

**At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor D. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors Allan, M. Dixon, P. Gibson, Gofton, L. Martin, Morrissey, Old, J.B. Scott, Tye, P. Watson, S. Watson and A. Wilson

**Also Present:-**

Keith Beardmore	Area Lead Executive	Sunderland City Council
Kath Butchert	Integrated Youth Officer	Sunderland City Council
Les Clarke	Head of Street Scene	Sunderland City Council
Jodie Collins	Employee Communications Officer	Sunderland City Council
Stephen Dodds		Nexus
Kevin Douglas	Media Officer	Sunderland City Council
Kevin Johnson	Principal Landscape Architect	Sunderland City Council
Carol Lewis	Play Pathfinder Programme Manager	Sunderland City Council
Lucy Malarkey	Head of Neighbourhoods	Gentoo Sunderland
Vivienne Metcalfe	Area Community Development Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Andy Neal	Youth Development Group Manager	Sunderland City Council
Sandra Mitchell	Head of Performance Improvement and Policy	Sunderland City Council
David Noon	Senior Democratic Services Officer	Sunderland City Council
Richard Parry	Area Officer	Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	Project and Service Development Manager	Sunderland City Council
Ken Robinson	Inspector	Northumbria Police
Tom Terrett	Trading Standards and Licensing Manager	Sunderland City Council
Lisa Theaker	Inspector	Northumbria Police
John Usher		Nexus

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Arnott, Oliver, P. Smith, A. Wright and T. Wright and also on behalf of Nonnie Crawford and Peter Iveson.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009**

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

Councillor M. Dixon referred to page 7 and advised that he had yet to receive the written reply regarding the A690 Christmas Lighting Project as promised in the minutes.

Councillor D. Allan referred to page 5 in respect of the Barnes Park Regeneration and expressed concern at the dumping of excavated material in the Barnes Park Extension.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Item 7, Annex 2 (ii), Community Leaders of the future.

The following Members declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item and left the room during its consideration as the applicant was a Labour Party Parliamentary Candidate and was known to them personally:-

Councillors Allan, D. Forbes, Gofton, Old, J.B. Scott, P. Watson, S. Watson and A. Wilson.

Councillors P. Gibson and P. Tye declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item and left the room during its consideration as they were both connected to the bid and the applicant was known to them personally.

### **Questions to Area Committee – Review of Pilot Scheme**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed the Committee on the implementation of the pilot Questions to Area Committees Scheme and which sought agreement to the extension of the pilot and a review of the Scheme being reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted; and
- (ii) approval be given to the extension of the pilot and to a report on the review of the Scheme being submitted to the Committee in due course.

## **West: An Attractive and Inclusive Area Summary**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which highlighted the following 'Attractive and Inclusive Area' priorities previously identified by the Committee, key issues and their background, current activity delivered day by day by services, identified gaps in services together with options and proposals:-

- (i) improve the environment;
- (ii) improve local shopping centres;
- (iii) improve local parks;
- (iv) regenerate the riverside;
- (v) improve public transport.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the report and introduced Carol Lewis, Play Pathfinder Programme Manager, Sunderland City Council, together with John Usher and Stephen Dodds of Nexus who provided Members with presentations on priorities in relation to the improvement of local parks and the improvement of public transport respectively.

With regard to options to complete Phase 2 of the City Adventure Play Park, Ms. Lewis advised that it was proposed to bring an SIB bid before a future Committee for approximately £50,000.

With regard to improvements to public transport, Mr. Usher informed Members that a presentation on the Nexus Accessible Bus Network Design Project and Consultation would be provided at the next meeting.

