

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY, 29th JUNE, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Wares in the Chair

Councillors Ball, P. Dixon, Errington, M. Forbes, E. Gibson, Paul Maddison, Peter Maddison, T. Martin, Mordey, M. Smith, Vardy and Wood.

Also Present:-

Insp. C. Warcup, Neighbourhood Inspector, Doxford Ward
Sgt. K. Goldsmith Neighbourhood Sergeant, Hendon and Ryhope
P.C. W. Wright on behalf of Insp. N. Craig
Alan Duffy, Head of Operations (Central Area), Gentoo Sunderland
Stuart Douglass, Safer Communities Manager, Sunderland City Council
Tom Terrett, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager, Sunderland City Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor O'Connor and on behalf of Colin Bowman and Ray Leonard.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 1st June, 2009 and the Minutes of the South Area Committee Meeting held on 2nd March, 2009 and the Extraordinary South Area Committee Meetings held on 6th April, 2009 and 17th April, 2009

Councillor Wood stated that for the Attractive and Inclusive theme Stagecoach should be invited and for the Healthy theme FUSHIA should be invited to the meeting.

1. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The minutes of the last meeting be confirmed and signed as a correct record.
 - b. The minutes of the meetings of the South Area Committee be confirmed and signed as correct records.

Declarations of Interest

Item 7 - Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2009-10 Ward Based Community Chest

Councillor Wares declared a personal interest as a Trustee of the Empire Theatre Trust.

Councillor Mordey declared a personal interest as a Director of the Empire Theatre Trust.

Councillor E. Gibson declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of Friends of Doxford Park.

Councillor Paul Maddison declared a personal interest as a Council appointed member of the Mayors Fund.

Developing Community Communications to Support Area Committees 2009-10

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which input from Members on the Development of a Community Communications Action Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Deborah Lewin, Interim Head of Corporate Communications, and Verity Dodd, Senior Corporate Communications Officer, presented the report. They advised that the Council was reviewing the delivery of communications and marketing and local level communications were a priority. There were plans for monthly newsheets produced for each area which would show what was happening within the area and how to contact people. Calling Cards to thank people for reporting problems were also being considered.

Councillor Peter Maddison stated that the newsletters would be a good idea, people appreciated newsletters containing local information more than a magazine which contained more general information.

Councillor Mordey asked whether there was any way this project could support the Eastwise magazine.

Ms Dodd advised that a copy had been received and it would be ensured that the publications did not duplicate what had already been included in Eastwise.

Councillor T. Martin advised that short important news articles were required. There should be details of Police meetings and ward surgeries included. The East Forum had now been established and this should be advertised in the newsletters.

Ms Dodd advised that relevant 'news you can use' was going to be included in the newsletters.

In response to a query from Councillor Paul Maddison, Ms Dodd stated that they were still looking at how local the local newsletters would be.

Councillor Vardy queried the delivery costs. Ms Dodd stated that different methods of delivery were being looked at and the costs would be no more than 5 to 7 pence per copy.

Councillor Vardy then asked about the editorial process. Ms Dodd stated that the Media Team were looking at this, there were five areas and it was planned that there would be a newsletter produced every month for each area.

Councillor M. Forbes stated that in St. Michael's ward the Councillors had always produced their own newsletter; she felt that it was the Members job to produce the newsletters. There was a threat of duplication and there was a requirement to look at all of the costs including officer time. A less frequent publication could still be just as effective.

Councillor T. Martin stated that the newsletters should not be politically biased.

In response to a question from Councillor Mordey, Ms Dodd advised that it was anticipated the newsletters would start in October.

Councillor Wood stated that he assumed drafts would be provided to Members. He also commented that monthly seemed to be ambitious and echoed Councillor T. Martin's concerns that they should not be political, previous publications had included the views of the ruling party.

The Chairman stated that he strongly advocated Eastwise, he felt that it served the committees purposes more appropriately than Sunrise. The residents he had spoken to had only read Eastwise, this was due to it providing local information about the local wards. Attracting members of the public to the meetings was difficult and there were problems when holding the meetings in the community. The publications should inform the public of when and where the meetings are taking place and how they can be involved. The committee was non political and the magazines and newsletters needed to be the same.

2. RESOLVED that the comments made be given consideration when developing communication methods to be included in the Community Communications Plan.

Questions to Area Committee

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which was intended to raise awareness and understanding on the new agenda item 'questions to Area Committee' which would give members of the public the opportunity to question Members and officers.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report and advised that during the development of the Local Area Plans it had been identified that there was a need to introduce a method of allowing members of the public to ask questions to Councillors and Council Officers. It was felt that the area committees would be the most appropriate arena for this.

