

Item 1d

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER, on WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER, 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors, Burnicle, Crosby, Dunn, Edgeworth, Greener, Haswell, Mann, McDonough Mullen, Nicholson Noble, O'Brien, Peacock, G. Smith, 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
Bill Leach	VCS Network Representative, Pennywell Com. Centre
David Noon	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Steven Passey	Inspector, Northumbria Police
Helen Peverley	Area Arrangements Strategic Manager, Sunderland City Council
Gilly Stanley	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Blackett.

Declarations of Interest

Item 4 West Sunderland Area Budget Report

Councillor Tye declared an interest as a member of Youth Almighty Project in the applications for funding from the Neighbourhood Fund made by the Sunderland All Together Consortium.

Councillor Tye 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 22 September 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)

The Chairman thanked Councillor Haswell for his report and invited questions from Members. Councillor O'Brien having sought assurances regarding the sustainability of the Sunderland All Together Consortium, and that funding for the various youth organisations was spread evenly across the six wards of the Area Committee 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 West Youth Activities be supported
- iv). the recommendation of the Board to approve the West ASB youth activities be supported
- v). the recommendation of the Board to align the Highways Capital project be supported.

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 Bill Leach which highlighted the following VCS Network activity undertaken since its last report to the Committee:-

- i) The receipt of presentations on Crowd Fund Sunderland and the VCS reps
- ii) A review of the frequency of VCS network meetings together with a call for agenda items for 2022. Those unable to attend the December Network Meeting had been sent a survey so all members could participate in the review.

- iii) The successful collaboration of West Area VCS groups to support the Extended Targeted Covid Community Champions project.
- iv) The receipt by Local West VCS organisations delivering the COVID Targeted Community Champion Programme of funding from Sunderland City Council to provide support to vulnerable households in most need this winter with Food and Fuel Support and Other Essential Needs.
- v) Work being undertaken to complement the Neighbourhood funded holiday activities.
- vi) the attendance of Joanne Laverick at various Strategic and operational meetings with the VCS Alliance.

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

Councillor Edgeworth expressed his concerns that with regard to the winter support scheme, there was a potential reputational risk for the Council if Councillors exploited their involvement in the scheme for political gain eg via photographs in election leaflets. To mitigate against this, he suggested that the physical distribution of support should only be undertaken by officers. Helen Peverley, Area Arrangements Strategic Manager, briefed the Committee on the operation of the Scheme and advised that Councillors assisting with the scheme would be doing so in their capacity as volunteers.

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)

In addition to the items detailed in the report, Ms Gamblin briefed the Committee on Gentoo's response to the effects of Storm Arwen that had hit Sunderland over the weekend. The Group had received over 6,500 calls and had carried out 800 urgent repairs to rooves. 45 fallen trees had kept the grounds maintenance team busy and with regard to fencing, 868 repair requests had been reported since Saturday.

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

Councillor Mann thanked Ms Gamblin for the work undertaken by Gentoo in tackling the devastation caused by Storm Arwen and welcomed the development work that was continuing at pace on the Prestbury Road site. She also looked forward to seeing the start of the Pennywell Environmental scheme in June. In response to an enquiry from Councillor Mann Ms Gamblin advised that she would send her confirmation of the plans to double glaze the outstanding properties in Pennywell.

Councillor Burnicle referred to the modular build of the Eco Housing and asked if it was true that they were manufactured outside of Sunderland as this would impact on the businesses of local traders such as plumbers. He asked if it was possible that the modules could be manufactured in the City. Ms Gamblin advised that she did not have that information to hand, but she would check and feedback to the Committee.

Councillor McDonough referred to Lakeside Towers and asked who was responsible for de-icing the paths around the properties as they were home to many elderly residents. He also referred to the long-term issue of parking in the area and asked if there was any strategy available to tackle it. Ms Gamblin advised that conversations were ongoing regarding the de-icing and that she could copy Councillor McDonough into the email trail. With regard to the issue of parking she advised that currently there was no long-term strategy in place.

Councillor Haswell asked if Ms Gamblin was able to comment on rumours that the Havelock Housing Office was to close and the building demolished. He also raised the issue of the Pennywell Fence Replacement Scheme in respect of the voids to the rear of some properties. Ms Gamblin replied that it was no secret that the staff from the Havelock Office would be relocating to City Hall as part of Gentoo's wider review of office accommodation. It was anticipated that the re-location would be undertaken during May/June 2022. There would be building on the Havelock site, but plans related to this were yet to be finalised. With regard to the voids Ms Gamblin advised that these would be picked up as part of the regeneration scheme and she would speak to the surveyor about this.

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 the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

A report of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) (copy circulated) was submitted which provided the Committee with an update on the Service's performance indicators for the period 1st April, 2021 to 30th September 2021 with particular reference to the L133 Incidents (deliberate fires) broken down by property type.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman advised that in the absence of the presenting officer, the report was submitted for information only. If members had any questions on the report, they should be emailed to Ms Stanley who would ensure that they received a reply in writing from the Fire and Rescue Service.

5. RESOLVED the report be received and noted

Report of Northumbria Police

Inspector Steven Massey presented a verbal report of the Northumbria Police Service which provided the Committee with an update on key performance information in relation to the Sunderland West area over the previous 3 month period. He apologised that there was no written report in the agenda papers owing to him having only just taken up his position. He would ensure a written report was provided for all future meetings.

