

**At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held at the MILLENNIUM CENTRE, CONCORD on THURSDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Scaplehorn in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, Kelly, Lauchlan, G. Miller, Padgett, Snowdon, Thompson, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, Walker and Williams.

John Rostron	-	City Services
Brian Hodgkinson	-	City Services
Victoria French	-	City Services
Mike Poulter	-	City Services
Tim Ducker	-	City Services
Graham Burt	-	City Services
Karon Purvis	-	Chief Executives
Karen Alexander	-	Chief Executives
Allison Patterson	-	Chief Executives
Sandra Mitchell	-	Children's Services
Lorraine Hughes	-	Children's Services/Sunderland PCT
Neil Revely	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Marion Marshall	-	Commercial and Corporate Services
Paul Wood	-	Commercial and Corporate Services
Colin McCartney	-	Gentoo
Sgt Ron Hyde	-	Police
James Third	-	Nexus

Members of the Washington Community.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors F. Miller, I. Richardson and Wake, Sarann Valentine and Inspector Paul Barrett.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 3a – 3.4 – Community Action in Washington, Education and Heritage Update

Councillor G. Miller declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as Managing Director and CEO of TWEBLO.

### Item 3b – Financial Statements and Proposals – Community Chest

Councillor Fletcher declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as Vice-Chair of Governors at Usworth Colliery Primary School.

Councillor Thompson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as Chair of Washington Scout Group.

Councillor Scaplehorn declared a personal interest in the item as a Member of Springwell Village Community Association.

Councillor Walker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as a Gentoo employee.

### **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2011**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **Community Action in Washington: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions (2010/11 Work Plan)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of the recent restructure within Children's Services in response to changes happening both locally and nationally. The restructure provided sharper focus on improving key outcomes, delivered against five key service areas.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Sandra Mitchell, Head of Early Intervention and Locality Service presented the report and briefed Members on the aims of the Early Intervention Service.

Ms. Mitchell informed the Committee that the new Team expected to move into Washington Library in January 2012 and that it was disappointing the key post of Operational Manager was still vacant at present but it was hoped they would also be appointed in January. Most staff were already in place and details would be circulated to Members.

In response to Councillor Miller's enquiry as to how big the Team would be, Ms. Mitchell advised that it included staff from Risk and Resilience, Family Workers, Connexions, Educational Psychology Service, Youth Team Leader, a small number of supporting staff and city-wide staff not just unique to Washington.

Councillor Miller queried how the Team would fit into the Library. Ms. Mitchell advised that there were vacant rooms which the Team were taking over and the expectation was that staff would not be sitting in the office all day as they would be out working with families and such like.

Councillor Kelly requested clarification if Connexions would still be operating after March.

Ms. Mitchell advised that changes were planned in September next year, careers advice would become the responsibility of the schools whilst NEET and learning disability would remain with the Authority but Service Level Agreements were being looked at.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that Early Intervention was key and enquired as to what role Elected Members were to have in this.

Ms. Mitchell advised that if Members were aware of any young people with issues, anyone could make a common assessment referral ("CAF") and could speak to a member of the Team.

2. RESOLVED that when appointed, the Washington Locality Operational Manager be invited to attend Washington Area Committee to represent Early Intervention and Locality Services (Children's Services).

## **Community Action in Washington – Progress Review**

### **Progress Report on 2011/12 Work Plan**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an update of progress against agreed actions in the current year's (2011/12) Work Plan (Annex 1).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Karon Purvis, Area Officer presented the report and updated the Committee on the work of the Employment Task and Finish Group and the recommendation to allocate £10,000 SIB to deliver their proposals.

### **Youth Opportunities (NEET Support and Co-ordination)**

The Chairman introduced Nikki Vokes of Sunderland North Community Business Centre (S.N.C.B.C.) who commented that she was really pleased to be given the opportunity to run the project and wished to thank everyone for making them welcome.

Ms. Vokes advised that the first apprentice had started at Images and Ian Gardner advised that a further three apprentices had been recruited into the Council's Street Scene, even though the project had not yet officially started.

