

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY, 10th DECEMBER, 2019 at 5.30p.m.

Present:-

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors M. Dixon, Fagan, Hodson, Hunt, Marshall, McClennan, Oliver and P. Wood.

Also Present:-

Alan Duffy	-	Head of Operations, Gentoo
Matthew Jackson	-	Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Shaun Makin	-	Station Manager, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Julie Maven	-	East Area VCS Network Representative
Nicol McConnell	-	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council
Allison Patterson	-	Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
Jon Ritchie	-	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council
Nicky Rowland	-	Environmental Services Manager, Sunderland City Council
Jamie Southwell	-	Neighbourhood Inspector, Northumbria Police

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received on behalf of Councillors Bewick, Essl, Potts, Scanlan and A. Wood together with Joanne Cooper, Trish Cornish, Ram and Sarah Reed.

Declarations of Interest

Item 7 – Area Budgets: Neighbourhood Fund and Community Chest

Councillor Hunt declared that she worked for Ryhope CA and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the funding applications.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 23rd September, 2019

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd September, 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

VCS Area Network Progress Report

Julie Maven provided the Committee with an update on the work of the VCS Area Network since the last meeting of the Committee. There had been three meetings of the network which had all been well attended. There had been a number of presentations received at these meetings including presentations from ICOS, Citizens Advice, NBC Arts and Wellbeing, Lets Talk Sunderland, the Bangladeshi Centre and Change for Life. There had also been discussions take place with regard to Oral Health, especially among young people. Two new network representatives had been appointed which were Ram from Young Asian Voices and Trish Cornish from Sunderland MIND. The Lets Talk Sunderland event had been well received and Ms Maven thanked Ms McConnell for the information that had been provided at the event.

Councillor Hunt commented that it was good to see that oral health was being focused on as this was a huge issue. Councillor McClennan added that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was doing a review of oral health which included an investigation into fluoridisation of water supplies. She asked that dental hygiene be included in all health discussions.

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

Northumbria Police Update

Inspector Jamie Southwell provided the Committee with an update on the work of the Police within the area. He advised Members of the crime statistics for the area, broken down into the A1 (City Centre, Millfield and Ashbrooke) and A2 (East) areas.

Total crime in the A1 area had reduced by 6 percent on last year which was 301 fewer crimes. Theft from motor vehicles had reduced by 8 percent which was 16 fewer offences. Burglary of dwellings had increased by 6 percent which was 9 additional crimes; burglaries other than dwellings had reduced by 39 percent which was 71 fewer crimes. Antisocial behaviour had reduced by 3 percent which was 357 fewer reports.

Within the A2 area total crime had reduced by 4 percent which was 70 fewer crimes. There had been an increase of 26 offences of thefts from motor vehicles due to there being a spate of offences in the Long Streets area

however arrests had been made and this spate of offences had now stopped. Burglary of dwellings had increased by 18 percent which was 18 more crimes while burglary other than dwellings had reduced by 55 percent which was 31 fewer offences. Antisocial behaviour had reduced by 3 percent which was 98 fewer reports.

There had been a successful operation targeting burglaries of student dwellings and this had been successful with no burglaries of student properties taking place in the first two weeks of the new university year.

The Christmas Lights switch on event had passed without any significant incidents.

There had been an issue around adult antisocial behaviour in the city centre; action had been taken which had seen the ringleaders arrested and since then antisocial behaviour had reduced again. Operation Kraken was continuing until Christmas and there were no aggressive beggars in the city centre as a result of the operation.

There was a knife crime operation underway; there was not a serious issue with knife crime in Sunderland however work was being done with schools to ensure that young people were not drawn into knife crime.

The Leisure Watch scheme had now started; this built on the existing Shop Watch and Pub Watch schemes and the first meeting had been well attended.

The Chairman commented that for policing purposes Doxford Ward was considered to be in the West area and asked whether the figures for the ward could be provided to the East Area Committee. Inspector Southwell agreed to speak to Inspector Pollock, his counterpart in the West Area to identify the best way to get the information. Ms Patterson added that there was a West Area Members meeting with the police; she would look into sharing the information from these meetings with the East Area Members.

