

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER, 2008 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Wares in the Chair

Councillors Ball, P. Dixon, M. Forbes, Paul Maddison, Mordey, O'Connor and M. Smith.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Peter Maddison, T. Martin and Wood.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 30th June, 2008

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

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Presentation from Northumbria Police on Crime Rates Relating to the East Sunderland Area

Inspector Neil Craig presented the figures relating to Millfield and St. Michaels and Sergeant Lee Butler presented the figures for Hendon and Ryhope.

In Millfield all crime had reduced by 10 percent, a reduction of 74 offences while in St. Michaels there had been 34 more offences, an increase of 6.9 percent.

Criminal Damage in Millfield had increased by 4 offences which was 2.5 percent and had dropped by 10.6 percent in St. Michaels, a reduction of 14 crimes.

In St. Michaels violent crime had increased by 13.9 percent which was an increase of 10 offences while in Millfield there had been a reduction of 9.3 percent which was 13 offences.

There had been 42 fewer vehicle crime offences in Millfield, a reduction of 34.7 percent however in St. Michaels there had been an increase of 58 offences which was a 71.6 percent increase.

Burglary from Dwellings had reduced in both areas with Millfield seeing 4 fewer offences, a drop of 8.9 percent, while in St. Michaels there had been 28 fewer offences, a reduction of 56 percent.

Hendon and Ryhope had both seen reductions in all crime with figures of 11 offences, 2 percent and 26 offences, 14.4 percent respectively while Grangetown had seen an increase of 24 offences which was 10.9 percent.

Violent crime had increased in all areas with Hendon having 2 more offences, an increase of 1.6 percent, an additional 7 offences in Grangetown which was 19.4 percent and one additional offence in Ryhope, an increase of 2.8 percent.

In Grangetown there had been no change in vehicle crime with 23 recorded offences. In Hendon there had been a reduction of 5 offences, 6.8 percent. Ryhope had seen a 21.4 percent increase however this was 3 extra offences as there had been 14 offences the previous year.

Burglaries had increased by 32 offences in Hendon, a 68.1 percent increase. In Grangetown there had been one fewer offence, a reduction of 5.3 percent, while Ryhope had seen a reduction of 13 offences, 40.6 percent.

Criminal Damage in Hendon had reduced by 19.8 percent, 37 fewer offences. In Grangetown there had been 4 more offences, which was an increase of 8.5 percent. There had been a reduction of 10.8 percent in Ryhope, 7 fewer offences.

Councillor M. Forbes asked about the dramatic increase in vehicle crime in St. Michaels.

Inspector Craig advised that the majority of offences were in the Durham Road area around the University Metro Station and that there was a large student population in the area, crime prevention tips had been provided to students to help reduce the problem.

Councillor O'Connor stated that it was good to see the reduction in offences but also advised that there were concerns over Anti-Social Behaviour in the area around the bottom of Hylton Road and asked what was being done about the problem; he also commented that he felt that private landlords could be contributing to the problem.

Inspector Craig advised that the situation was being monitored and that there were concerns over a privately rented property on Hylton Road which had recently had a number of known criminals move in.

Councillor Ball advised that the previous week there had been a group of youths outside of the Civic Centre Canteen vandalising the windows, drinking and sniffing glue and that when the police had arrived the youths had been moved on however they had not had the drink or glue taken off them which raised concerns that these youths could have gone on to cause problems elsewhere.

Inspector Craig agreed to look into this matter.

Councillor P. Dixon thanked the officers for their efforts in reducing Anti Social Behaviour in Millfield. He also commented on the recent attack on a nurse and asked whether patrols had been increased.

Inspector Craig confirmed that patrols had been increased and advised that the incident was being closely looked at with CCTV being checked and the victim had provided a description of the attacker.

2. RESOLVED that the presentation on crime statistics relating to the East Sunderland Area be received and noted.

Minutes of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Groups (LMAPS)

The local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Groups submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Members with the minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 1st July and Tuesday 5th August, 2008 for the Hendon, Ryhope and Grangetown areas and on Thursday 3rd July and Thursday 7th August, 2008 for Millfield and St. Michael's Wards.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

3. RESOLVED that the minutes 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) which provided the Committee with information on the following project which it had previously funded through its SIB allocation:-

- Hendon 2000 – East and North Areas Community Publishing Partnership Project

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, introduced John Wilkins in respect of the project who proceeded to provide Members with a commentary on his feedback report and answered questions thereon.

The chairman having thanked Mr Wilkins for his presentation it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB): Regeneration Issues Report

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) on the proposed allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) funding to support the following initiative of benefit to the area:-

- (i) £1,800 from the 2008/2009 budget to provide capital funds to enable the purchase of IT hardware and software for Hendon 2000.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report and advised that should the committee endorse the request before the committee it would leave a balance of £66,888 in the 2008/2009 budget.

Ms. Trueman provided members with a summary of the application and introduced John Wilkins from Hendon 2000 who was present to address any comments and questions from Members.

Consideration having been given to the application it was:-

5. RESOLVED that approval be given to the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget Funding of:-
 - £1,800 from the 2008/2009 budget to provide capital funds to enable the purchase of IT hardware and software for Hendon 2000

Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2008/2009 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) on 23 projects recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme in respect of the Hendon, Millfield, Ryhope and St. Michael's Wards.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 23 projects recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest Budget with a total value of £9,221 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Progress Report

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) which advised members of the performance of the Benefits section in the processing of new claims and changes in circumstances in accordance with the new National Indicator (NI 181) for Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Steve Atkinson, Benefits Manager, presented the report and advised that the section was doing well with claims being processed in half the time it was taking last year. He also advised that the 17 Best Value Performance Indicators had been replaced by two National Indicators however at the moment the BVPIs and NIs were being monitored.

Additionally he advised that the government had changed the rules for backdating of benefits claims and from October 6th claims would only be able to be backdated three months rather than 12.

Councillor O'Connor asked whether paying individuals rather than landlords was causing any problems and also whether landlords wanted direct payments.

Mr Atkinson advised that it was causing some minor problems and that there had been 250 requests for direct to landlord payment and 60 percent of these requests had been successful. He also advised that the new system was providing on average £25 to £30 per week more than on the old system.

The Chairman commented that this would help to stop absentee landlords as they would need to visit the properties to collect the rent.

Mr Atkinson advised that in addition there were also plans to pay the benefit directly into bank accounts which had received a good response.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Carnegie Libraries Celebrations

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated members on the proposed Carnegie Libraries Celebrations at Hendon Library.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Julie McCann, Principal Librarian - E Resources & Information Services, presented the report and advised that Hendon Library was the first of the three Carnegie Libraries to open in Sunderland.

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) D.R. WARES,
Chairman.