

**At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held remotely on MONDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020 at 5.30p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Bewick, M. Dixon, Fagan, Hodson, Hunt, Mordey, Oliver, Potts, Scanlan and P. Wood

**Also Present:-**

Sam Humble	-	Gentoo
Matthew Jackson	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Julie Maven	-	East Area VCS Network Representative
Nicol McConnell	-	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council
Allison Patterson	-	Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
K. Ramanathan	-	East Area VCS Network Representative
Graham Scanlon	-	Assistant Director of Housing Services, 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 Essl, Marshall and McClennan and from Joanne Cooper, Trish Cornish and Shaun Makin.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 4 – East Area Budget Report

Councillor Hunt declared that she was employed by Ryhope Community Association and that she was a Member of the Board of the Empire Theatre and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of these applications.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2020**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **Change in the order of business**

Due to technical difficulties affecting the VCS representative it was agreed that the Unauthorised Encampments Update would be considered first in order to allow the representative time to reconnect to the meeting.

### **Sunderland City Council: Unauthorised Encampments Update**

The Assistant Director of Housing Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on the Unauthorised Encampments Police and site activity in 2020 and the associated financial and service impact.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Scanlon presented the report and advised that since the production of the report there had been a further three unauthorised encampments in the Coalfield and Washington areas which had resulted in further cleansing costs; the cost now stood at around £3,500.

Councillor Hodson queried what had happened at the camp that was at the Vaux site. Mr Scanlon advised that the site had been deemed as being unsuitable so a notice to vacate the site had been issued in 24 hours and then subsequently there had been an application to the Courts for eviction. The occupants had eventually left of their own accord.

Councillor Mordey commented that he felt that the policy of tolerance worked well. There had been a camp at Grangetown and the process had worked well with Members being kept informed of the situation so that they could then keep residents informed. He thanked the Encampment Review Group for all of their hard work. Mr Scanlon advised that the dedicated email address had worked well at improving responses; concerns would go directly to the team so that responses could be provided.

Councillor Bewick queried whether the water bowsers and toilets had just been provided due to the Covid-19 pandemic or whether this was a permanent provision. He also queried whether the costs for damage were insurance costs or the costs for replacement. Mr Scanlon advised that the government guidance during the pandemic had highlighted a need for welfare services to be provided; welfare needs were always reviewed and an offer of provision was made however this would normally not be requested by the occupants. The costs were for replacement of the damaged items.

2. RESOLVED that the update be noted.

### **VCS Area Network Progress Report**

Ram provided the Committee with an update on the work of the VCS Area Network since the last meeting of the Committee. He advised that the network had held a virtual meeting in September where three presentations had been received relating to Tesco funding for local community groups; Mental Health first aid training; and the Young Asian Voices Sports Academy. There was also a discussion around covid-19 community hubs starting again to provide support for residents. There was a further meeting planned for October.

3. RESOLVED that the update from the VCS Network be noted.

### **Northumbria Police Update**

A report was submitted in respect of the West Area which covered Doxford Ward.

Neighbourhood Inspector Jamie Southwell provided the Committee with an update on the crime statistics for the area and of the work done by Northumbria Police. In the A1 area which covered the City Centre, Millfield and Ashbrooke there had been a 32 percent reduction in all crimes; vehicle crime had seen a reduction of 51 percent. Burglaries of dwellings had reduced by 31 percent while burglaries of properties other than dwellings had reduced by 29 percent. Youth antisocial behaviour had reduced while adult antisocial behaviour had increased.

In the A2 area which covered Hendon, Grangetown and Ryhope there had been an increase of 13 percent which was due to there being a sharp increase in criminal damage incidents and also in violence without injury which included public order offences and harassment. There had been an increase in burglaries of dwellings of 14 offences while burglaries of properties other than dwellings had reduced by 5 offences which was a 25 percent reduction. Both youth and adult antisocial behaviour had seen an increase.

