

**At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held in THE MILLENNIUM CENTRE MAIN HALL, CONCORD, WASHINGTON on THURSDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022 at 6.00p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Laws in the Chair

Councillors Farthing, Fletcher, F. Miller, D.E. Snowdon, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, P. Walker and Williams

**Also in Attendance:-**

Mrs. Karon Purvis	-	Area Officer – Sunderland City Council
Mr. Jon Ritchie	-	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Paul Wood	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Denise Gilholme	-	Community Support Worker
Sylvia Copley	-	Area Network Representative
Shirley Gillum	-	Area Network Representative
Mr. Alan Duffy	-	Gentoo
Mr Steven Bewick	-	TWFRA
Inspector Patrick Scott	-	Northumbria Police

**Apologies for Absence**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Donaghy, Lauchlan, G. Miller, Taylor, M. Walker and Warne.

**Declarations of Interest**

Washington Area Budget Report

Councillor Dianne Snowdon made an open declaration with regards to the following items and left the room during their consideration:-  
Item 3 annex 1 application 1 as her husband was employed by Sharp Shiney Row who deliver this project.

WNF - Improving Community Assets - Washington Central Ward , as Vice Chair on Columbia Community Association.

### **Minutes of the last meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record

### **Washington Area Neighbourhood Investment Plan Delivery Plan 2020-2023**

The Chair of Washington Neighbourhoods and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the Washington Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020-2023 and also provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Karon Purvis, Area Officer Washington presented the report, highlighting the key points of action with the relevant Task Groups and was on hand to answer any queries raised by Members.

Councillor D. E. Snowdon wished to thank Mrs Purvis for her work carried out in relation to the Community Facebook page.

At this juncture, the Committee viewed a short video on the Delivery of the Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan.

2. RESOLVED that the Committee
  - i) Considered the progress and performance update with regards to the Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020- 2023, and agreed the proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 1 of the report
  - ii) Agreed the recommendations for the completion of the Highways Capital Maintenance programmes 2022/23 as detailed in Annex 2 of the report;
  - iii) Noted the video highlighting the Committee's work in relation to the delivery of the WAC Delivery Plan priorities throughout 2021/22

### **Washington Area Budget Report**

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided a financial statement as an update position on progress in relation to allocating Area Committee Funds, Neighbourhood

Investment Capital Programme and Community Chest as well as presenting proposals for further funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mrs Purvis presented the report and was on hand to answer any queries raised by Members.

Councillor Farthing referred to the extension of the Washington Individual Support Project and commented that she believed this service would be overwhelmed with applicants due to the upcoming cost of living crises, therefore she was pleased to see the project up and running.

Sylvia Copley commented that the support received from the Area Committee on this had been excellent.

In relation to the Washington Outreach Project, Councillor Williams referred to the anti-social behaviour occurring around the Galleries Shopping Centre and enquired if their management had put forward any funding as we were supporting them and it may be worth asking the question if not.

Mrs Purvis advised that they had conducted some really productive meetings with the new management of the Galleries, and they could always ask if they wished to contribute.

Councillor Farthing agreed that the Galleries could contribute and advised that they did employ security so it may be worth them employing a part time youth worker also.

Councillor Farthing commented that there were lots of issues within her ward so it was good that we had this project and it was essential we continue to fund this due to the scale of anti-social behaviour being experienced. Councillor Farthing also added that the targeting of elderly residents was unacceptable and that she believed parents should be made more aware and accountable to this.

Councillor D. E Snowdon commented that the new galleries management were much more proactive and had a new perspective on working in partnership so suggested the link with Mrs Purvis be made.