It was proposed to pilot the questions to Area Committee at the September and November 2009 meetings, Members were encouraged to invite local people to these meetings to ask strategic questions affecting the Sunderland East Area as a whole.

In response to queries from Councillor Mordey, Ms Trueman advised that the pilot was being carried out in all areas of the city. There was a need to respond to questions in a timely manner and as such responses were required within two weeks.

Councillor Paul Maddison asked for clarification of what a 'strategic question' was.

Phil Barrett, Director of Development and Regeneration and Area Lead Executive, advised that they were questions which related to larger issues rather than being individual, personal issues.

Councillor Paul Maddison then asked whether the Members would receive copies of all questions submitted regardless of whether they were presented to the committee.

The Chairman advised that this should be possible.

Councillor T. Martin commented that it was important to look at whether there was a pattern of problems. Individuals who were responsible for problems should be fined.

In response to a query from Councillor Vardy, Ms Trueman advised that the question form would initially be given to Members to give to local residents; the forms contained a summary of the protocols to ensure that people knew what would happen once a question was submitted. Once the pilot had been completed the scheme would be fully rolled out across the city.

Councillor Vardy then expressed concerns that he felt the form was not worded appropriately, he felt there was a need for Strategic questions to be explained otherwise it could lead to residents thinking that the council did not care.

Ms Trueman advised that the Local Area Plans would be considered by Cabinet and after that there would be work done to raise public awareness. If a question was not presented to the committee there would still be a response provided to the person who submitted the question.

The Chairman commented that this was an opportunity to see if the scheme would work. When giving residents the question forms Members would be able to explain the local area plans and what strategic questions are. The final forms needed to be written in plain English to ensure that the residents would be able to understand them fully.

Councillor Wood stated that question times had been considered by Council, he supported the principle of the scheme. There was a need to ensure that the documentation was grammatically correct.

3. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The proposed protocols be approved
 - b. The pilot scheme be implemented with the Members providing the question forms to residents.

Sunderland East a Safe Area Summary

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed Members to consider, discuss, agree and action the proposals identified within the report.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, and Phil Barrett, Director of Development and Regeneration and Area Lead Executive, presented the report and introduced the short, medium and long term proposals which were identified in Annex 1 of the report.

Councillor Mordey asked what policies the Police had in place for tackling antisocial behaviour.

Sergeant Goldsmith advised that Northumbria Police were currently targeting antisocial behaviour in Hendon. They were targeting the hotspot areas and times and were working with trading standards to combat the sale of alcohol to children. They were also working with environmental health to reduce anti social fly tipping.

Councillor Mordey then advised that there were many positive things done by young people and these should be advertised more. The majority of young people do not cause problems however they are all tarred by the same brush; young people could be encouraged to see older people to show them that not all children cause problems.

The Chairman agreed that this could be a good idea, he suggested that it be done as soon as possible as a long hot summer could result in problems and it would be best to work on changing peoples perceptions before the summer holiday.

Councillor Mordey then stated that there needed to be more prosecutions for fly tipping and dog fouling, he asked for the figures for prosecutions.

Councillor T. Martin stated that the local newspaper was full of good news stories about children and young people, the vast majority of children had positive attitudes. Children playing football in the street was a cause of irritation for residents however the children were only playing in the street because there was nowhere else for them to go. The Multi Use Games Area at Hudson Road was well used.

The Chairman commented that when there are good news stories about children in the area they could be invited along to the committee to thank them.

Councillor E. Gibson advised that residents of Doxford Park had not felt safe during the recent fires.

Inspector Warcup advised that there were now patrols of the area every night to reassure residents and prevent any more empty properties from being set alight. A 3G camera had been relocated to the area to monitor the situation. There was to be a visit to the area with Police, Gentoo and Councillors in attendance.

Councillor Vardy commented that young people often harassed adults to get them to buy alcohol from off licenses. This was often recorded on CCTV and should be monitored and targeted. The CCTV operators have specific targets and this should be made one of them. There was a new play park at Doxford Park however the policy was that there are no cameras watching children's play areas and he felt that this could cause problems.

The Chairman advised that the policy was in place due to legal issues regarding taking images of children without permission.

Inspector Warcup stated that each area had its own cameras, these could not cover everywhere so were sited where there were problems identified.

The Chairman then advised that young people outside of off licenses were difficult to move on as they just returned after the police had left, they would often intimidate people into buying alcohol for them, and he had received complaints from residents about this.