Councillor Marshall commented that she was the East Area LMAPS representative and there had not been any information received about the West LMAPS which included information on Doxford Ward. She was concerned by the lack of information and felt that the LMAPS were an important channel for Members to take residents concerns to. Inspector Southwell agreed that communication was important and agreed to look into it.

Councillor Wood commented that it was good to see the reductions in crime. He stated that there would always been antisocial behaviour in the city centre and advised that at the PACT meetings there had been discussions around placing cameras on the problem streets. He advised that residents had been complaining about speeding traffic and asked whether there could be an increase in police action to target speeding. Inspector Southwell advised that speeding traffic was a roads policing issue rather than a Neighbourhood policing issue; he had spoken about the matter with the relevant officers who

had advised of how it was determined whether speed camera vans could be used at a location; he had been advised that it was not possible to use them in 20mph zones currently. CCTV camera locations were discussed at the LMAPS meetings; it was important to consider that there were a limited number of cameras so the requests needed to be prioritised.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Southwell for his report and it was:-

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

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Update

Station Manager Shaun Makin presented the Committee with an update on the number of fires in the area and the other work that was being done in the area by the fire service. He advised of the figures for quarter 2 which was to the end of October. For deliberate fires there had been 99 in Hendon last year compared with 84 this year which showed that the multi agency work that had been undertaken was having an impact. Millfield had gone from 71 to 72. Doxford had seen a reduction from 21 to 16. In Ryhope there had been 41 last year compared with 54 this year. Overall there had been a reduction from 239 to 226 since last year.

He thanked partners for their hard work over the bonfire night period; there had been police escorts provided and there had been no attacks on firefighters in the East Area. During that period there had been 20 deliberate refuse fires compared with 13 during the same period last year.

Councillor Hunt queried the cause of the increase in Ryhope and Mr Makin advised that he would look into this and provide information via Ms McConnell including a breakdown of the fires in the ward.

Councillor Oliver commented that Hendon had the largest number of deliberate fires in the region and asked what caused this. Mr Makin advised that there had been an issue around wheelie bin fires however this had reduced following proactive work in the area. Flytipping in the area had reduced however since the daily targeted action had ended the problem had started again. During the targeted action the problem had been pushed into surrounding areas.

4. RESOLVED that the update from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be noted.

Gentoo Update

Alan Duffy, Head of Operations, Gentoo, presented the Committee with an update on the work done by Gentoo. There were changes being made to the neighbourhood services which would see the offices now open 9am to 4pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 12 noon on Fridays. The allocations system

would be changing with bidding for properties opening on Wednesday instead of the current Friday. The repair service would be open until 2pm on Fridays. These changes were to reflect changes in the way people contacted Gentoo.

Phase 6 of Doxford Park had been approved and would provide affordable homes; there would be a section 106 agreement to provide funding for schools and the underpass was now closed. The site compound was being installed and groundworks on the site had commenced.

Councillor Hodson queried the cleansing schedules for Gentoo land; there was an issue in the flower courts area of Millfield which was not cleaned regularly and there was a build up of litter in the area. There had been litter there since prior to when the grass had last been cut. Mr Duffy advised that the cleansing schedule was normally when the grass was cut; there was a sweeper and he agreed to direct this to the area in question.

5. RESOLVED that the update from Gentoo be noted.

Resident Engagement and Neighbourhood Investment Plans

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience Submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented Members with an update on resident engagement programme 'Lets Talk Sunderland' and how the engagement was informing the development of the Neighbourhood Investment Plans. The priorities within the Neighbourhood Investment Plan would be presented to Area Committee for approval in March 2020.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms McConnell introduced the report and asked Members whether there were any opportunities that had not been included and also whether there were any groups that should be contacted or events attended.

Councillor Hodson queried where the funds for the Neighbourhood Investment Plan had come from and how much there was. Ms McConnell advised that there was £500,000 aligned to each area; in addition to the Council there would be partners involved in delivering the plan and they would be putting in funds as well. The Area Committee would have control over the allocation of the funding. Mr Ritchie added that the fund was intended to cover three years.

Councillor Hodson then queried whether the funds could be used to top up existing budgets to enhance services such as cleansing. Mr Ritchie advised that the fund was intended to be used to support long term investment rather than being used to fund services.

