

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held at the BIDDICK SCHOOL, WASHINGTON on WEDNESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 2009 at 5.30 P.M.

Present:

Councillor Walker in the Chair

Councillors Chamberlin, Fletcher, Kelly, Miller, I. Richardson, Scaplehorn, Snowdon, Stephenson, Timmins, Trueman, Wake and Whalen.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A. Cuthbert and I. Cuthbert.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 26th November, 2008

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 26th November, 2008 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 6 – Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) Regeneration Issues Report

Councillors Fletcher and Snowdon declared a personal interest in Washington School in as both had children that attend Washington School.

Councillor Walker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the F-Pit Banner Memorial Project as a Member of the Banner Group and took no part in any discussion on the application.

Councillor Walker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Millennium Centre Project as a Board Member and took no part in any discussion on the application.

Councillor Scaplehorn declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Springwell Village Hall as a Member of the Community Association and took no part in any discussion on the application.

Item 7 – Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2007/2008 Ward Based Community Chest

Councillor Walker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Washington Colliery FC as family members were involved with the Club and took no part in any discussion on the application.

Presentation from Northumbria Police on Crime Rates Relating to the Washington Area and Minutes of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Groups (LMAPS)

A copy of the Minutes of the meetings of the Local Multi Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) Group held on 5th November and 10th December, 2008 (copies circulated) were submitted.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

Inspector Dave Willett was in attendance and provided details of actual crime numbers committed in the Washington Area for the period ending December 2008 in comparison with the same period in 2007.

In relation to the specific crime categories Inspector Willett reported that there had been an increase/reduction as follows:-

	Increase/Decrease	No. of crimes
Burglary dwellings	-26.8%	44
Burglary OTD	-13/3%	25
Criminal Damage	-14.7%	142
Violent Crime	+0.3%	2
Vehicle Crime	-24.1%	

He advised that total crime in Sunderland was currently showing a decrease of 3.1% for the year to date compared to 2007. Washington was showing a decrease of 9.9% overall.

Councillor Trueman raised the issue of hate crime and noted that 3 racial incidents had been reported.

Inspector Willett advised that these offences were taken extremely seriously; however there did not appear to be an increase in such crimes.

Councillor Miller queried when 'head cams' would be likely to be in use in Washington.

Inspector Willett advised that 4 head cams were currently in use to tackle anti social behaviour.

Inspector Willett having been thanked for his presentation, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

Regeneration Issues Report: Feedback on Projects Previously Funded through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB)

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with information on the Tumble Track Project – Biddick Sports College Community Gymnastics Club, which was awarded £14,000 on 2nd July, 2008 from SIB.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mrs. Lynn Hope, Head Coach, was in attendance and updated the Committee on how the funding had been used.

Members of the Committee applauded Mrs. Hope and the children on the gymnastics demonstration they had performed for them and congratulated all those involved in the Club and on the successes it had achieved.

3. RESOLVED that the feedback on the Tumble Track Project be received and noted.

Urgent Item – Washington Wheeled Sports Park

In accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman proposed and it was agreed by the Committee that a presentation from Julie Russell, Sport and Leisure Partnership Manager and Julie Gray, Head of Community Services on the Washington Wheeled Sports Park be considered at this meeting as members would need to consider an option to proceed regarding extending the period of consultation as a matter of urgency and the matter would need to be considered prior to the next meeting on 1st April 2009.

Ms Russell addressed the Committee and advised that Sunderland Council had successfully applied to the Department for Children, Schools and Families for Play Pathfinder status and was one of only 20 Councils to secure the £2.1 million Government grant. She proceeded to give a PowerPoint presentation outlining the process that had taken place to date with the project and to seek endorsement on the way forward.

As part of the funding, proposals had been developed for the area Wheeled Sports Park. Children and young people from across Washington were involved in identifying the location and design of the Washington wheeled

sport provision. Consideration was given to a number of sites. Many factors were considered including access by public transport, land ownership, land topography and sub-structure, visibility and informal oversight.

Sites initially considered included:-

- Princess Anne Park
- Albany Park
- Glebe Park - Pitstop
- Holley Park

During consultation, additional sites were also identified by Councillors and young people including:-

- Glebe Park – near to equipped area
- Rickleton
- North East Oxclose

After considering the range of issues, young people's preferred site was at Glebe Park, near to the current equipped area. This was largely because of perceived safety and was viewed as accessible for all.

Ms Russell outlined the consultation that had taken place with the Oxclose and District Young People's Project in September 2008, Northumbria Police and the widely advertised young people's event. Subsequent additional consultation had also taken place at the request of Members.

The design proposals were sent to residents in a letter which included a memo and design of new provision distributed on 24th December 2008

As a consequence it was acknowledged that the letter was untimely. Ward Councillors met with officers and agreed to extend consultation period to ensure residents had a reasonable time to raise their concerns. This extended period of consultation was introduced by an additional 1000 newsletters being circulated to residents with close proximity to the Park, from Glebe and Washington Village.

Ms. Russell went on to advise that, in addition, officers and Ward Councillors were invited and attended an open public meeting in Washington Old Hall. Ward Councillors had also met with residents in small groups. That week a meeting chaired by portfolio of Leisure and Culture was attended by Council officers, ward Councillors and local police to meet with a selection of the newly formed Washington Village Residents Association.

A number of negative and positive themes had been identified from the extended consultation.

