

**At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, on WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2021 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors, Ayre, Burnicle, Crosby, Dunn, Greener, Haswell, Mann, McDonough, Mullen, Nicholson, Peacock, G. Smith, P. Smith, Tye and Watson.

**Also Present:-**

Kelly Brougham	VCS Network Representative, Active Families N.E.
Victoria Gamblin	Head of Operations, Gentoo
Sarah Lattaway	Sunderland VCS Alliance Community Support Worker
Andy Nelson	Station Manager, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Karen Noble	VCS Network Representative, Pallion Action Group
David Noon	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	Area Arrangements Strategic Manager, Sunderland City Council
Gilly Stanley	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council
Jon Ritchie	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council
Gemma Robinson	Sgt. Northumbria Police

Representatives from the West Area Youth Providers and the Sunderland All Together Consortium.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Edgeworth and O'Brien.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Tye declared an interest in Item 4 on the agenda (West Sunderland Area Committee Budget Report) as Chairman of Youth Almighty and left the meeting at the appropriate point 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 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 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 an annual performance update on the West Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020-2023
- ii) Provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan which would be the focus for the West Sunderland Area Committee during 2022 /23 and;
- iii) Provided an update on the Neighbourhood and Community Board Governance Arrangements for 2022 /23

(For copy report – see original minutes)

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 the future delivery as contained within Annex 1 of the report.
- iii) Area Committee Governance arrangements for 2022-2023 outlined in Section 3 and Item 2 Annex 2 be noted
- iv) the Year in Numbers outlined in Section 4 and Annex 3 be noted
- v) the Communications Plan outlined in Section 4 and Annex 4 be noted

## **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 the following presentations from:-
  - Cultural Spring on the Stephenson Trail
  - Actives Families on the Wellbean Machine
  - Sunderland City Council on the Weed Killing pilot,
  - Youth Almighty on the Barnes Park West Area Event,
  - Sunderland City Council on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund:

- ii) The work of the West Area Neighbourhood and Community Board in partnership with a variety of organisations including Sunderland VS Alliance to review opportunities to utilise existing and vacant community buildings and assets to support the creation of cultural hubs, leisure activities and safe places to bring the community together.
- iii) the 'Connectedness' event designed by Sunderland Wellbeing Network which was held at Silksworth Youth and Community Centre in April.
- iv) the work of the West Area organisations in continuing to distribute Round 2 of the Sunderland City Council Household Support.
- v) the ongoing work of the West Area partner organisations to address holiday hunger in the West Area.
- vi) the election of Karen Noble of Pallion Action Group as the new West VCS rep following the decision of Bill Leach to step down. (The Committee paid tribute to Bill for all the hard work he had done on its behalf over the years and welcomed Karen to the meeting).
- vii) the attendance of Joanne Laverick at various Strategic and operational meetings with the VCS Alliance.

The Committee then received an update from the representatives of the West Area Youth Providers and the Sunderland All Together Consortium on the West Area Youth Activities and West ASB project which brought to life and placed in context the work being commissioned by the Committee through the West Sunderland Neighbourhood and Community Board.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor P. Smith regarding what would be his next priority if money was not an issue, Kevin Howard of Lambton Street Youth and Community Hub advised that it would be to appoint more staff. There were currently only 2 members of staff available in respect of ASB activities and if one was unable to make it, the evening would have to be cancelled. He would also like to prioritise an upgrade to the building to provide improved kitchen and storage facilities.

Councillor Haswell placed on record his appreciation for the fantastic job being undertaken in the community by Lambton Street and Mr Howard replied that he would pass this on to everyone at the Centre.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor McDonough regarding whether the Council provided funding for training for the VCS in respect of bid writing etc, Sarah Lattaway explained that the VCS Alliance was currently looking to identify any gaps in respect of community organisation needs. It was in a constant dialogue and provided workshops in respect of community intelligence, bid writing and funding opportunities.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor McDonough as to whether there was anything the Committee could do to contribute, Gilly Stanley advised that the Task and Finish Group had discussed undertaking a review of Community needs. This was ongoing and each VCS organisation was being contacted regarding the services they provided to help identify any gaps. This intelligence would enable informed decisions to

be made. The results of the review would be presented to the Area Committee Board shortly in the form of a number of 'Asks'

Councillor McDonough stated that he was aware of a number of free bid writing courses to which the VCS could be signposted. Councillor Burnicle concurred stating that he had benefitted massively from the free bid writing courses. In addition, Councillor Burnicle praised the work that Mr Howard had undertaken as a boxing coach at Lambton Street and the enormously positive impact it had made to so many people's lives.

Councillor Tye advised that Sunderland had been highlighted by the Government for the work being done in pulling the community together and was 1 of 46 Local Authorities invited to bid for investment from the Government's Community Ownership Fund. It was an opportunity not to be missed and was something that the Committee members could all support.