Ms Patterson advised that there was information being gathered currently and information would be brought to the next area committee meeting and the plan would be taken to Cabinet in March. Ms McConnell added that after the

consultation had ended there would be information provided on what the fund would be able to be spent on.

Councillor M. Dixon commented that he was concerned that the consultation responses would be around refuse collection, highways maintenance and flytipping as the issues such as homelessness would not be in people's minds. Ms McConnell advised that the early indications were that streetscene was a major focus of the responses. There had been a steering group meeting where representatives of the responsible authorities had been in attendance; the plan would not just be based on what residents suggested but also on the needs of the responsible authorities.

Councillor McClennan commented that this was a large sum of money which could be used to do a lot of good work; Council budgets were being stretched and she asked for assurances that the funds would be used for what Councillors wanted rather than for what departments wanted. Ms McConnell advised that the funds would be controlled by the Area Committee and that Councillors would be able to bring forward projects through discussion at the boards.

Councillor Hodson queried whether the resident engagement strategy had come from Cabinet and also asked whether the Assistant Director of Community Resilience could come to a future meeting of the Area Committee to provide information on the strategic aims of the project. Ms McConnell confirmed that this was a citywide strategy which had been through Cabinet; 'Lets Talk' would be the brand used for all consultation. It would be possible to invite the Assistant Director if necessary however Ms McConnell together with Ms Patterson were in attendance on her behalf and Helen Peverley had presented the strategic information on the matter at the last meeting. Mr Ritchie advised that this was a devolved budget which could be used for capital development; the scheme could be rolled forward to future years if it worked well.

In response to Councillor M. Dixon, Mr Ritchie advised that the Area Committees were well established and had been able to grant revenue funding; this development was to allow Members to have a capital budget available to them.

Ms Patterson added that the Neighbourhood Investment Plans were a reiteration of the local area plans which were set a number of years ago in consultation with residents and partners. There was a need to look at how to improve engagements with communities and there was also an additional £100,000 available to the area this year.

Councillor Hunt welcomed the suggestion that there would be increased consultation with residents. She expressed concerns that funding bids would likely be revenue driven rather than being for capital investment; she felt that there was a need to be mindful of the questions that were asked of applicants.

6. RESOLVED that the report be noted and further discussions on how Members would wish to support and monitor delivery of their Neighbourhood Investment Plan take place at a future People/Place Board.

Environmental Enforcement Update

Nicky Rowland, Area Response Manager, presented the Committee with an update on the work done around Environmental Enforcement. There had been a number of vacancies within the team however these had now been filled and the new recruits would be starting in January. The enforcement officers would now not be geographically based but would be responding to issues.

Previously there had been an emphasis on education rather than enforcement however now there would be a zero tolerance approach taken and fixed penalty notices would be issued in the first instance and if it was in the public interest then prosecutions would be brought forward.

The press and public had been supportive of the enforcement actions; recently there had been prosecutions for dropping cigarette ends and a vehicle had been seized after being used for flytipping; these had been reported in the Sunderland Echo and there had been a positive response from readers. There were further cases pending.

Where people were caught littering they were offered a fixed penalty in the first instance as this was a cheaper course of action for the council than prosecution and the income from the fixed penalty remained within the council.

There was a flytipping strategy in place which focused on flytipping of domestic waste within rear lanes; residents wanted to see rear lanes cleared of waste. Large flytips took months of investigation and this took resources away from other investigations.

There was enforcement action taking place around bins; commercial premises had a duty to know the regulations and ensure that there were disposal contracts in place for their waste. There were no excuses for not complying with this duty and action would be taken against offending businesses. Where residents were encountering difficulties with disposal of domestic waste the council would offer support where possible. There was a legal requirement for everyone to ensure that their waste was disposed of correctly and this was part of the public space protection order. There had been problems within Hendon ward however there had been targeted work undertaken and there had been positive results.

The figures had shown that the biggest issue for flytipping was black bags of domestic waste being left in back lanes.

The area committee would influence what enforcement action was carried out and if Members desired this could be made a standing item on the agenda.

