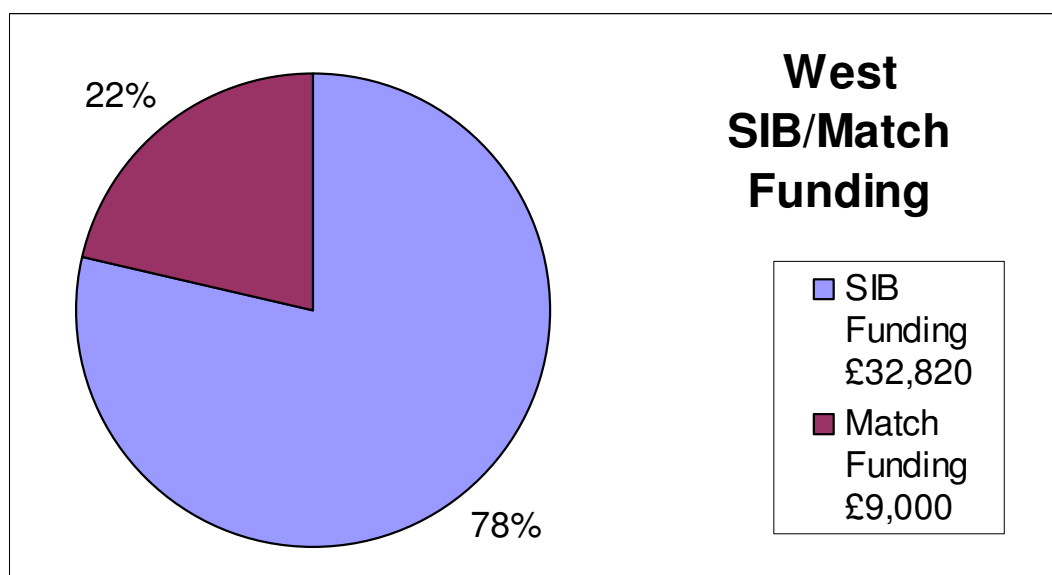
6. Finance and Funding Requests

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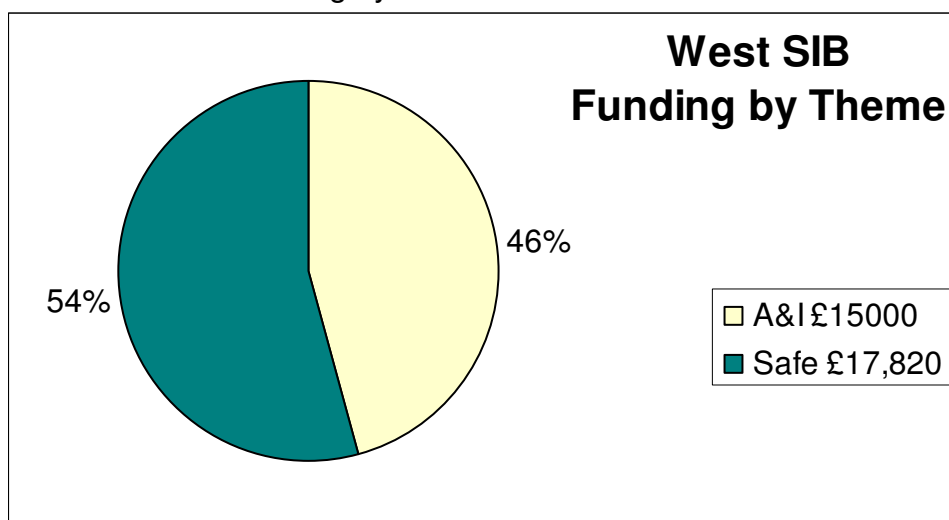
A budget of £332,634 was available during 2009/10. A total of £32,820 has been allocated, leaving a balance of £299,814 to be carried over to 2010/11. The committee agreed to 80% of its allocation as a 'Main Fund' to solicit bids to meet priorities with the remaining being an 'Opportunities Fund' to enable the committee to receive unsolicited bids that meet priorities. The funding split is shown below:



The percentage of match funding achieved is shown below:



The allocation of funding by theme is shown below:

