

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, on WEDNESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER, 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors, Blackett, Burnicle, Crosby, Dunn, Edgeworth, Greener, Haswell, Mann, Mullen, Noble, O'Brien, Peacock, P. Smith and Tye.

Also Present:-

Kelly Brougham	VCS Network Representative, Active Families N.E.
Fiona Brown	Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Sunderland City Council
Victoria Gamblin	Head of Operations, Gentoo
Joanne Laverick	VCS Network Representative, Youth Almighty
Andrew Nelson	Station Manager, Tyne and Wear Fire & Rescue Service
David Noon	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	Area Arrangements Strategic Manager, Sunderland City Council
Marie Pollock	Inspector, Northumbria Police
Gilly Stanley	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council

Prior to the commencement of the formal business the Chairman informed the Committee of the West Area Winners and highly commended runners up in the 2021 Sunderland Shining Stars awards.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors McDonough and Nicholson.

Declarations of Interest

Item 4 West Sunderland Area Budget Report

The following Councillors declared interests as members of the organisations indicated, that were making applications for funding from the Neighbourhood Fund.

Cllr Noble – Pallion Action Group
Cllr Tye – Youth Almighty Project
Cllr Smith – Friends of Silksworth Park
Cllr Mullen – Barnes Residents Association

The Councillors left the meeting at the appropriate point on the agenda taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 16th June, 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

West Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020-2023

Councillor Haswell, Chair of the West Area Neighbourhoods and Community Board, presented the report (copy circulated) which:-

- i). Presented the West Sunderland Neighbourhood Delivery Plan 2020-2023; and
- ii). Provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

In response to enquiries from Councillor Edgeworth, Ms Stanley briefed the Committee on the roll out of play equipment across the West Sunderland area and ongoing measures to tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked Councillor Haswell for his report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the progress and performance update with regard to the West Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020/23 be noted,
- ii) approval be given to the proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 1 of the report.
- iii). the recommendation of the Board to approve the Keep Sunderland West Tidy be supported
- iv). the recommendation of the Board to approve the Stephenson Trail Project Proposal
- v). the recommendation of the Board to approve the Mental Health and Wellbeing Project proposal
- vi). the recommendation of the Board to approve the CLLD Match for the West REACT project

The Committee then received and noted a short video presentation detailing the work undertaken to deliver the various components of the West Area Delivery Plan.

Report of the West Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network

The Network submitted a progress report (copy circulated) which briefed members on issues pertinent to the Committee and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
(For copy report – see original minutes)

Consideration was given to the report presented by Kelly Brougham which highlighted the following VCS Network activity undertaken since its last report to the Committee:-

- i) The receipt of presentations on the Community Wealth, VCS Alliance, Energising Sunderland and the Digital Employment tool together with presentations from NE Youth, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) awareness and Home Group.
- ii) The successful collaborative work of West Area VCS groups to support the Targeted Covid Community Champions project.
- iii) The delivery from Groups from across the Area of activities for the Big Lunch and holiday activities for young people.
- iv) The continued use of the Community Chest and Walk and Talk budgets to support the VCS to deliver activities and support to residents across the West.
- v) The involvement of the VCS reps alongside the Alliance team in organising the 'Let's Talk VCS' Event to be held on the 7th October.

There being no questions or comments for Ms Brougham, the Chairman thanked her for her report, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of Gentoo

Victoria Gamblin, Head of Operations, 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)

The Chairman thanked Ms Gamblin for her report and invited questions from Members

Councillor Mann welcomed the work being undertaken to support the Afghan settlement scheme and asked if there were any problems dealing with the language barrier. Ms Gamblin replied that no refugees had actually arrived in Sunderland as yet, however Gentoo was currently identifying properties to support the rehousing scheme.

Councillor Mann referred to the delay in the completion date for the Prestbury Road site. She advised that she had received numerous complaints from residents regarding

noise and asked if someone from Gentoo could speak to her about it. Ms Gamblin confirmed that she would contact Councillor Mann outside the meeting.

Councillor Edgeworth asked if any further thought had been given to the land use of the site that would be left following the garage demolitions and also if there was an update on the Secret Garden project. Ms Gamblin replied that the future land use for the site had not been considered yet and that she would ask a colleague to contact him with an update on the Secret Garden.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Crosby regarding the works on Grindon Lane and the traffic issues it was causing, Ms Gamblin advised that the work concerned replacement rooves for the Gentoo properties. It was not anticipated that the work would continue for much longer and she would provide Councillor Crosby with a completion date following the meeting.

In response to further enquiries regarding the lifespan of the homes being built on the Prestbury Road site and whether leniency would be shown to tenants struggling with rent payments following the removal of the Universal Credit Uplift, Ms Gamblin replied that she did not know the expected life span of the properties and that Gentoo would be there to support residents facing difficulties following the removal of the Uplift. There was a whole host of things Gentoo could do to provide support and it recognised that there would need to be a period of readjustment.