The Chairman commented that it was a great beginning for the project.

In response to Councillor Kelly's request for an update on the apprentice at Images, Ian Gardner advised that the apprentice had already been with the Company as a work experience placement and with their help had managed to secure an apprenticeship.

Ms. Vokes informed that the Company was also looking to take on another person.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that the main concern raised had been that young people could not afford the transport to travel to employment opportunities.

Karen Alexander, Employment and Training Manager advised that this year, they had received funding for travel passes but as the funding was to be much reduced, she could not say for certain if the funds would be there in the future for this.

James Third, Nexus advised that he would look into the matter further.

Councillor H. Trueman enquired if there was any way the Committee could raise the funding to help this along.

Mr. Gardner advised that the Riverside Training Programme would cover the travelling expenses for all the apprentices involved.

### **Education and Heritage Project Update**

The Chairman, Councillor Kelly and Councillor Miller all wished to congratulate the Education and Heritage Officer (EHO) and Trainee Apprentice for the work they had done and the money they had saved the Community Associations since they were appointed.

Councillor Miller commented that four months into their appointment, every target had been achieved and they were continuing to expand the project, which was down to their hard work.

### **Operation Choice**

Sgt Ron Hyde, Northumbria Police, presented an update on Operation Choice and their new approach to find a long term response to anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Thompson wished to compliment the Police as this had been an excellent piece of work which was found to be a sustainable operation through working with agencies and provided excellent figures and feedback.

Councillor Williams informed of a recent residents' meeting at St. Robert's School where hotspots of ASB had been identified and interventions had been made, but these had not been recorded, therefore no evidence base was being formed.

Sgt Hyde advised that there were ebbs and flows of instances through areas and he would take the information back to Inspector Barrett for him to feed back on.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that the figures showed an improvement, but the message was not getting across to the older generations or changing their perceptions. Councillor H. Trueman also queried if the hotspots of ASB were moving to different areas, was it a case of the same youths just being moved on and queried if this was not defeating the purpose.

Sgt Hyde commented that an element of tolerance was needed by older generations as not all groups of youths were causing ASB, and in relation to the hotspots, Officers do try to tackle the issues, rather than just moving the youths on to another area, through measures such as writing letters to parents and so on.

Councillor H. Trueman suggested that a statement be circulated to the PACT meetings informing of the good work being carried out.

Sgt Hyde advised that they did intend to spread information of the good news and practices being carried out.

Councillor Kelly commented that there had been no issues of ASB raised at his PACT meetings and wished to congratulate the Police on their work.

Councillor Miller agreed that there were very few issues of ASB raised at his PACT meetings and residents attending appeared to be much happier, also this he believed was down to Operation Horizon and the Youth Villages for example. Councillor Miller also believed that perceptions were changing and there was a need to keep doing this as it was working.

Sgt Hyde informed the Committee of a planned site visit at Oxclose to look at a long term solution to issues going on in the area.

The Chairman commented that Members were very happy with the work being carried out and the excellent partnership working and requested this be relayed to Inspector Barrett.

### **Attractive Neighbourhood**

The Chairman introduced Brian Hodgkinson, Washington Area Response Manager who advised that from the 253 Member requests to date, only two were outstanding with the main service requests involving pruning, litter, leaves, graffiti, dumping of waste and dog fouling.

Further meetings had taken place over Persimmons' maintenance programmes and how to drive progress forward.

ASB was mainly occurring in the Lower Oxclose area and they were working in partnership with the Police and Gentoo. The Police would be attending a walkabout on the 6<sup>th</sup> December at Oxclose to combat issues around the area.

They were working with the Probation Service and the Fire Brigade to open up the area and prevent ASB, including fires which had been problematic in recent times.

Neglected roundabouts at Parsons Road had been tended to and they would be moving onto other areas of priority, including the roundabout at Parkway leading to the Galleries.

In relation to customer satisfaction, Mr. Hodgkinson advised that through working with the Complaints Team and the help of Gentoo also they had been successful in closing a category three complaint and turned it into several thank you letters.