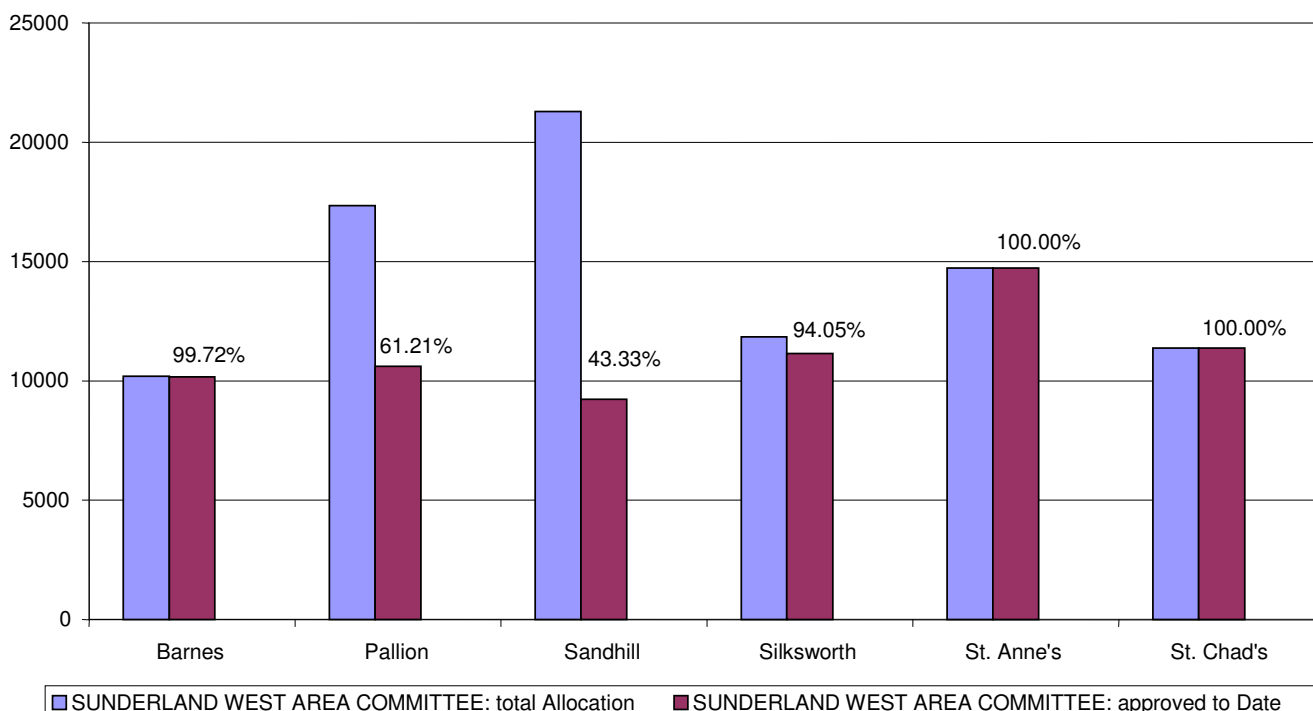


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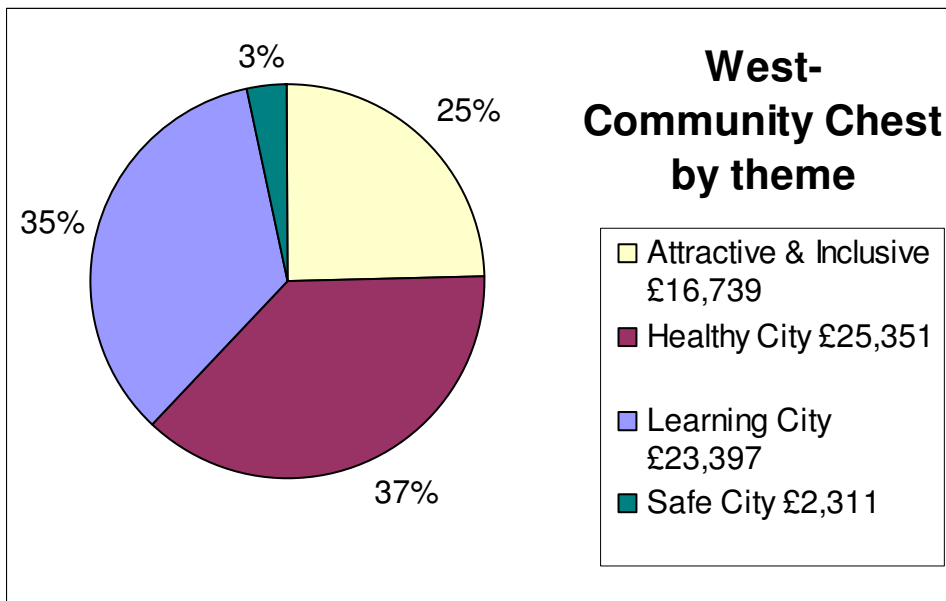
A one off budget of £233,230 was available for 2009/10 and the full amount remains to be allocated, which must be fully expended by 31 March 2011. As identified in the strategic objectives, this budget is available to make physical improvements to the area.

Community Chest

A budget of £86,774 was available for 2009/10. A total of £67,648 has been allocated, leaving a balance of £19,126 to be carried over to 2010/11. The ward breakdown is as follows:



The pie chart below shows Community Chest's thematic breakdown:



Community Chest is allocated against the themes within the Local Area Plan and this has supported 109 community projects throughout the West Area.

7. Summary

The Annual Report and supporting information will be used to analyse and reflect on the work that has taken place throughout the past year and help to inform the June meeting as the committee moves towards a new work plan.

8. Background papers

- Sunderland Strategy Delivery Plans
- Local Area Agreement Delivery Plans
- West Local Area Plan
- West Area Committee papers

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