

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held at the WASHINGTON COMMUNITY FIRE STATION, GLOVER INDUSTRIAL ESTATE on THURSDAY, 2ND JULY, 2009 at 6.00 P.M.

Present:

Councillor Kelly in the Chair

Councillors Chamberlin, I. Cuthbert, A. Cuthbert, Fletcher, Miller, I. Richardson, Scaplehorn, Snowdon, Timmins, Trueman, Wake, P. Walker and Whalen

Police: Inspector Dave Willett

Gentoo: Stewart O'Neill
Dennis Gray

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of John Chapman, Mrs. Wake and Mr. Swan.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4th June, 2009

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4th June, 2009 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Questions to Area Committee

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to raise awareness and understanding on the new agenda item 'Questions to Members' on the support to launch the scheme from September 2009.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report and informed the Committee that it would be an ideal opportunity for local people to ask

questions on the services provided, such as youth provision or employment for example.

Ms. Trueman advised that it was hoped front line Councillors would pilot the scheme and that a sample of the Question Form was included for Members' consideration.

The forms would be given to Members for distribution upon engagement with local people and residents, with a review of the practice after September and November meetings of the Committee.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposed protocol and pilot for Questions to Area Committee, as set out in Annexes 1 and 2, be approved; and
- (ii) the report be received and noted.

Washington – A Safe Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) for Members to consider and discuss the priority of 'Safe' as agreed at the June meeting of the Committee and identified in the Work Plan for 2009/10.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Trueman requested Members deliberate over the 36 proposals outlined in Annex 1 and to consider the short, medium and long term proposals and if awareness needed to be raised or if enhanced services were required.

The Chairman advised that the main cause of concern identified in the Washington area was anti social behaviour and sought Members' thoughts on the best way forward. Should the Committee look to tackle the issue throughout the whole of Washington or look at the three to four areas identified as most severe.

Councillor Miller commented that as Washington covered five areas, the Committee should ensure all Wards were engaged.

Councillor Trueman advised that the Police had a difficult job in containing anti social behaviour and it was an issue which needed to be targeted.

Councillor I. Cuthbert commented that the Committee needed to work closely with partners in identifying the hot spots where anti social behaviour was occurring.

In response to an enquiry from a member of the public, the Chairman advised that Prudential had been contacted as possible partners, but they had not responded as yet.

The Chairman commented that more needed to be done than sending the Police into each Ward's identified hot spots to chase children away. Those children needed to be engaged through services delivered via the Council and partners.

Councillor Scaplehorn commented that as well as the Police Beat Managers, Gentoo's Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers could also identify problem areas.

The Chairman referred to a recent study by Children's Services Review Committee on alcohol awareness, of which children had raised issues that this Committee needed to take responsibility for and start delivering services.

A member of the public commented that Sunderland did a great amount of work on alcohol and drug misuse for adults and that the impact such misuse had on children also needed to be considered.

The Chairman advised that it was hoped for partnership working with the Primary Care Trust as prevention measures were needed in relation to alcohol misuse.

Councillor Trueman commented that there was not enough being done in the way of treating alcohol misuse and that a facility was desperately needed.

In response to a member of the public, the Chairman agreed that it wasn't always children involved in anti social behaviour and that adults, such as nuisance neighbours and so on, would be targeted also.

The Chairman also commented that the majority of children were well behaved and only a small percentage caused trouble.

In relation to tackling the misuse of drugs, Councillor Trueman commented that there were many experts which the Committee should refer to on the best way forward.

Deliberation having been made, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the 36 proposals outlined in Annex 1 be agreed; and
- (ii) the document be developed throughout the year.

Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2009/2010 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) bringing forward a total of 28 recommendations relating to the 2009/2010 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Geoff Rudd from the Washingtonians Jazz Band was in attendance and at the request of the Chairman, gave a brief report on the progress the project had made.

Councillor Trueman enquired if the band would be available for events such as the Miners' March and Remembrance Sunday.

Mr. Rudd advised that the band would be playing at the Springwell Carnival and would be happy to play at other events if invited.

Councillor Wake suggested the Kite Festival as a possible event.

The Chairman requested that Members contact Ms. Trueman with possible events and that details be published in Sunrise.

The Chairman then proposed that the contribution towards Washington Cricket Club be funded through the Strategic Initiatives Budget rather than the Community Chest.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) 27 of the 28 proposals for Community Chest funding be approved, with;
- (ii) the Washington Cricket Club proposal to be funded from the Washington Area Committee's main Strategic Initiatives Budget.

Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with details of the proposed SIP as a delivery mechanism for achieving the long term ambitions of the area in order to improve the quality of life for residents and communities as encapsulated within the Sunderland Strategy, the Local Area Agreement, CAA and Local Area Plans.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman and Ms. Trueman advised of the two options on how best to allocate SIP across the Washington area and requested comments from Members.

Councillor Miller expressed a preference of Option 2 so that each Ward had the ability to decide on expenditure against the LAP priorities.

Councillor Miller also commented on the need to be proactive in respect of any unspent money from Wards.

Councillor I. Cuthbert also expressed a preference for Option 2 and agreed that an ongoing review would be needed for effective expenditure within the required deadlines.

The Chairman commented that if implemented correctly it was hoped any expenditure could be matched by external funding.

Councillor Trueman commented that it could be reviewed in a year's time to see if the option was working correctly.

Councillor Wake agreed that if there was any unallocated money left over, that it be distributed to the more needy Wards.