Mr. Hodgkinson also advised that the next steps were for the clearing of several underpasses to help to improve the perception of safety.

Councillor Fletcher wished to congratulate Mr. Hodgkinson for the quick response received by Members and for how nice the Washington Area was looking.

Councillor Williams also wished to congratulate Mr. Hodgkinson on the work being done to the roundabouts in Washington and requested he circulate details/dates of the walkabouts.

In response to Councillor Kelly's request to have certain trees replaced in the Concord area, Mr. Hodgkinson advised that he would look into the matter.

Mr. Hodgkinson also advised that he would speak to Colin Curtis, Senior Waste Manager in relation to the schedule for the emptying of Bins/Brown Bins and report back to the Committee.

### **Equality, Community Inclusion and Engagement**

John Rostron, Area Community Manager informed the Committee of the progress being made by the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and that one of their priorities was to increase networking and group work to support each other rather than competing against each other.

Mr. Rostron advised of the collaborative working being carried out and commented that he believed this was really good for Washington and showed the strength of the Voluntary Sector to adapt under the current financial situation.

Mr. Rostron also informed of a programme that would target employers in enabling them to keep carers in work and they would be requesting to attend the next Business Breakfast.

#### **3. RESOLVED that Members:-**

- (i) noted the report, progress updates and actions as detailed in this report and in the Work Plan attached as Annex 1;
- (ii) noted the recommendation as detailed in paragraph 3.1.7 of the report and in Community Action in Washington – Progress Review 3c Financial Statement and Proposals to allocate £10,000 SIB to deliver recommendations proposed by the Employment Task and Finish Group;
- (iii) agreed to receive further updates from Youth Opportunities; and
- (iv) agreed to receive a detailed progress report for the Washington Managed Work Space Project to be presented to the next Area Committee meeting.

## **Community Chest and Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) – Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to request the Committee's consideration of proposals for the allocation of the Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest to support initiatives that would benefit the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

### **4. RESOLVED that the Committee:-**

- (i) noted the financial statement set out in Section 2.1 of the report;
- (ii) agreed the recommendations set out in Annex 1 with reference to the SIB applications;
- (iii) agreed to allocate a budget of £10,000 to deliver the proposals identified by the Employment Task and Finish Group (subject to receipt of detailed SIB application, assessment and consultation);
- (iv) agreed to allocate a budget of £40,000 to deliver the Heritage and Community Events as detailed under paragraph 2.2.4 (subject to receipt of detailed SIB application, assessment and consultation); and
- (v) approved the 13 proposals for support from 2011/12 Community Chest as detailed in Annex 2.

## **Interim Performance Report**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of how the money it had allocated through SIB and SIP had been used during April 2011 – September 2011, how successful it had been in achieving its original objectives, and how the projects would continue to perform.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Purvis presented the report and introduced Tim Ducker, Cycle Network and Public Rights of Way Officer who updated the Committee on the progress of the River Wear Trail project.

Mr. Ducker advised that the Cox Green Bridge had been ramped, with work moving quickly and apologised for any delays, which had been down to land ownership issues.

In response to the Chairman's query, Mr. Ducker advised that they were looking for a total project completion date before Christmas.

Councillor Padgett raised concerns over missing parts of fencing, Mr. Ducker advised that he would speak to Councillor Padgett to find out exact locations and check if additional work was required.

Councillor Kelly commented that the Trail was 100% better than it was and he was perfectly happy with the project.

Councillor Snowdon commented that upon viewing the photographs of the project, the Trail looked absolutely brilliant and felt it needed to be promoted and included in community fitness programmes for walks and such like.

5. RESOLVED that the performance information be noted.

## **Influencing Practice, Policy and Strategy**

### **Sunderland in 2012**

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to engage with the Area Committee in relation to the proposed Sunderland in 2012 Programme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Victoria French, Assistant Head of Community Services presented the report and short powerpoint presentation advising that they were on a journey in relation to what the programme would look like and with the Olympic torch passing through Sunderland, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to encourage communities to take part in sport, heritage and volunteering.