With regard to the accessibility of buses and the deadline for the implementation of accessible buses, Councillor Allan asked if Mr. Usher could confirm rumours that certain bus companies were lobbying to get the deadline set back. Mr. Usher replied that he was not aware of any such moves but that he would investigate Councillor Allan's concerns and report back.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor M. Dixon, the Committee was informed that the Council's Team of Environmental Enforcement Officers did make school visits as part of their educating role.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- (i) receive a report on the implications and opportunities for the West area within the Green Space Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- (ii) receive a report on potential park structural improvements and note the intention to submit a SIB bid for approximately £50,000 as part of options to complete Phase 2 of the City adventure play park;
- (iii) receive a report on improving waste and unsightly land;

- (iv) investigate the potential of Claxheugh riverside for water sports, recreation and parkland;
- (v) investigate an 'Employment Initiative' linking construction skills required to build the new bridge, and its infrastructure, with training opportunities;
- (vi) receive an update report at a future meeting regarding the Nexus Secured Services Strategy and Consultation.

### **Thematic Feedback Report – West Area Action Plans**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an opportunity to discuss feedback on actions taken to date with regard to its priorities in relation to its Safe, Attractive and Inclusive and Learning Action Plans.

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the report and introduced:-

- (i) Inspector Lisa Theaker and Inspector Ken Robinson of Northumbria Police who provided Members with feedback on partnership working in relation to Crime Reduction;
- (ii) Kath Butchert, Integrated Youth Officer, Sunderland City Council, who updated the Committee on the new commissioning arrangements for youth provision; and
- (iii) Kevin Johnson, Principal Landscape Architect, Sunderland City Council, who briefed the Committee on proposals for tree planting and street scene improvement, including tree lining the outer ring road from European Way, Ford Estate, Plans Farm and Premier Road, Members noted the proposal to submit a SIB bid to a future meeting of the Committee for approximately £10,000 in connection with the proposed tree planting.

Councillor Gofton referred to the XL Youth Villages Diary (copy tabled) and enquired about the 8.30 p.m. finish time. Ms. Butchert confirmed that this was partly due to the dark nights but also because the villages were being sited within residential areas and the associated music could become a potential nuisance if they continued later. The villages were being attached to recognised community buildings so if the weather was poor the events could switch indoors with relative ease.

With regard to the tree planting schemes, Councillors Gofton and P. Watson welcomed the mental health aspects of the proposals, however, Councillor Watson stated that he would like to understand what the proposed £10,000 would be attributed to.

Councillor L. Martin questioned where the funding would be coming from, especially given that in the past the Council had undertaken schemes to remove trees and grass verges in areas such as St. Gabriels Avenue.

In reply Keith Beardmore, Director of Financial Resources and Area Lead Executive, advised that officers would go away and investigate potential sources of funding for the Scheme and report back.

4. RESOLVED that the updates, activities and actions in respect of the Safe, Attractive and Inclusive and Learning Area Action Plans as detailed in the report and presentations be received and noted.

### **Financial Statement and Funding Requests**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter which sought Committee approval for the following recommendations:-

- (i) to approve 10 proposals for funding from the Community Chest;
- (ii) to approve the following 2 proposals for SIB funding:-
  - £5,000 for the Miners' Memorial Project;
  - £10,000 for the Seaburn Public Realm Project;
- (iii) to defer the following 2 proposals for SIB funding:-
  - Community Leaders of the future;
  - Green Team;
- (iv) to reject a proposal for SIB funding received from Kool Kids (Dance Sunderland);
- (v) to note the financial statement for Area Committee funding for 2009/10.

Richard Parry, Area Officer, presented the report and advised Members that following the November 2009 meeting a balance of £314,814 remained to be allocated from the 2009/10 SIB budget. Should the Committee approve the two applications for funding before it, the remaining balance would be £299,814.

Councillor Gofton complimented Mr. Parry on the clarity and readable nature of his reports.

With regard to the application in respect of SIB funding for the Community Leaders of the Future project, 10 Members declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application and retired from the Committee room. The meeting therefore became inquorate at this juncture and the application in respect of the Community Leaders of the Future project stood adjourned.

With regard to the SIB applications in respect of the Miners' Memorial and Seaburn Public Realm, Councillor Allan stated that on this occasion he was prepared to support the bids, however, these were obviously Citywide projects. He added that the SIB funding had been delegated to the Area Committees to do good work within their own areas. He contended that rather than going through the processes of the medium term financial plan, officers were going through the back door to raid Area Committee budgets and he would not support any similar requests in the future.