Councillor Mann welcomed the update provided by Lisa regarding the work carried out by Pennywell Youth Project. In particular she welcomed the work undertaken with the enforcement officers and the Jubilee celebrations. She knew the amount of work the team put in and believed they were really raising the bar.

Councillors McDonough and P. Smith welcomed the update provided by Sophie Clinton in respect of the Youth Activities and measures to reduce antisocial behaviour carried out by Youth Almighty. Councillor McDonough highlighted the great work undertaken by Youth Almighty in Herrington and Farringdon in respect of ASB and urged the Police to liaise with the team in this regard. Councillor Smith praised the work carried out by Youth Almighty and in particular the efforts of Joanne Laverick, Phil Tye and Sophie who had striven for years to keep a lid on ASB.

In response to an update from Ruth Walker in respect of activities in the Sandhill Ward, Councillor Tye stated that Sandhill was now probably the biggest issue in terms of Youth Activities given the demise of the A690 project which had left a massive gap to fill.

In conclusion Sophie Clinton briefed the Committee on the preparations for the West Area Event to be held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

There being no further 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 the period March to June 2022 together with a summary of the annual performance of Gentoo's Neighbourhood Services for 2021/22.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Ms Gamblin for her report and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Mann, Ms Gamblin advised that following the pandemic, the ban on evictions had been lifted in October, 2021. There had been a number of evictions but nothing that was alarming. Councillor Mann welcomed the help that had been provided to families by Gentoo's Money Matters team.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Crosby regarding the Gartland Road consultation, Ms Gamblin advised that she understood that Councillor O'Brien was going to contact the Havelock Road office to arrange a walkabout. With regard to a request from Councillor Crosby for an update on the storm damage repairs, Ms Gamblin advised that 2,000 repairs (mainly fencing) were outstanding across the city, and these were being done on an area basis.

In response to enquiries from Councillor McDonough, Ms Gamblin replied that she had no update as yet with regard to Australia Tower and she would check the position regarding the Lakeside boiler replacement and get back.

With regard to an enquiry from Councillor Mullen regarding the ownership issue in respect of the land in Barnes behind the Springwell Health Centre, Ms Gamblin advised that she would contact the Operations Manager on his behalf.

Councillor Burnicle referred to paragraph 3.1 of the report and asked if the figure of £50,000 in respect of the crisis fund related to the West Area or the City as a whole and how were people able to access it? Ms Gamblin confirmed that it was the city wide figure and that £5,000 had been allocated since April. Applications to the fund could be made by ringing the Gentoo Money Matters Team. Karen Noble also drew Councillor Burnicle's attention to paragraph 3.4 of the VCS report regarding the distribution of Round 2 of the Council's Household Support Funding.

Councillor P. Smith congratulated Ms Gamblin on the new build properties at Bellman Green stating it was the perfect fit for that plot of land.

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

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Report of Northumbria Police**

A report by Inspector Baker of the Northumbria Police Force (copy circulated) was submitted which provided the Committee with an update on and key performance information in relation to the Sunderland West area for the period March to May 2022

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Sgt Robinson for presenting the report and invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Mullen referred to the lack of mention of drug related crime in the report as he was aware of 3 cannabis farms having been shut down during the time period. He also stated that when people reported crime, they did not get a response which had the effect of discouraging future reporting. In conclusion he stated that residents had never seen the new PCSO in comparison to the daily visits to the area that were undertaken previously. In reply the meeting was advised that the PCSOs did patrol the area and did so on foot. In terms of crime reporting nothing was ignored. Anything reported was investigated and collated for intelligence purposes.

Councillor Peacock stated that he had been informed by residents that they were not going to bother reporting crime anymore as it seemed that no action was taken, and they never received a response. He advised that of greatest concern to most residents was the extent of motorcycle ASB particular in the St George's Playing Field Area. People locally knew who the perpetrators were and there was a fear that there would be a fatality if it was not tackled. There was also the fear that people may retaliate out of frustration. It had got to a point where the perpetrators were openly challenging the Police and 'rubbing their faces in it' on social media.

Ms Robinson advised that if you ring in to report a crime there would not be a response back unless the crime was personal to you. It was Northumbria Police policy not to chase motorcyclists engaging in ASB because of the risk it posed to both the perpetrators and the wider public. The issue was also frustrating for the Police, but they needed the public to continue to report the problem. Councillor McDonough referred to the no chase policy and advised that the Durham Constabulary had its own off-road unit who were authorised to chase offenders and perhaps it was time that a similar unit was employed by Northumbria Police. In response to an enquiry from Councillor Ayre as to whether the problem was worsening, the Committee was advised that it remained pretty much the same but that was not good. The Police tried to gather photographic evidence of the bikes and the riders concerned but generally the riders wore balaclavas which made this difficult. Councillor Ayre also asked if there were any facilities locally, where motorcyclists could go to drive off road legally and safely as he was aware there was one in Stanley. Jon Ritchie advised that Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils were looking to provide such a facility and were currently working to identify a suitable site.

