

**At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held at COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2008 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Bohill, Charlton, Foster, G. Hall, Leadbitter, Shattock, J. Walton, L. Walton, D. Wilson and N. Wright

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the Committee on behalf of Councillors Higgins, Howe, Stewart and Symonds.

**Minutes of the last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee (copy circulated) held on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Chairman's Announcement**

The Chairman announced that following the last meeting of the Committee he had received a letter from Inspector Patterson, informing them of his retirement from Northumbria Police and advising that Inspector Craig Gardner would be attending future meetings of the Committee. The Chairman advised the Committee he had sent a letter of thanks and welcome to both officers on behalf of the North Area Committee.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Presentation from Northumbria Police on Crime Rates Relating to the North Sunderland Area**

Inspector Gardner presented a statistics document (copy circulated) illustrating crime, detection and arrest management information for the North Sunderland Area and also providing data on the number of youth related disorder incidents recorded.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Gardner reported that the information he had provided was at a neighbourhood area level rather than Ward area and advised that there had been an overall reduction in crime and disorder of 15.6%, which translated to 753 less incidents of crime. He updated the Committee on crime rates as follows:-

Criminal Damage	19% reduction	307 less incidents
Violent Crime	15.9% reduction	168 less incidents
Vehicle Crime	11.2% reduction	64 less incidents
Burglary Dwelling	40% reduction	88 less incidents
Youth Related ASB	2.6% increase	85 more incidents
Non Youth Related ASB	13.2% reduction	581 less incidents

Councillor Bohill asked if there was a particular age range pinpointed as offenders and if there was a certain time of day when more incidents were raised. Inspector Gardner advised that as it was the perception of the person reporting the disorder, the age of most offenders was difficult to know exactly. In relation to the time of day most incidents were reported he informed Members that it tended to be early evening until approximately 9.00pm and weekends when most reports were received.

In response to a further query from Councillor Bohill regarding how many of the incidents involved alcohol, Inspector Gardner advised that this was also at the discretion of the perception of the person reporting the incident of youth disorder. He advised that schemes were ongoing addressing under age sales of alcohol and informed Members that new legislation had been introduced giving them powers to close down establishments where underage sales were taking place.

Councillor Wilson congratulated the Inspector on his promotion and asked if when targeting specific areas of anti-social behaviour did they have procedures in place to ensure they weren't just moving the problem into another area. Inspector Gardner advised that it was considered a potential issue and a number of tools were at their disposal to help in ensuring the problem was solved rather than just moved.

Having answered Members' queries, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the statistics report be received and noted.

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group**

The Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with the minute of their meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 for information.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Gardner presented the report and advised that there was further work to do with regard to the CCTV provision at the Fulwell Skate Park. After installation, it had been found that the electricity feed was on a timer for the lamppost and therefore the CCTV was not activated during the day. They were currently working with Morrison's to find a suitable solution.

Councillor J. Walton suggested that future minutes submitted to the Committee have fewer abbreviations and asked if they could be in more of a written report style. The Inspector stated that this was the format for the LMAPS minutes but he would raise the comments with the report author.

Having answered Members' queries on the minutes of the LMAPS Group, the Chairman thanked Inspector Gardner for his attendance at the meeting, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the minutes of the LMAPS group held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 be received and noted.

## **Sunderland's 15 Year Commissioning Framework for Adult Social Care**

Mr Neil Revely, Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services gave a presentation on Sunderland's 15 Year Commissioning Framework for Adult Social Care.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes).

Mr. Revely advised the Committee that the strategy set out a comprehensive vision and approach to delivering services to meet the projected changing needs of Sunderland's population over the next 15 years.

Users of Social Care had advised that they wanted personalised services that met their individual needs, support a healthier independent life, have a greater focus on prevention and provide better support for those with high level needs.

Mr. Revely advised that the framework was being shared with a range of stakeholders including Area Committees as part of the consultation process and stated that the final draft Framework would then be submitted to Cabinet for approval at its meeting in April, 2008.