Councillor Tye informed the meeting that he believed the life span of the modular properties on the site would be 25 to 30 years.

In response to enquiries from Councillor Haswell, Ms Gamblin advised that of the 18 properties identified to date for the Afghan resettlement programme a small number were on the outskirts of the city however the majority were close to the city centre and therefore with good public transport links. With regard to allocations in respect of properties on the Prestbury Road site, this would be in line with Gentoo's 1 to 4 Priority Banding System and being new build, would be banded as priority 3.

With regard to Councillor Mann's enquiry regarding properties in Pennywell that were not double glazed, Ms Gamblin asked her to forward the customer details and she would investigate. Councillor Tye advised that there was a general problem around the supply of glass centred on the shortage of the right type of sand needed in the glass making process.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked Ms Gamblin for their attendance and it was :-

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Station Manager, Andy Nelson presented a report of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on the Service's performance indicators for the period 1st April, 2021 to 30th

June, 2021 with particular reference to the L133 Incidents (deliberate fires) broken down by property type.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Nelson who was attending his first meeting of the Committee and invited questions from Members on the report.

Councillor Noble welcomed the resumption of the Prince's Trust at Farrington. She also advised Mr Nelson that she, Councillor Mann and Councillor Peacock had been dealing with a number of issues in King Georges Park, and other areas of Sandhill and Barnes regarding the theft and burning of wheelie bins. Councillor Haswell also advised of specific incidents in Millfield where wheelie bins were being set on fire in back lanes between 4.00 and 4.30am.

Councillor Greener suggested that the message to the public to bring in their bins was reinforced.

Councillor Edgeworth referred to the grass fires in Grindon and Thorney Close and asked if there was an update for July. Mr Nelson advised that he did not have the figures to hand but would email Councillor Edgeworth following the meeting.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor O'Brien, Mr Nelson advised that the Fire Service could not presume that everyone had access to social media and therefore it would use alternative means of communicating its messages for specific groups such as the elderly.

There being no further comments or questions for Station Manager Nelson, the Chairman thanked him for his report and it was:-

5. RESOLVED the report be received and noted

Report of Northumbria Police

Inspector Marie Pollock presented the report of the Northumbria Police Service (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on and key performance information in relation to the Sunderland West area for the period June to August 2021

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Inspector Pollock for her report and invited questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Greener stated that she believed the root of the problem in Sunderland was that crime was being driven by drugs. Inspector Pollock replied that where Officers saw or could identify any drug related activity they would act. However, the Force could not simply approach a Judge and ask for a warrant without evidence. The Force's agenda was determined by the PPC and the public's priorities. If there was anything Inspector Pollock could do then she would. Resources were deployed in response to threat, harm and risk. In tackling the issue of drugs, targeting suppliers was the key.

Councillor Mann referred to the protection of vulnerable people and noted that Domestic Violence cases had recently started to decrease, and alcohol related crime was rising. She asked if this was as a result of lockdown being lifted? In response Inspector Pollock outlined the partnership work being undertaken to break the cycle of domestic violence and the engagement and support provided to victims to keep them on board. With regards to enforcement there were a variety of civil orders that could be sought to keep couples apart together with a number of programmes to support victims and work with perpetrators. With regards to alcohol related issues, it was a little early to ascertain the reason. It was possibly coupled to a desperation from people to get out and enjoy themselves after virtually a year in lock down and the sustained good weather.

Councillor P. Smith advised that problems were still being caused by off road motor bikes particularly in the vicinity of Blind Lane in Silksworth. Inspector Pollock replied that she would review the reports to assess the current picture. The issue in the West area was exacerbated by the large number of open spaces.

Councillor Mullen referred to the issue of indiscriminate parking, and asked what would you like the Council to do to assist you? Inspector Pollock replied that if there was a clear offence, that enforcement action was taken. It would only become a Police matter if a vehicle was obstructing the highway. Councillor Mullen also noted that the Police were undertaking a review of all fixed speed cameras and asked for details of the likely impact of this for the West.

Councillor Peacock thanked Inspector Pollock for the Tweets regarding the number of vehicles seized and crushed, as it was something that went down well with residents. He referred to the reporting of crime via 101 or the website and advised that residents constantly said it was something that took too long to do. He asked if the Police could look to make reporting more streamlined allowing people to 'ping' you? He believed It might help Inspector Pollock create a clearer picture of crime rates to support bids for a greater share of resources.