Councillor Haswell advised that there had been a fatality in Ford as a result of off-road motorcycling. He acknowledged the frustrations of the Police and asked if staff surveys could be used to highlight the issue to policy makers at the Force. The Committee was informed that this could be fed into staff surveys. The issue centred on the risk of injury not only to the Police and perpetrators but also to innocent people unrelated to the offence if the Police engaged in a chase. The issue was frustrating and there had to be a better solution however there was not one to hand as yet.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor P. Smith, regarding the ASB centred on the former Farringdon Hall Police Station, Ms Robinson advised that the Police worked jointly with the Fire Service, visiting schools to warn of the dangers. The parents of the young people concerned were also spoken to however the message didn't seem to be getting through.

Councillor P. Smith stated that she missed the Police presence on the streets in Silksworth. There were rising levels of ASB and drug crime in the area and increasing

problems with money lenders. She worried that the problems would only worsen with the coming of the dark nights.

Councillor G. Smith stated that the 111 system must be short of call handlers as it was impossible to get through. He added that he also felt that the presence of the PCSOs was less visible. Ms Robinson replied that the 111 operators answered calls as quickly as possible and that her PCSOs were currently out on patrol this evening. Patrols would not always be on foot and there were occasions when they would need to use cars.

Councillor Burnicle referred to a section of Chester Road near Chester Gate where the speed limit had recently been reduced to 30mph however traffic continued to speed past at 60mph plus. He advised that he had asked the Highways team to install 30 signs on the approach, but they had replied they were unable to do so for legal reasons. Ms Robinson advised that Northumbria Police operated a 'speed watch team' and she would bring the issue to their attention.

Councillor Mann referred to the format of the report included with the agenda papers and expressed concern that it was flimsy, lacking in detail and requested that future reports were much more comprehensive. Councillor Crosby concurred stating that the report was lacking in specifics. Mr Ritchie suggested that perhaps the Police could use the report the Force submitted to the East Area Committee as a template as it was generally fairly informative. Ms Robinson replied that she would take the comments back to the report author.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked Sgt. Robinson for her attendance and it was:-

5. RESOLVED 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, 2022 to 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 with particular reference to the L133 Incidents (all deliberate fires).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Mr Nelson for his report and invited questions from Members

Councillor Burnicle referred to the ongoing issues of ASB centred on the old Farringdon Hall Police station and asked if it was possible to get a temporary CCTV camera at the site or that pressure could be brought to bear on the building's owners to pay for security. Mr Ritchie advised that a review of current fixed camera provision was currently underway, and he would feed this request in. Councillor Tye advised that the owners of the building had now been served with a Community Protection Notice warning and that failure to comply with its requirements could ultimately result in a term of up to 5 years imprisonment.

Councillor Peacock highlighted a video posted on social media of an arson attack on play equipment in King George's Park and the work of the fire service being impeded by young people running around while they were trying to tackle the fire. He also advised that similar attacks had been made on South Hylton Play Park and suggested that perhaps they should be priority areas for the attention of enforcement officers.

In response to a further enquiry from Councillor Peacock as to whether the number of vehicle fires were the result of electrical faults or arson, Mr Nelson advised that he did not have that information to hand but suspected that it would be down to arson.

Councillor Mann paid tribute to the outstanding work being undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Service in trying times particularly in relation to the horrifying attacks they had recently been subjected to while carrying out their duties.

There being no further questions or comments 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 and 2022/23 Community Chest budgets, together with details of proposals for the allocation of funds from the Neighbourhood Investment Fund.

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

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee's funding statement as detailed in paragraphs 2.1 and 3.1 of the report be received and noted;
- (ii) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £4,955 to — Barnes ward- Plains Farm Youth and Community Centre in respect of Holiday Activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report
- (iii) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £4,999 to — St Anne's ward- Pennywell Community Centre in respect of Holiday activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report
- (iv) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £4,960 to – Holiday activities – Pallion ward- Lambton Street Youth and Community Centre in respect of Holiday activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report



- (v) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £4,955 to – Silksworth ward- Youth Almighty Project in respect of Holiday activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report
- (vi) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £5,000 to – Sandhill ward- Community Opportunities in respect of Holiday activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report
- (vii) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £4,955 to – St Chad’s ward- Farrington Youth and Community Centre in respect of Holiday activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report
- (viii) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £4,955 to – Barnes ward- Plains Farm Youth and Community Centre in respect of Holiday activities as detailed in Item 4 Annex 1 of the report
- (ix) Approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £120,000 (20k per ward) - Walk and Talk – Ward improvements as detailed in Item4 Annex1
- (x) the approval of the Community Chest applications from the 2021/22 budget as detailed in Annex 2 of the report be noted; and
- (xi) the approval of the Community Chest applications from the 2022/23 budget as detailed in Annex 3 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.