

Washington Area Committee



Cllr Bernie Scaplehorn
Chair of Washington Area Committee

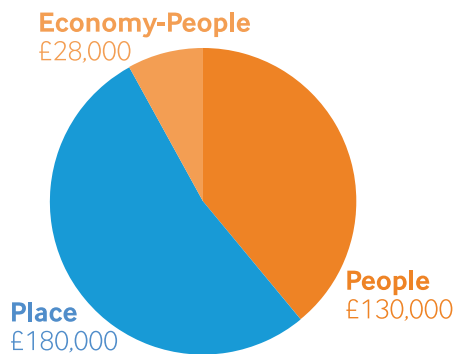
The Washington Area Committee has continued to embed partnership and participation to ensure both residents and the voluntary and community sector have helped to deliver activity to meet local need. This has kept our local communities at the heart of everything we do and has encouraged a wide range of organisations to support the work of the Committee.

Washington Area Committee set out its priorities for the year ahead to ensure a focus on activities that would bring real benefits to the local community. This included:

- Stimulating opportunities for employment and encouraging more enterprise and entrepreneurship particularly for young people. This has been achieved through a Youth Opportunities and a School Opportunities Project. Funding has also been provided to develop better engagement with businesses and for a Retail Support Specialist Project to work with the Concord Traders.
- Tackling health inequalities through addressing social isolation of older people, and helping residents become more active through the Community Health and Green Spaces Project. Neighbourhood improvements and the development of green spaces work also contributed to the development of local initiatives to tackle health inequalities across the area
- Ensuring support for the voluntary and community sector to help build capacity and deliver services for local people

Funding

Through the Strategic Initiatives Budget the Committee has worked hard to ensure the best outcomes from its resources, and has allocated more than £338,000 to projects to deliver priorities for People, Place and Economy. This has included £100,000 for the Community Health and Green Spaces programme (People and Place), £80,000 for Village Centre Improvements (Place), £28,000 to develop a local approach to employment and enterprise (Economy), £50,000 to fund local community events (People) with a further £50,000 to ensure a community led program to celebrate Washington's 50th birthday in 2014. Members also awarded 63 Community Chest grants totalling £53,125 to local groups and organisations to deliver community benefits at a Ward level.



A number of excellent projects have been rolled out throughout the area:

- The launch of the Village Centres Improvements Project whereby a range of environmental activities and initiatives will deliver a co-ordinated approach to neighbourhood management and improvements in all of the Washington villages. This will also involve local communities and VCS organisations providing opportunities for joint working and a co-ordinated approach to neighbourhood management.
- The Youth Opportunities and Schools Opportunities Projects have worked with more than 250 young people to date. More than 65 young people are now in further education or

employment and the projects are considered best practice with regards to engaging with our NEET young people.

- Following local traders contacting the Council and local Councillors the Retail Support Specialist Project together with a Shop Local Project has been initiated to support the Concord Traders. This initiative will support local businesses to improve competitiveness, effective trading and sustainability.
- The Community Health and Green Spaces Project has provided a co-ordinated network to encourage local people to be more active. It has also linked the villages and will provide a venue for events and activities and will be a valuable resource to tackle Washington's health inequalities.
- To support adult social care a small grants scheme was agreed to encourage local organisations to provide additional services to address social isolation in older people. 8 schemes have been agreed which will deliver a range of activities, develop social clubs and provide services such as a local shopping bus.
- Local events are key to enhancing community inclusion and involvement in Washington. Funding has been allocated to ensure a community programme of activities and events is in place to celebrate Washington's 50th birthday, established events such as the ever popular Washington Heritage Festival and the Washington Illuminations are once again delivered, and a new Christmas Festival for Washington Village will be launched.
- The award of funding to support the development of the Washington Youth Council

From a Place perspective the Area Committee has directly influenced a range of services. This includes:



Washington Illuminations

- Washington Business Centre which opens in April 2014 on Turbine Business Park will provide improved business space, increased jobs/employment and new businesses.
- The new Washington Leisure Village to replace the current Washington Leisure Centre will provide much improved facilities for the area
- Prioritising road repairs as part of the Highways Maintenance Programme, consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy which sets out housing, business and development needs for the area and working through partners to deliver a co-ordinated response and approach to mitigate against local flooding
- Continuing to work closely with the council's Area Response Team to influence street scene service delivery and to ensure a partnership approach with local residents and organisations

From a People perspective we have worked to

- Develop community inclusion & support for the Voluntary and Community Sector. This has been through the Washington 50th birthday Community Programme and

the support of the Washington Trust to help the local community and VCS to build capacity through events management, partnership and consortia working

- Encourage the community and partners to increase the number of residents engaged in activity in order to tackle health inequalities through the Community Health and Green Spaces Project. We are currently working with partners to determine branding, a launch event and links to other activities
- Area Committee has also influenced area specific elements of the Council's Core Services including local youth provision, activities to be delivered by the Children's Centres in Washington from April 2014, how a modern library service will be delivered, and helped to inform both the Integrated Wellness Review and the Sexual Health Review.

We have worked with a number of partners to achieve our outcomes including a developing relationship with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health and continuing to work closely with and support the Washington Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network and VCS organisations. Key public sector partners continue to work

with us to deliver local benefit including Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Age UK, local schools, Groundwork, and the Probation Service.

What have the benefits of our work meant to others? Our work has reduced the number of NEETs across Washington & increased vocational opportunities for hard to reach young people. We have also engaged with more young people and a Washington Youth Council has been established with key events organised such as a Talent Show, Question Time/State of Area Event for young people and a celebration event. Our work has also improved neighbourhoods and partnership working through close collaboration and sharing of resources. Key projects will tackle health inequalities and improve local health outcomes

The year ahead - Washington Area Committee will continue to work in partnership to deliver local benefits for local people. The next year will see a further focus on ensuring opportunities for employment for local people, improving health outcomes including looking at the provision of mental health services for young people and delivering a dementia awareness health champions course, and supporting the VCS to develop and deliver services for local people.



Washington Heritage Festival