

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL on TUESDAY, 19th SEPTEMBER, 2023 at 5.30p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Herron in the Chair

Councillors Ali, Curtis, Dixon, Fagan, Gibson, Hodson, Leonard, Mordey, Morrissey, Potts, Reed and A. Wood.

Also Present:-

- Steven Bewick - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Stephen Gordon - Gentoo
- Matthew Jackson - Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
- Fiona Kelly - Partnership and Community Resilience Manager, Sunderland City Council
- Graham King - Director of Adult Services and Area Lead Executive, Sunderland City Council
- Allison Patterson - Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
- Kelly Patton - Gentoo
- K. Ramanathan - VCS Representative

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received on behalf of Councillors Graham-King and Scanlan together with Lee Bell, Station Manager TWFRS, Julie Maven, East VCS Representative, and Jamie Southwell, Neighbourhood Inspector Northumbria Police.

Declarations of Interest

Item 4 – Area Budget Report

Councillor Dixon declared that he was a member of the management board of St Michael's Community Association and took no part in the determination of the application for funding in respect of this.

Councillor A. Wood declared that he was a member of the board of The Bunker CIC and took no part in the determination of the application for funding.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 26th June 2023

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th June 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

VCS Area Network Progress Report

The East Area VCS Network provided the Committee with a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the work of the East Area VCS Network.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Julie Maven having submitted her apologies for absence the Committee were advised that any questions would be forwarded to her for response. There being no questions from Members it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the update from the East Area VCS Network be noted.

Northumbria Police Update

Neighbourhood Inspector Jamie Southwell submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the crime statistics for the East area and of the work done by Northumbria Police.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Southwell not being in attendance the Chair advised that any questions would be forwarded to him for response.

Councillor Dixon advised that there had been issues around Park Lane relating to drug taking and drug use and that there had been discussions with the police on this matter.

Councillor Gibson stated that the report did not cover Doxford Ward and asked that the police areas and council area be standardised to ensure that complete information was provided.

Mr Stephen Gordon advised that Gentoo residents from City Green and Benedict Court had reported to him issues with drug dealing and use in the Park Lane area and work as being done with the SAIL team to tackle this issue.

Councillor Hodson advised that in the Burn Park and Thornhill area there was blatant drug dealing taking place and asked that the Police provide a thorough report on this issue at the next meeting.

Councillor Ali referred to the statement from the Police and Crime Commissioner that the city was still owed new police officers which had been promised by the government, he asked that Inspector Southwell provide an update on when these new officers would be in place.

3. RESOLVED that the update from Northumbria Police be noted.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Update

Lee Bell, Station Manager Sunderland Central Fire Station, submitted a written report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the work of the fire service for the period 1st April to 15th Jun 2023.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Steve Bewick, Station Manager, was in attendance on behalf of Mr Bell and delivered the update to the Committee; drawing attention to the fire statistics for the area and the ward breakdowns as well as the work being done to tackle antisocial behaviour fires alongside partner agencies.

Councillor Gibson thanked Mr Bewick for his report and expressed his congratulations for the work done to reduce instances of fires. He asked whether further detail could be provided on the ward breakdowns to show the types of fire in each ward. Mr Bewick agreed that he would speak to Mr Bell to ensure that this information was included in the report in future.

Councillor Fagan asked what work had been done to result in the reductions. Mr Bewick advised that there were a number of factors involved including partnership working with the police and other partners; proactive education work being done in schools; antisocial behaviour tours being undertaken in order to identify problems including fly tips which were then reported; and the wet weather.

Councillor Mordey stated that it was good to see such large reductions but noted that there were still a significant number of fires in Hendon; he asked what the Council and Ward Councillors could do to help reduce the number. Mr Bewick stated that informing people of Firestoppers was helpful as this allowed for more partnership working to be undertaken and also advised that crews wore cameras to help with identification of people responsible for the fires and antisocial behaviour when attending.

Councillor Reed commented that there had been a car burned out on Leechmere Road and that the same thing had happened in the same location at the same time last year; he asked whether any links were being considered. Mr Bewick advised that if there had been multiple incidents in a

short period of time then patterns would be looked at however with them being a year apart it could simply be a coincidence. He added that if the crews in attendance were suspicious that the fire was malicious then they would inform the police.

Mr Gordon advised that should perpetrators be identified as being Gentoo tenants then enforcement action could be taken against them by Gentoo. Mr Bewick advised that the fire service worked with all partners and asked that the Firestoppers number be included on Gentoo leaflets.

Councillor A. Wood commented that it was good to see that there was differentiation between the different types of fire on the maps.

Mr Bewick advised that he had noted that deliberate primary vehicle fires were not included in the report and he would speak with Mr Bell to ensure that these were included in future reports.

Councillor Ali questioned whether there was a link between general antisocial behaviour and fires and Mr Bewick confirmed that there was a correlation and that work was done with the police to tackle this.

The Chairman questioned whether the property fires were of empty or occupied properties. Mr Bewick advised that it was a mix of both and that empty properties could attract people to break in which could then result in further damage being caused and fires being set.

4. RESOLVED that the report of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be noted.

Gentoo Update

Stephen Gordon, Gentoo Group presented a report, (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Gordon presented the update and welcomed questions from Members.

Councillor Mordey expressed his thanks for the meeting that was held with Councillors and Hedworth Court residents; this meeting had left the residents feeling much more comfortable. He also queried the loft insulation upgrades. Mr Gordon advised that properties needed to meet a certain EPC rating and that those properties which did not meet the requirements would have additional loft insulation added if there was currently insufficient insulation. If residents wanted to have their level of insulation checked then they could contact Gentoo who would then inspect the property and add more insulation where required.