Councillor L. Martin echoes Councillor Allan's sentiments, however, he did not feel able to support the bids because of their Citywide nature.

The two applications were therefore put to the vote with 10 Members voting in favour of the Miners' Memorial application with 2 voting against and 11 Members voting in favour of the Seaburn Public Realm application and one voting against.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- i) approval be given to the granting of £5,000 SIB funding to the Miners' Memorial Window project;
- ii) approval be given to the granting of £10,000 SIB funding in respect of the Seaburn Public Realm Scheme;
- iii) the application received from Green Team (Groundwork) for SIB funding of £53,825 be deferred;
- iv) the application received from Kool Kids (Sunderland Dance) for SIB funding of £11,645 be declined;
- v) the financial statement for 2009/10 be received and noted; and
- vi) approval be given to all 10 proposals recommended for support from the 2009/10 budget as detailed in Annex 1 of the report.

#### **Area Review Process – Introduction of Referral Criteria and Process for Dealing with Issues of Local Concern Incorporating a Revised Mechanism for Councillor Call for Action – Initial Proposals**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which advised Members of the proposed introduction of a Referral Criteria and process for dealing with an Area Review process, which could be used by Area Committees, Scrutiny Committees and the Sunderland Partnership, and which included an amalgamation with the Councillor Call for Action Mechanics.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the introduction of the referral criteria and process for determining the appropriateness of undertaking an investigation triggered either by the non-mandatory referral / Councillor Call for Action route be supported;
- ii) subject to the comments received from the Area Committees (along with the Scrutiny Committees and Sunderland Partnership), the revised procedure be referred to Cabinet for approval, implemented and included in the Area Committee Handbook.

### **Area Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Networks and Volunteering in Your Area**

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed the Area Committee of progress and proposed future developments regarding the involvement and representation of the Voluntary and Community Sector with the new Area Arrangements to enable a more proactive level of participation in the delivery of the Local Area Plans.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Vivienne Metcalfe, Area Community Development Co-ordinator, presented the report and informed Members of the intention to celebrate the contribution of volunteers in the West Area at an event to be held in the Sandhill Centre on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2010. This would feed into the Annual Volunteer Celebration to be hosted by the Mayor of Sunderland at the Seaburn Marriott Hotel during National Volunteer Week (1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2010). Ms. Metcalfe having asked Members to inform her of anyone they felt should receive an invitation to the February event, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Responsive Local Services**

The Executive Director of City Services and Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the Committee with current standards for the Services currently being provided as part of the Responsive Local Services project.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Peverley, Project and Service Development Manager, presented the report highlighting in particular the service performance data for the period September to October 2009 as detailed in paragraph 5.

Councillor Allan paid tribute to the refuse collection staff for their work carried out during recent difficult circumstances.

Councillor M. Dixon also thanked City Services for the work undertaken in the St Chad's Ward for which residents were very grateful.

Councillor Gibson referred to a recent resident complaint on behalf of the St. Chad's residents made to the Sunderland Echo about a dog waste bin that had not been emptied for 5 weeks. Upon investigation it had been found that the bin concerned was in fact only three quarters full. There was, however, a litter bin nearby that was overflowing with plastic bags of dog waste together with a number of bags dumped around it. The message needed to be reinforced to the public that litter bins should not be used for dog waste.

Councillor L. Martin advised that the two dog waste bins in the Barnes Park extension were overflowing and asked if it was possible on a temporary basis to relocate dog waste bins from the main Barnes Park while it was closed for refurbishment.

Councillor Tye paid tribute to the staff involved in responding to a call to the 553 1999 number to remove drugs paraphernalia. The request had been responded to and the area cleaned within one hour on a Sunday.

Councillor Dixon asked if the information could be broken down do a Ward by Ward level. Ms Peverley replied that it was currently difficult to access the data base to that detail however the Service was looking to breakdown the information to postcodes so that hotspots could be identified.

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that further updates be submitted in due course.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance.

(Signed) D. FORBES,  
(Chairman).