Councillor Oliver welcomed the more robust approach to enforcement; people should know not to litter or flytip. He asked how people reacted to getting caught. Ms Rowland advised that people were not happy when they were caught; they did not want to be told off or humiliated so the process was kept discreet and she was proud of how the team conducted themselves; they treated people with respect and ensured that people knew about the appeal process. People were surprised to be fined for dropping cigarette ends; people commonly suggested that they thought that they were biodegradable; it seemed that there was an attitude that people thought they would not get caught.

Councillor Hodson queried why the figures for 2014/15 and 2015/16 were so much lower and also commented that in Millfield there was an issue with customers from takeaways littering; he queried what was done to hold shops to account. Ms Rowland advised that it was difficult to say why the figures had changed; the figures were the number of reported incidents and multiple reports of one incident would skew the figures; there had been an increase in reporting at the time of Responsive Local Services being introduced. Enforcement could be taken against shops and they could be required to clean land within 100m of their shop if it was proven that they were contributing to litter; there was a desire to work with business owners before enforcement action was taken and there was currently engagement taking place with businesses on Hylton Road. There was a need to ensure that long term sustainable solutions were put in place rather than just carrying out enforcement action.

Councillor Hodson stated that it was good to see the barrowmen and asked how many there were any when they would be expected to be in each ward. Ms Rowland advised that they came under cleansing rather than enforcement; she believed that there was a full complement of staff. There were schedules in place however it was not possible to keep to the schedules at all times. There was a push to move away from set schedules to ensuring that minimum standards were met at all locations.

Councillor Hodson then queried how many enforcement officers there were. Ms Rowland advised that there were six enforcement officers and four support officers; there was also an additional enforcement officer for the North Sunderland Area which was funded by the North Sunderland Area Committee. Ms Patterson added that the North Area Members had supplied cameras as part of a SIB project and as part of this project had also provided the funding for an enforcement officer who would be in post from January. Ms Rowland then advised that the officer had been required as it would not have been possible to support the management of the cameras without having additional staff resources.

Councillor Fagan queried whether it would be possible to receive information on a ward basis. Ms Rowland agreed to provide this.

7. RESOLVED that the update on environmental enforcement be noted.

Place Board Interim Update Report

The Chair of the East Sunderland Area Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Area Committee with an update on the Place Neighbourhood Plan.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms McConnell, presented the report and advised Members of the work that had been done by the board which included a presentation on the Heritage Action Zone; Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Scheme; and the Highways Maintenance Programme 2020/21.

8. RESOLVED that the updates on the Heritage Action Zone; Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Scheme; and the Highways Maintenance Programme 2020/21 be noted.

People Board Interim Update Report

The Chair of the East Sunderland Area People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Area Committee with an update on the People Neighbourhood Plan.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Chair of the People Board, Councillor Marshall, presented the report and advised Members of the work that had been done by the board which included Homeless Crisis Support; and the Health and Wellbeing project themes of More Males and Positive Parenting.

9. RESOLVED that the updates on the Homeless Crisis Support and the Health and Wellbeing Programme be noted

Area Budgets: Neighbourhood Fund and Community Chest

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with a financial statement as an update on the position on progress in relation to allocating Neighbourhood Fund and Community Chest.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms McConnell presented the report and advised Members that there were 12 applications for Neighbourhood Funding totalling £102,449 under the Health

and Wellbeing priority for consideration by Members at this meeting which were set out in paragraph 2.4 and in annex 1; the budget aligned to this was £50,000; within paragraph 2.4 there were three of the applications recommended for approval; totalling £14,570; six recommended to be deferred and three recommended for rejection.

There had been Community Chest awards made which were set out in annex 2 to the report and paragraph 3.1.

Councillor McClennan referred to the work the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was doing around Oral Health and asked that this be integrated into the Positive Parenting workstream. Ms McConnell advised that this could be added as a condition of the funding approvals.

10. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The recommendations set out at paragraph 2.4 and annex 1 be endorsed.
- b. The financial statements set out in tables 1 and 2 be noted.

Planning Applications – For Information Only

Current Planning Applications relating to the East Sunderland Area for the period 1st November to 30th November, 2019 were submitted for Members information only (copy circulated).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

11. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) E. GIBSON,
Chairman.