Inspector Pollock replied that the Police Transformation Review Team looked at the Force's operating model and how it could be improved, and that she would feed Councillor Peacock's suggestion across to them. With regard to the text and call back service, she would check the wording to make sure that users understood that they would only receive a call back if Officers required further information. With regard to the 101 service, the Committee was informed that there were days when demand surged. The Force had installed a new digital computer system which had brought with it its own training needs. The Police were trying to get more staff in to handle calls however there were lots of logistical issues attached to Policing which were difficult for the general public to understand. 999 calls would always take priority. She informed the Committee that currently across the Force, all calls were answered on average within 3 minutes and 999 calls within 9 seconds and she hoped that this would provide a degree of reassurance for Members.

Councillor O'Brien referred to Inspector Pollock's claim regarding the Force's call response times. He asked if 3 minutes was the average as he had recently waited over half an hour after calling 101 having found someone lying in the street. He asked Inspector Pollock if she could please explain why? He also referred to the Anti-Social

Behaviour in Thorney Close and stated that he had been told by a youth worker that linkages with the police were pretty poor and that the Police needed to improve. He felt it was counter productive that you could not call to report crime anonymously and expressed the view that the public had lost confidence in the Police.

Inspector Pollock confirmed that the figures regarding call response times were correct. Given the situation described by Councillor O'Brien she advised that calls for help should be made via 999 rather than 101. With regard to being unable to report crime anonymously, Inspector Pollock informed the meeting that there needed to be a victim for it to be a crime. Whilst information received anonymously was useful in terms of intelligence, it was not something that could be put before a court.

Councillor Noble stated that ASB was a massive concern for residents but the message to the public had to be – 'report, report, report via any service you can including via your local Councillor'.

Councillor Crosby stated that there had been a number of Police Station closures including Farringdon and asked what provision was available outside the hours of 9 to 5? Inspector Pollock replied that the hub was now at Southwick Police Station. The Police had to operate differently following political decisions taken in 2010 which was something she was not able to comment on.

Councillor Burnicle advised that the St Chad's forum had noted an increase in the number of van break-ins in the Ward and asked what could the Police do to tackle this? Inspector Pollock reiterated that people needed to report crime such as this via 101. Calls would be triaged on the basis of threat, harm and risk. The Police would investigate if there appeared to be patterns, however they had a large number of crime types to manage. Councillor Burnicle replied that he would try to encourage people to report such issues.

Councillor Haswell asked how many active Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers were currently allocated to the West Area and what should the numbers actually be? Inspector Pollock replied that she was not able to provide an answer at this time as the situation was currently subject to a review.

There being no further questions or comments for Inspector Pollock, the Chairman thanked her for her report and it was:-

6. RESOLVED the report be received and noted.

West Area Budget Report

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Gilly Stanley Area Community Development Lead, presented the report highlighting the Committee's financial statement, details of projects approved under delegated powers for support from the 2021/22 Community Chest budgets, together with details of

proposals for the allocation of funds from the Neighbourhood Fund and the Neighbourhood Investment Capital Fund.

Ms Stanley drew Members, attention to the 'If you Care Share' funding request detailed in the report and advised that this had now been reduced from £56,592 to £44,496.

Councillor Mann referred to the Keep Sunderland West Tidy project and queried in particular the proposed allocation of £1,644 to the South Hylton Tansey Centre which she felt was significantly greater than the allocations to other 8 organisations involved in the project.

Ms Stanley advised that she could ask the Lead Agent for further information regarding the expected outputs from the Tansey Centre. This would allow the Committee to agree the project in principle subject to the receipt of the further information to the satisfaction of Members.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee's funding statement as detailed in tables one, two and three of the report be received and noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £42,500 to Sunderland North Community Business Centre (SNCBC) - West REACT Employability Project - Stage 2 as detailed in paragraph 2.3 and Annex 1 of the report;
- (iii) approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £44,496 to If You Care Share -Young Peoples Emotional & Mental Health Support Sessions as detailed in paragraph 2.3 and Annex 1 of the report;
- (iv) approval be given the granting of NF funding of £10,117 as follows in respect of the Keep Sunderland West Tidy Project, and as detailed in Annex 1 of the report, subject to the satisfactory receipt of further information in respect of the South Hylton Tansey Centre.

Community Opportunities- Clean and Green	£1,365
Friends of Silksworth Park	£1,126
Pallion Action Group	£878
Pennywell Community Centre	£1,100
Sunderland Training and Education Farm	£839
South Hylton Tansy Centre	£1,644
Barnes Residents Association	£1,495
Youth Almighty Project	£470
111 (Sunderland) Squadron	£1200

- (v) approval be given to the granting of £50,000 funding from the Neighbourhood Capital Investment Programme budget in respect of the Stephenson Trail Multi Area Project as detailed in paragraph 3.4 and annex 2 of the report; and

- (vi) the approval of the 11 Community Chest applications from the 2021/22 budget as detailed in Annex 2 of the report be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) P. GIBSON,
Chairman.