Ms. French advised that it was not just aimed at children and young people but to engage with the whole community.

The Chairman enquired if the £10,000 funding request would be allocated entirely for work to be done in the Washington area.

Ms. French confirmed that the money would be used to add value and determine what happened in the Washington area.

Councillor Miller commented that he believed this is what the Council should be doing every day as part of the Economic Masterplan and should not just be used because of the Olympics as he was not certain the London 2012 Olympics would be of a major benefit to Sunderland.

Ms. French agreed that this type of project was part of what they do in their day job and that this was an opportunity to maximise an event as they wanted to engage residents and almost say that we can do this better than London, and make sure there is a lasting legacy.

Councillor Kelly commented that Ms. French and her Team had worked extremely hard on this and Sunderland's reputation for events was growing enormously nationally and felt this was an excellent opportunity for the City.

The Chairman commented that originally he was sceptical but upon seeing a preview of the presentation he felt this would be fabulous.



Councillor Snowden wished the programme every success and informed of a memorial event hoped to be staged at the Skate Park and suggested this be tied in with the programme.

The Chairman proposed this be discussed further at the workshop which was due to be arranged.

Ms. French commented that they did want to introduce events that would last and not disappear in 2013.

In relation to the workshop, Ms. Purvis advised that as a number of Members would be struggling to attend, an alternative date would be sought. The Chairman also commented that Members could submit any ideas in writing/email.

6. RESOLVED that the Committee noted the content of the report and agreed to:-

- (i) inform and contribute to the development of the Sunderland in 2012 Programme;
- (ii) approved the financial contribution from Washington Area Committee (SIB budget of £10,000) subject to a full application, consultation and approval, to support the delivery of the Sunderland in 2012 Programme; and
- (iii) Members to be invited to inform the Sunderland in 2012 Programme through Task and Finish workshops as detailed in Section 3.15 of the report.

### **City Village Concept**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to offer Members the opportunity to be consulted on plans and strategies relevant to the area. The Sunderland Economic Masterplan identified the promotion of City Villages as a fundamental part of Sunderland's economic development. It sets out the need for a comprehensive approach to regenerating communities across Sunderland to help the people in those communities to engage in the wider economy of the City, to make their neighbourhoods attractive places where people want to live and to help promote Sunderland as 'a national hub of the low carbon economy'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Allison Patterson, Scrutiny and Area Arrangements Manager presented the report and advised that they would be looking to come back to the Area Committee with five pilots to help shape and identify where they wanted to be. Learning from those would then help roll out the concept across the City into all areas.

Councillor Kelly commented that he had concerns over the process and queried what size the City Villages were going to be, if the different villages would have to compete for resources resulting in some losing out and felt that the different areas of Washington worked well together at present and did not want to disrupt that.

Councillor Snowden acknowledged that a lot of work had been done on this, but did not feel this would work as the Wards which she represented were split up under these proposals.

Ms. Patterson understood Members concerns and advised that what was in the report was just the starting point and would not necessarily define the neighbourhoods. Ms. Patterson also commented that they wanted to take all Members views on board.

Councillor Williams commented that Washington was already made up of villages, of which most people have an affinity to, and they may not wish to be tied in with others just to make the numbers up.

Councillor G. Miller advised that he looked forward to seeing how this would go but had concerns, in particular as to the distribution of funding/resources for service delivery and that the City Village Concept could make matters worse as we run the risk of having areas in competition with each other.

Councillor G. Miller also requested that plain English be used in getting the message across for future reports and consultations.

Councillor Kelly also raised concerns over the locality of schools for residents and the need to retain the five Wards.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that it would be interesting to see the comments from the residents of Washington on the Concept.

7. RESOLVED that Members:-

- (i) noted the information in the report; and
- (ii) agreed to future engagement and consultation with regard to the development of the City Village pilot areas and the benefits it could bring to Area Arrangements.

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

(Signed) B. SCAPLEHORN  
Chairman.