Ms. Julie Gray then outlined the options available to Members:

- Option 1 – Proceed with Glebe Park Option
- Option 2 – Do not proceed with Glebe Park Option
- Option 3 – Extend period of consultation and include consideration of alternative locations

Members thanked Ms. Russell and Ms. Gray for the presentation which had clarified issues Members should have been made aware of at a much earlier date.

Members unanimously agreed to proceed with option 3. Ms. Gray then outlined the process for option 3.

Members raised some concerns in relation to the residents' leaflet that would be going out to them and requested that it be made more generic in highlighting the proposed facilities for Washington.

Accordingly it was:-

4. RESOLVED that
 - i) the contents of the presentation be received and noted;
 - ii) the Council proceed with Option 3 – extend the period of consultation with young people, residents and elected Members and include analysis of alternative locations across Washington; and
 - iii) the results of the consultation be presented to the July 2009 Washington Area Committee for it to consider the preferred location based upon the findings

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB): Regeneration Issues Report

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining proposals for the allocation of SIB funding to support initiatives of benefit to the area, requesting the Committee to consider the principle of deferring commitment of expenditure from next year's SIB budget (subject to budget approval), except in cases of clear emergency and to defer consideration of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) expenditure until the new financial year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members proceeded to give consideration to the request to defer commitment of expenditure from next year's SIB budget as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

The Chairman moved that the Committee endorse recommendation 2.2 of the report and this was agreed.

Ms. Trueman outlined the budgetary position to the Committee as detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The Committee then proceeded to consider the applications for SIB funding:-

i) Memorial Project for F-Pit Banner Community Group

Ms. Trueman briefed the Committee on the application. Mr. Ray Middleton was in attendance and agreed to respond to members questions.

ii) Centenary celebrations for Washington School

Ms. Trueman briefed the Committee on the application. Mrs Dorothy Butler was in attendance and agreed to respond to members questions.

iii) The Millennium Centre

Ms. Trueman briefed the Committee on the application. Mr. David Snowdon was in attendance and agreed to respond to members questions.

Councillor Miller queried why the decision had been made to purchase laptops as opposed to desktop computers. Mr Snowdon advised that the decision was based on the fact that laptops were more portable and could be taken home by users.

Councillor Wake referred to free pc/internet access available at libraries and asked whether it had been ascertained that there was demand for the equipment at the Millennium Centre. Mr Snowdon advised that the requirement had been determined based on user footfall and the vast number of organisations and community groups who currently use the centre.

iv) Donwell Community Association

Ms. Trueman briefed the Committee on the application. Mrs Vera Mallin was in attendance and agreed to respond to members questions.

Councillor Trueman informed the Committee that the volunteers at the community centre do an excellent job and he fully supported the application.

v) Springwell Community Village Hall

Ms. Trueman briefed the Committee on the application. Ms. Suzanne Shaftoe was in attendance and agreed to respond to members questions.

It was therefore:-

5. RESOLVED that

- i) approval be given to £20,000 from the 2008/9 budget, as a contribution towards a Washington Memorial Project for F-Pit Banner Community Group;
- ii) approval be given to £16,000 from the 2008/09 budget, as a contribution towards the centenary celebrations for Washington School;
- iii) approval be given to £30,000 from 2008/09 budget, to enable an e-community project to be established at The Millennium Centre;
- iv) approval be given to £6,500 from 2008/09 budget, as a contribution towards roof repairs for Donwell Community Association;
- v) approval be given to £15,886 from the 2008/09 budget, as a contribution towards refurbishment and equipment costs for Springwell Community Village Hall.

Strategic Initiatives Budget: 2008/09 Ward Based Community Chest

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) bringing forward a total of 19 recommendations relating to the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that:-

- i) approval be given to the 19 proposals for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest as detailed on Annex 1 and 1A to the report at a total value of £16,999

Housing and Council Tax Benefits 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 and changes in circumstance in accordance with the new National indicator (NI 181) for Housing and Council Tax Benefit. The report which covered the period 1st April to 31st December, 2008 also updated Members on developments relevant to the business.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Steve Atkinson, Benefits Manager, was present at the meeting and briefed Members on the report, referring them to the performance statistics.

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

Heritage Open Days – Post Event 2008

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) updating Members on Heritage Open Days 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Jessica Bell, Arts Development Officer, briefed the Committee on the report.

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Fly Tipping and cycle Path Interventions

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Washington Area Committee with information relating to research undertaken across Sunderland to enable investment to be made to address fly tipping and improve cycle paths.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Peverley, Project and Service Development Manager, presented the report and requested feedback on the proposed programme of work.

In response to a question from Councillor Trueman, Ms. Peverley advised that there were 12 enforcement officers in total. Individual officers would carry out targeted enforcement in a given patch when required. Ms. Peverley also advised Councillor Trueman that CCTV cameras would be utilised out of hours to target hot spots for fly tipping etc.

In response to a question from Councillor Wake, Ms. Peverley advised that some of the newly appointed enforcement officers were currently working their notice and it was hoped all officers would be in place by the end of February.

Councillor Miller advised that the whole of Barmston Lane needed to be monitored for fly tipping. He also suggested that the Wild Fowl Sanctuary Car Park should be included in the programme.

Councillor Timmins suggested that the increased enforcement action should be widely publicised to act as a deterrent. Enforcement campaigns needed to target children at an early age.

Members requested that they were asked for their input regarding target area on a regular basis.

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

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

(Signed) P. WALKER,
Chairman.