Members were advised that overall crime had increased by 1% during the period. This was to be expected as it included Bonfire Night and Halloween. There had been 2 additional burglaries over and above the figure for the previous period however over the last 6 weeks of the current period, there had been a 19% reduction in the number of burglaries. There was no identified pattern to the burglaries which would give rise to a greater cause for concern.

The number of cases in respect of vehicle crime had risen from 21 to 41 from the last period to this. The incidents had been spread evenly across the West Area with no discernible pattern. Analysis work was being undertaken to try and establish a reason for the sudden spike. It should be noted however, that despite the rise, the actual numbers were less than the figures for the previous year.

Anti-social behaviour was down by 9% across the area which was remarkable and a tribute to the work of the Neighbourhood Team and its partners in the West.

With regard to off road motorcycle crime this had reduced by 63% and a motorcycle had been seized earlier that day.

Inspector Massey thanked the Committee for their support and asked Members to continue to feed into the Team any issues that were of concern to them.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Massey to his first meeting of the Committee, thanked him for his report and invited questions from Members.

Councillor Mullen referred to a series of accidents occurring over the last 3-4 months in relation to the junction at the top of Ettrick Grove and Durham road. He had raised the issue of the junction's safety with the Council's Highway's Team who advised that they were reliant on receiving accident data from the Police and there had been none in respect of the junction since 2014. Councillor Mullen found this hard to believe as one of the accidents had involved occupants being cut out of vehicles while Police Officers were in attendance. He also raised the issue of a van that regularly parked with all 4 wheels on the pavement between the wall of a school on one side, and a rubbish bin on the other completely blocking the path for pedestrians. He had asked an Officer to remove it on previous occasions without success. Inspector Massey stated that being new to the area he was not yet up to speed with all of its issues. With regard to the accidents, he stated that certainly in respect of the one requiring people to be cut out from vehicles that this would have been recorded. With regard to the obstruction to the pavement he asked Councillor Mullen to Email him the details and he would ask an officer to investigate and email him with the reasons for the decision made.

Councillor McDonough thanked Insp. Massey for the work done by the local PC in response to reports of increases in petty crime in Herrington and Farringdon. Previously PCs had been placed on the beat in Allendale Road and the high profile, on the ground policing, had made a big difference. With 'Bobbies on the Beat' being seen less often, Councillor McDonough asked how easy was it for the Police to access Council CCTV footage? Insp. Massey replied that the Police had very good links with the Council in this regard, with Police Officers having laptops that could connect straight away to the CCTV system.

Councillor Mann referred to the increasing despair felt by store managers at the Portsmouth Road Shopping centre with regard to rising Anti-Social Behaviour. There was a desire to set up a meeting with partners and the Police to address the issue and Asda had offered to provide a venue. Insp. Massey advised Councillor Mann that if she set up the meeting either he or a Police Sergeant would be happy to attend.

Councillor Greener advised of an increasing problem of shoplifting and drug dealing in Chester Road which she felt was being ignored. She believed the issue, especially in relation to drugs needed to be tackled as it tended to be the driver behind other crime.

Insp. Massey concurred that drugs tended to be the root cause of a lot of other crime. He informed the Committee that he had a proactive style and a desire to get on top of things. He asked that members continued to report issues to the Police. Intelligence work tended to be a slow process but the more evidence, the greater the chance of a successful funding proposal to effectively tackle the issue.

Councillor Peacock advised that he had a similar issue to Councillor Mullen with regard to an accident blackspot at the Pennywell / Portsmouth Road junction where there had been two serious crashes recently. He also referred to the Police use of Twitter to disseminate information and especially the ability to highlight successful operations, but he felt there was still more that could be done with new technology to assist the public in reporting crime, especially making reporting more streamlined, allowing people to 'ping' the police about an incident.

Insp. Massey replied that Northumbria Police were currently going through a massive review of its technology with regard to reporting which would allow it to state 'You told Us, We did it, Here's the Proof'. The NP Alerts system was currently being piloted and was due to be launched during 2022.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor O'Brien regarding Northumbria Police resources in the West Area, Insp Massey advised that there were 2 Sgts, 8 PCs and 7 PCSOs operating across two teams.

The Chairman referred to Insp Massey's predecessor, Insp Pollock, and on behalf of the Committee thanked her for all her hard work undertaken on behalf of the Committee and wished her well in her new position. Insp Massey confirmed that he would relay the Committee's thanks to Insp Pollock.

The Chairman then thanked Council Officers for their work undertaken to tackle the affects of the damage caused by storm Arwen. Councillor P. Smith also paid tribute to the friends of Silksworth Park for their work in this regard.

There being no further questions or comments for Insp. Massey, the Chairman thanked him for his 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.

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

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee's funding statement as detailed in sections 2.1 and 3.1 of the report be received and noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £213,480 to the Sunderland All Together Consortium in respect of West Youth Activities as set out in Section 2.3 and Annex 1 of the report;
- (iii) approval be given to the granting of NF funding of £32,460 to Sunderland All Together Consortium in respect of West Youth ASB as detailed in paragraph 2.3 and Annex 1 of the report;
- (iv) approval be given the alignment of £270,971 funding from the West Neighbourhood Capital Investment Fund to support highways investment in the West, subject to further detail being developed by the Neighbourhood and Community Board and referred back to the Area committee for full Approval
- (v) 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.