The Chairman commented that all aspects of Washington needed support, therefore, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the Washington Area adopt Option 2 – SIP would be split across the five Wards of the area, totalling £52,492 per Ward, with local Ward Councillors and service providers being responsible and accountable for its expenditure against the LAP priorities, with proposed projects being presented to Area Committee for a final decision.

Washington Wheeled Sports Park

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report and Powerpoint presentation (copy circulated) to advise Members of the findings from the recent consultation, to seek endorsement of the preferred option and progress to step 7 of the process to develop a Wheeled Sports Park for Washington.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Carol Lewis, Play Pathfinder Programme Manager, presented the report and advised that the Crocodile Pond at Princess Anne Park was the preferred site and requested endorsement from the Area Committee.

Ms. Lewis also advised that if endorsed, the site would be looking at a cost of £150,000. As the original funding had been set at £135,000 a request for the Area Committee to meet the £15,000 deficit would be proposed.

Councillor Trueman proposed that the suggested site be accepted and that the Area Committee give consideration to meeting the shortfall in the funding.

Councillor I. Cuthbert commented that he fully supported the proposed site and thanked officers for their thorough work.

Councillor Miller commented that he believed the process had worked well and he hoped the public had seen that the Council had listened to their concerns.

At the request of the Chairman, Ms. Lewis advised that the costs of the consultations undertaken were estimated to be £20,000, which included external Architects designs and printing costs.

As officer time was still being calculated, this figure could rise to £30,000 or above.

Councillor I. Richardson thanked everyone involved and believed the positive outcome showed what can be achieved through the good work at Area Committee.

Councillor I. Cuthbert commented that he hoped lessons had been learned from the first round of consultations and the mistakes that were made.

Councillor Snowdon thanked her fellow Ward Councillors for their support in helping deal with the initial complaints and concerns on the consultation process.

A member of the group enquired as to how the public would be informed of the outcome for the proposed site.

Verity Dodd, Senior Corporate Communications Officer, advised that details on the Wheeled Sports Park would be in the September issue of Sunrise.

6. RESOLVED that the Area Committee endorse the recommended preferred site with a view to move on to step 7 of the process.

Developing Community Communications to Support Area Committees 2009-10

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek input from the Committee to inform the development of a Community Communications Action Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Dodd advised that the Communications Team would like to assist the Area Committees in promoting the Local Area Plans and agreed work plan during 2009-10 and beyond.

Ms. Dodd requested Members' suggestions for different ways to communicate with local residents and provide information to the area.

Suggestions from other Area Committees included posters, postcards and a 2-4 page colour newsletter relevant to each area with what events were to be held and any good news stories.

Councillor Miller commented that he believed a newsletter was vital to show what the Committee had achieved and was looking to achieve, with an opportunity for residents to identify any issues or concerns specific to the Washington area.

Councillor Miller also suggested that Members be provided with some kind of T-shirt/polo shirt which would more easily identify them to the community if the public wished to approach their ward councillor.

Councillor Walker commented that he would like to see Sunrise disbanded as a Citywide publication with separate localised publications introduced for each area as an alternative.

Councillor Walker also commented that more needed to be done to promote the meetings of Area Committee.

Councillor Trueman commented that many members of the public found it difficult to find the venues for the meetings and suggested notification be given at the end of a meeting on where the next scheduled Area Committee would be held.

Councillor Wake suggested a sign in sheet for all members of the public where they could include email addresses for notification of meeting and venue details.

Councillor I. Cuthbert agreed with and supported the idea of having localised newsletters rather than the Sunrise publication but expressed a concern that they could become politicised.

The Chairman advised that the Committee would always be non political as long as he was Chair, and that the same applied to Area Communications as they would be for the people of Washington, not for a particular party.

A member of the public requested the implementation of a social diary for the voluntary sector and community organisations events over the year.

It was also raised that the majority of communication from the Council is marketed towards adults, whereas Gateshead for example have publications for younger people.

Members of the public also commented that Sunrise was not published frequently enough to give residents up-to-date information.

The Chairman agreed and commented that a website based on issues relating to the Washington area could help in delivering Council related information and also supply links to groups such as the Washingtonions, the Cricket Club and Scouts, etc.

It would also be a good platform to inform the public of Community Chest projects that had received funding.

Mr. George Thompson advised that the Washington Pride website was already set up to provide such information on groups and organisations, but needed the details to be supplied before it could be effective.

Members of the public made the following comments:-

- Can information be published in the Evening Chronicle and the Washington Star as the Sunderland Echo is not the only newspaper available in Washington?

Ms. Peacock advised that information had been supplied to the Chronicle but difficulties had arisen due to the loss of a reporter for the Washington area.

- Why does the Council not utilise buses and bus stations to provide information or advertising?

The Chairman commented that information was supplied to libraries and community centres yet was still not reaching the public, therefore using the bus stations may be a valid suggestion.

- Shop windows in The Galleries/Concord area could be used to advertise upcoming events, etc.
- A member of the public commented that there was very little in the way of walks/rambling, he had requested information/publications on organised walks which he was trying to arrange and the Countryside Team were unable to help him, yet Durham Council were able to send information out to him the next day.

Councillor Chamberlin advised that the Committee had recently funded a Washington Walking Group.

- It was suggested that information boards and advertisements could be used at the Washington Wheeled Sports Park when completed.

The Chairman advised that contact could be made to open up more aspects of the park.

7. RESOLVED that the report and all suggestions made be noted and considered for inclusion in the Community Communications Plan.

(Signed) J. KELLY,
Chairman.