There had been an increase in youth antisocial behaviour incidents including public order issues and minor criminal damage in the weeks leading up to the schools reopening which had mostly been caused by youths from outside of Sunderland. Officers had identified the culprits and they had been visited and antisocial behaviour orders had been issued; the incidents had reduced once the schools had reopened.

There had been a joint operation with Trading Standards focused on the night time economy and as part of this a lot of licensed premises had been visited; there had been direction orders issued to some premises and further visits were planned. A lot of premises were still quiet.

Operation Eagle, which targeted off road motorcycle use, was ongoing.

There was an operation taking place in Hendon to tackle burglaries and there had been two arrests of wanted people who had now been recalled to prison.

There was an operation taking place around safeguarding the new student intake and there were dedicated officers in place who had been paid for by external funding. The students were behaving responsibly and there had been no reports of large parties or pub crawls.

Councillor Hodson referred to issues in the Thornhill area of cars speeding around the streets late at night. He had encouraged residents to report this and some had managed to get photographs of the vehicles however it had been difficult to get registration numbers. Inspector Southwell asked Councillor Hodson to provide this information to him and he would forward it on to the dedicated community team within the Traffic section.

Councillor Hodson then reported concerns from residents of the city centre tower blocks about people congregating in a hidden corner of the back lane of Primark and there was a lot of mess being left by these people. Inspector Southwell agreed to pass this on to be looked into.

Councillor Mordey advised that residents of Rowlandson Terrace were concerned about cars speeding between the cameras on Ryhope Road; these vehicles were using the petrol station but residents had been unable to get any registration numbers. Inspector Southwell advised that there was a lot more work around speeding being done in communities and there had been over 100 nominations for locations for camera vans to be used. He would provide the information about this location to the Sergeant in charge of this operation.

Councillor Mordey then referred to the recent spate of car fires in the area; this was causing concerns for residents and he asked whether a culprit had been identified. Inspector Southwell advised that the latest spate had been due to a dispute between families and their associates. Earlier in the year there had been a spate due to a male, who was previously not known to police, who had been identified following excellent work by the police and any since then had not been involved in any more incidents.

Councillor Mordey then advised that there had been incidents of antisocial behaviour in the vicinity of Hudson Road play park; the Gentoo antisocial behaviour team had been spoken to about this; he queried whether the police were aware and if there was the ability to increase patrols in the area. Inspector Southwell advised that the Hendon team were aware of this issue and an unsuccessful attempt had been made to have a Criminal Behaviour Order placed on the main offender; his behaviour had since escalated and there were efforts being made to have a civil injunction made against him.

Julie Maven added that this group had been moved on from Hudson Road so had moved down to the East End. Inspector Southwell advised that efforts were being made to engage with the youths to address the issues and that enforcement action would take place if necessary.

Ram advised that the youth centres being closed was an issue; some of the youths would normally have attended the centres but were now unable to and were bored; when the centres were able to reopen there would be sessions put on to support these youths.

In response to a query from Councillor M. Dixon relating to domestic violence Inspector Southwell advised that in the last 28 days there had been 9 offences; there had been concerns that there would be an increase during the lockdown period and the situation was being closely monitored. There was a debrief session took place after every incident.

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

### **Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Update**

No representative from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance.

### **Gentoo Update**

Sam Humble presented the update from Gentoo. She advised that changes had been made to the customer access arrangements with the Silksworth office being moved to Doxford Park; the old office would be demolished and 13 new affordable homes would be built on the site. The Havelock office was now open on an appointment basis. Cash payments were no longer being taken at the city centre office; there had been a decline in the amount of cash payments and during the lockdown period customers had found alternative ways of making payments; there were no plans to reopen the cash payment facility.

Allocations of properties were taking place with the government guidance being monitored.

Customers were encouraged to use the website to find staff contact details should they have any queries.

The work on phase 6 of the Doxford Park redevelopment had been paused during the lockdown period however it was hoped that work would recommence soon. There was work being done around starting a programme of development which would see 900 new homes being built in the city by 2024; residents were being consulted on the development plans.