Councillor Mordey stated that Neighbourhood Wardens had been used in the North Sunderland Area to reduce anti social behaviour, these had been successful. He suggested that the Strategic Initiatives Budget funding could be used to fund wardens for the East Area.

Stuart Douglass, Safer Communities Manager, commented that the scrutiny committees were looking at anti social behaviour and the use of Neighbourhood Wardens. The findings from scrutiny could be fed back into the Area Committee.

Councillor Mordey then queried how effective a DVD would be at raising awareness of the priorities being addressed. He asked whether it would be the best use of resources and how many people would watch it.

Mr Douglass advised that there were TV screens in public places which were used to show public information messages. He did not know who had proposed the DVD but he would be happy for the Safer Sunderland Partnership to be involved in producing it.

Councillor Errington stated that the Box Youth Project had produced a DVD; the children had produced it and had won an award. He suggested that local schools and the university could be approached; their students and facilities could be used to produce the DVD which would give the young people in the area an input into the DVD.

Mr Douglass agreed that this seemed like a good suggestion.

Councillor T. Martin added that youth projects in the area could also be approached.

Ms Trueman stated that the Alcohol Awareness Campaign, to be delivered by the Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT) could be looked at by the committee.

Councillor Errington advised that colleges and sixth forms should be targeted as there was often pressure on these students to drink. The schools should also be involved in order to ensure that children are educated from a young age.

It was important for groups such as FUSHIA to be involved and when they carry out public awareness campaigns these need to be based in prominent locations such as Market Square or Park Lane.

Mr Douglass stated that he could ask officers to produce a report on the campaign.

Ms Trueman asked whether the Members were happy to look at the hotspots for illegal sales of alcohol and target the shops within the area and carry out bottle tracing exercises.

The Chairman advised that if anyone had a problem they should contact the relevant officer to allow them to take action.

Ms Trueman then asked whether the Northumbria Police anti social behaviour campaign would only cover Hendon or whether it would look at the other wards as well.

Sergeant Goldsmith advised that the campaign was being partly funded by Back on the Map and as such would be predominantly based in Hendon. The police would be working with Gentoo and other partners. There will be a review after the campaign to see how successful it was.

Ms Trueman then went on to say that wheelie bin fires were a major problem which cost £6million per year to tackle.

Councillor Mordey advised that in the Long Streets and Middle Hendon areas of Hendon there were plans in place to introduce selective licensing of landlords.

4. RESOLVED that the proposals be agreed and the comments made be included when implementing the proposals.

Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2009/10 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which requested Members to approve the 26 proposals for funding from the 2009/10 community chest.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report and advised that there were 26 proposals for approval which totalled £13,070, which were identified in Annexes 1 and 1A. Should the Members approve the proposals there would be funding remaining as follows:

Doxford Ward: £8,935
Hendon Ward: £1,091
Millfield Ward: £2,302
Ryhope Ward: £10,708
St. Michael's Ward: £7,709

5. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 26 projects recommended for support from the 2009/10 Community Chest Budget with a total value of £13,070 as detailed in Annex 1 and Annex 1A of the report.

Strategic Investment Plan (S.I.P.)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the details for the proposed SIP as a delivery mechanism for achieving long term ambitions for the area. The report requested that Members discuss how best to allocate the SIP across the East Area.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report and advised that there were two options for the allocation of SIP funds across the wards; either

- (i) Allocation of the SIP as a total of £227,293 across the four identified wards, with the area committee being responsible for its expenditure. Or
- (ii) Splitting SIP across the four identified wards of the area, totalling £56,823 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.

Councillor Paul Maddison asked why there were the two different options.

Ms Trueman advised that there was the desire to get the service providers included at ward level, there was already this support available for the Area Committee.

Councillor Mordey advised that he was in favour of option two and asked whether it would operate in a similar way to the Community Chest. He then stated that if funding was not spent it could be lost and suggested that any leftover funding could be brought back to the central pot near the end of the period to ensure that it was not lost and enable it to be spent on area wide projects.

Ms Trueman stated that it would work in a similar way to the Community Chest funding.

Councillor T. Martin commented that some areas had more need for resources than others. Hendon ward only had £1000 left of its Community Chest funds as there were so many projects in the area which required funding, he did not want to see Hendon lose out.

6. RESOLVED that the SIP be split across the four identified wards of the area: Hendon, Millfield, St. Michael's and Ryhope; totalling £56,823 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 the Area Committee for a final decision.

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

(Signed) D.R. WARES,
Chairman.