Members' welcomed the report and the ambitious programme for the future and were happy to see that Sunderland was able to continue to support four bands and that it was likely that it would be the only Authority in the near future to be doing so. They were pleased to hear of the progress of the extra care housing programme and sought clarification in relation to the Direct Payments Scheme and the Resident's Survey that had been undertaken.

Having answered Members' queries and taking note of their comments, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the presentation be received and noted.

### **Community Legal Advice – Presentation on the Legal Services Commission**

Mr. Lee Hanson from the Legal Services Commission gave a verbal presentation on the work of the Legal Services Commission (LSC).

Mr. Hanson advised that the LSC looked after the legal aid scheme in England and Wales. Through Ward Councillors it was hoped that information, advice and legal help could be disseminated and therefore reach more people with a wide range of problems. The LSC worked in partnership with solicitors and not-for-profit organisations to provide services to help people in need.

Each year the LSC helped more than two million people to deal with their legal problems.

Mr. Hanson advised that Community Legal Advice provided a series of free leaflets that outlined people's legal rights in key areas of law. Members were advised that members of the Legal Services Commission would be available after the meeting to address Member's questions.

Members commented that the information received had been very useful and informative.

Mr. Hanson having answered Member's queries on the service was thanked for his presentation and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the verbal feedback report be received and noted for information.

### **Development on Local Area Plans**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an update on the development of Local Area Plans.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Sue Bartlett, Area Regeneration Officer introduced the report and advised that following a report to the Committee in September 2007 on the development of a Local Area Strategy, a revised document was presented to Members. Following further consultation and to ensure full alignment with the 'Sunderland Strategy' the emphasis had changed to the production of an Area Profile, as a precursor to identifying the priorities that will form the Local Area Plan.

Members raised various issues and comments in relation to the draft plan, which were to be addressed or clarified. Members also asked that there be a glossary of terms included within the document as there were a lot of acronyms and abbreviations which not all users of the plan would understand. Ms Bartlett advised Members that they could forward any further comments directly to her.

Having fully discussed the report and thanked the officer for her input, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that Members' comments on the Local Area Plans be received and noted.

### **Housing and Council Tax Benefit – Progress Report**

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) informing Members of the performance of the Benefits Section in the processing of new claims for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Elaine Bateman, Deputy Benefits Manager presented the report stating that now the problems with processing claims had been resolved, the speed of processing had increased considerably to approximately 14 days.

Inevitably this would impact on the year end statistics although it was unclear whether the annual target would be met.

A publicity exercise for take-up would coincide with the issuing of the 2008/2009 Council Tax bills.

In response to a question from Councillor Bohill regarding the number of cases the service handled, Ms. Bateman advised that they dealt with approximately 300 new claims a week.

Councillor Hall asked how many claims the service dealt with in total and Ms. Bateman informed the Committee that they currently dealt with 36,000 benefit claimants.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Bateman for her report, it was:-

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

### **Strategic Initiative Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining proposals for the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) to support the following new initiative to benefit the area:-

- (i) Castletown Wardens;
- (ii) Sunderland Women's Centre; and
- (iii) Northumbria Police.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Sue Ellwood and Ms. Willa Allan presented the application in respect of Sunderland Women's Centre and Inspector Craig Gardner presented the application in respect of Northumbria Police.

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

8. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £29,163 from the 2007/08 budget as gap funding for the Castletown Wardens;
- (ii) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £11,885 from the 2007/08 budget as a contribution to the Sunderland Women's Centre Area Courses; and
- (iii) approval be given to the allocation of SIB funding of £4,214 from the 2007/08 budget as a contribution towards the purchase of two portable speed cameras for Northumbria Police.

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

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) providing information to the Area Committee on expenditure from the SIB toward Cyclon Body Worn Surveillance Devices (Headcams) for Northumbria Police in November, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Gardner, Northumbria Police and having his feedback report and answered Members' questions, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that the presentation of the feedback report be received and noted.

### **Strategic Initiatives Budget : 2007/08 Ward Based Community Chest**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to bring forward 26 proposals relating to the 2007/08 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

10. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 26 proposals recommended for support from the 2007/08 Community Chest with a total value of £17,421 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report.

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

(Signed) R. BELL,  
Chairman.