Councillor Mordey referred to the upcoming end to the ban on evictions and queried what position Gentoo was in regarding this; he was concerned about the impact on vulnerable tenants. Ms Humble advised that gentoo followed the government guidelines. There was a requirement for 6 months notice to be given of seeking possession. Eviction was always the last resort for Gentoo; it was preferable to work with tenants to support them however there were some tenants who would not engage and who did not pay rent who would be pursued. Gentoo did not consider eviction to be a successful outcome.

Councillor M. Dixon queried what was happening with Auckland House in Hill View and Ms Humble advised that there was no update yet but she would look into this and report back. Councillor M. Dixon then suggested that a walkaround in the area with Gentoo representatives and Members could be useful. Ms Humble advised that she was new to working in the area and she had been around the Gentoo estates in the area to get a feel for the area.

Councillor Hodson queried whether the new developments would include social housing and affordable housing. Ms Humble advised that some of the estates would be social housing which saw rent set at a rate set by the government while others would be affordable which saw rent set at 80 percent of the market rate; some of the developments would be for sale while others would be for rent; there would also be some shared ownership properties.

5. RESOLVED that the update from Gentoo be noted.

### **East Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020/2023**

The Chair of the East Sunderland Area Neighbourhoods and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the East Area Committee Delivery Plan for 2020/2023.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chair introduced the report and advised of the work that had been undertaken by the Board since the last meeting of the Area Committee including the ward discussions to identify the local priorities and the shortlisting exercise that had been undertaken at the Board to identify the key priorities to be actioned in year one of the delivery plan.

Councillor P. Wood expressed concerns that should the replacement of grass verges on Laurel Grove; as detailed within the Invest in highways, pavements and street lighting Priority; be funded from walk and talk then there was a risk that the money could be lost due to the timescales involved in this investigation. Ms McConnell advised that quotes for the work had been requested from the Highways department and if these quotes were within budget then the funds would be awarded to the work. There was no issue with the budget being lost as the funds had already been ringfenced for the walk

and talk programme. There would be further discussions at the board around traffic calming measures.

6. RESOLVED that the East Sunderland Area Committee Delivery Plan be agreed and that monthly meetings of the Neighbourhood and Community Board be held to enable the delivery of actions and that update reports be received to the Area Committee throughout the year.

### **East Area Budget Report**

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

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms McConnell presented the report and drew Members attention to the financial statements set out in the report and the applications for funding totalling £129,900. She advised that following the approval of £10,000 towards festive lighting there had been consultation undertaken to identify the best location in the area for this lighting; the roundabout near Morrison's and Aldi along Doxford Park Way had been selected. A site visit had been undertaken and it had been advised that an electricity point would need to be installed and the trees on the site would be suitable for lighting however the effect would be minimal.

Members gave consideration to the festive lighting and it was suggested by the Chair that the funds be returned to the budget to be reallocated elsewhere. Councillor Bewick agreed that the funds should be returned to the budget as the money could have a more significant benefit if used for other projects. Councillor Fagan advised that she had contacted the Community Champion at Morrison's and that they had been positive about providing support for the project however she had not heard anything further so would chase this up; if the lighting could be funded by Morrison's it could then allow the Committee's budget to be used elsewhere.

Councillor M. Dixon queried whether there were alternative locations for the lighting. Ms McConnell advised that there had been four different locations in Millfield suggested however if the location was to be changed then there would be a need for site visits to be undertaken by the Highways Department to assess suitability and it was possible that this would result in the lighting not being able to be installed for this year due to the tight timescales involved. Councillor M. Dixon then expressed his support for the Chair's suggestion that the funding should be returned. Councillor Scanlan also agreed with the return of the funding.

7. RESOLVED that:-
  - a. The financial statements set out in tables one and two be noted.

- b. The applications totalling £129,900 from the Neighbourhood Fund, as set out in paragraph 3.14 be approved.
- c. The approved Community Chest grants between July 2020 and September 2020 as set out in Annex two be noted.
- d. The previously approved funding of £10,000 as a contribution towards festive lights be returned to the budget.

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

(Signed) E. GIBSON,  
Chairman.