Councillor A. Wood questioned whether the tower blocks in the City Centre and the East End would receive estate walks. Mr Gordon agreed to organise these.

Councillor Dixon commented that it was good to see more structure being introduced for the estate walks including the setting of dates in advance. These were useful exercises which allowed issues to be identified and discussed. Mr Gordon advised that he would continue to provide the dates in advance.

Councillor Leonard asked where in Grangetown the estate walks would be taking place and Mr Gordon advised that it was up to partners, including Councillors, to inform Gentoo of the areas where they felt the estate walks would be most useful and this information would be used to ensure that the estate walks looked at the most appropriate locations.

The Chair questioned why Ryhope was not referred to in the report and Mr Gordon advised that Ryhope was within Gentoo's west area and he agreed to ensure that the west area report was also provided in future.

Councillor Gibson questioned whether all of the new windows being installed were double glazed and Mr Gordon confirmed that they were.

5. RESOLVED that the report from Gentoo be noted.

East Sunderland Area Neighbourhood Delivery Plan 2023 - 2026

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the East Sunderland Area Committee Area Plan for 2023/2026 for consideration and approval and provided an update on the Governance arrangements.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Hodson introduced the report as Chair of the Area Board, and drew Members attention to the priorities set out in the delivery plan.

Councillor Fagan asked for an update on the walk and talk budgets. The Chairman advised that there would be changes to this budget and an update would be provided shortly following the conclusion of ongoing discussions.

Councillor A. Wood commented that walk and talk was appreciated and well used by Councillors and it would be poor if control of this budget was taken away from Councillors. Councillor Mordey agreed and stated that the proactive nature of the budget was what made it unique as it allowed a quick response to issues. It would be a shame if the budget was lost or that it lost its unique, proactive abilities.

Councillor Reed questioned whether the changes would be a change to the budget or a change to the process involved. Ms Kelly advised that as discussions were ongoing she was unable to provide any information at the moment but would provide an update as soon as one was available. The Chairman added that he would feed back Members concerns.

Councillor Dixon stated that there had been no consultation of Members and residents on where the trials of glyphosate alternatives took place and that one of the streets chosen in his ward was a private road. He felt that there was a need for better consultation.

Councillor Mordey asked that an update on the outcome of the consultation on the trials be brought to the October meeting of the board. Councillor Hodson stated that there had been a lot of feedback from residents and that the complaints had been passed to Mark Morley.

Councillor Dixon referred to the Empty Properties priority and advised that he sat on the Homelessness group along with Councillor Curtis; this was an important issue and he asked whether homelessness could be looked at alongside empty properties. Councillor Hodson suggested that Graham Scanlon could be asked for information on this as part of his next update to the Board.

6. RESOLVED that:-
- i) consideration be given to the progress and performance update with regard to the East Area Committee Area Plan 2023-2026
 - ii) consideration be given to the progress update with regard to Sunderland City Council Service Plans – Area Priorities, which were provided for information purposes only.

East Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided financial statements in respect of the Area Committee's delegated budgets and presented proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Fiona Kelly, Partnership and Community Resilience Manager, presented the report highlighting the Committee's financial statement, the Neighbourhood Fund had a starting balance of £408,817 for the 2023/24 year and there were five applications for funding totalling £186,493 from the previously aligned funds totalling £187,500 towards developing youth offer across the 5 wards. If these applications were approved then there would be a remaining balance of £222,324 after the remaining £1,007 from the aligned funding was returned to the main budget. There were a further three applications for Youth Activities which were recommended for rejection. All of these applications were set out in annex 1 of the report.

Councillor Reed queried how the scores were calculated for the applications and whether this information was communicated to the applicants. Ms Kelly advised that all of the applications received for the Youth Activities were good applications and that there was feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants.

The Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme 2020/23 funds of £500,000 had now been spend fully following the approval of £88,891 by delegated decision on 21st May and 28th June 2023 to fund 14 proposals for funding under the Community Assets Capital Improvements project. The approved proposals were set out in annex 2 to the report.

Each ward had been allocated a Community Chest budget of £10,000; the approvals were set out in annex 3 with the remaining balances shown in the table at paragraph 4.2.

Members gave consideration to the applications and it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-
 - i) the financial statements set out in sections 2.1, 3.1 and 4.2 of the report be noted;
 - ii) approval be given to NF funding of £37,500 to Doxford Activities for Young People, The Box Youth and Community Project;
 - iii) approval be given to NF funding of £37,500 to Youth Work in Every Place and Space, Back on the Map;
 - iv) approval be given to NF funding of £37,500 to Future in Mind, Blue Watch Youth Centre;
 - v) approval be given to NF funding of £36,993 to Millfield Youth Activities, Sunderland All Together Consortium;
 - vi) approval be given to NF funding of £37,500 to Next Steps St Michael's, St Michael's Community Centre
 - vii) the application for NF funding of £37,500 to Youth Provision Raich Carter, Everyone Active be rejected;
 - viii) the application for NF funding of £30,421 to Evolve Youth Inclusion, Evolve Youth Inclusion be rejected;
 - ix) the application for NF funding of £37,500 to The Bunker, The Bunker CIC be rejected;
 - x) the 14 approved Community Assets Capital Improvements Projects outlined in annex 2 be noted;
 - xi) the Community Chest approvals from the 2023/24 budget as detailed in annex 3 be noted.

Planning Applications – For Information Only

Current Planning Applications relating to the East Sunderland Area for the period 1st July to 23rd August 2023 were submitted for Members information only (copy circulated).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) M. HERRON,
Chairman.