With regards to the Improving Community Assets applications, Councillor Farthing drew the Committee's attention to a typo on page 50 of the agenda and the Building Blocks Day Centre Kitchen Repairs, the recommendation was to approve £4,920 rather than £5,000.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Noted the financial information detailed within sections 2.1,2.2,3.1 and 4.2 of the report;

- ii) Considered and Approved the NF Funding of £16,000 to ShARP to extend the WISP Programme as set out in Section 2.3 and Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- iii) Considered and Approved the NF Funding of £18,750 to the Sunderland All Together Consortia to extend the Washington Outreach Programme as set out in Section 2.3 and Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- iv) Considered and approved the NF Funding of £45,000 for the Queen's Jubilee Fund Project Brief and Call for Projects as set out in Section 2.3 and Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- v) Considered and approved the NF Funding of £35,000 and the Project Brief and Call for Projects for the Youth Matters – Making Money Work Project as set out in Section 2.3 and Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- vi) Considered and approved the NF Funding of £14,670 for the 3 applications for the Cook Well Live Well Call for Project as detailed in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- vii) Considered and approved NC funding of £50,000 for the investment in Princess Anne Park as detailed in Section 3.4 and Item 3 Annex 2 of the report;
- viii) Considered and approved NC funding of £29,640 for the 6 applications for the Improving Community Assets Project, as detailed in Item 3 Annex 2 of the report;
- ix) Noted the approved Community Chest grants from 2021/2022 as detailed in Annex 3 of the report;

## **Partner Agency Reports**

### **a) Washington Area Community Voluntary Sector Network**

The Voluntary and Community Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update with regard to the Washington Area Community and Voluntary Sector Network.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Sylvia Copley, Area Network Representative presented the report on behalf of the VCS Network and advised Denise Gilhome, Community Support Worker had now settled into the role very well and the new arrangements within the Voluntary Sector Alliance were working well.

Ms Copley advised that the Washington VCS was made up of a very wide range of organisations that were very active and everyone was thoroughly committed, providing excellent value.

The sector was engaging particularly well with residents and those who would ordinarily miss out on services. The Network had continued to meet over Microsoft Teams during the pandemic but the first in person meeting had

taken place February and the Area Hubs continued to support the most vulnerable people's needs.

Ms Copley commented that it had been a huge success in terms of the number of people volunteering to help and they had the benefit of additional City funds to help mitigate some of the hardships faced by the most vulnerable via partnership working.

Ms Copley also informed that Ms Gilholme was reaching out to all forms of organisations and they were moving forward at a strategic level and that an Annual Report would be brought to the June meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Williams wished to congratulate the VCS and commented that they had worked really effectively, Ms Gilholme had made a massive impact and the Covid funding had been used well. However Councillor Williams was concerned that going forward this extra money would be expected again and suggested that consideration be given to budgets and that this be one of the Area Committee's priorities as to how we continue to support at this level.

In response to Councillor H. Trueman's enquiry, Ms Copley advised that they did use and refer people to the Sunderland Student Law Clinics and that they were an excellent service to work with where they had seen good results in the past.

Councillor D. E. Snowdon advised that there was a huge bank of willing volunteers at the Nightingale hospital and queried who they get in touch with. Ms Gilholme advised that she was setting up a volunteer programme and she could link up with Councillor Snowdon outside of the meeting.

Councillor Farthing wished to congratulate the Sector on their work and the report given and enquired if they had developed links with the Council's FACL for training. It was advised that they did have newly developed links and Ms Gilholme advised that they had carried out surveys across the VCS on training and it was planned to deliver locally based training via working with partners and should anyone have any pressing needs on training, to get in touch.

Mrs Purvis advised that she would circulate the presentation given by FACL at the Roadshows for information.

Members having considered the report, it was: -

4. RESOLVED that the content of the report and the opportunities and issues raised by the Washington Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network be received and noted.

**b) TWFRS**

The Tyne and Wear Fire Service submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided performance-monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Washington Area Committee from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, compared with the same period in 2020

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Steven Bewick, Station Manager presented the report and expanded on the figures provided.

Councillor Farthing commented that she was horrified to see the increase in deliberate fires set within her Ward since coming out of lockdown and that this seemed to have spread throughout the area, affecting play parks and there was a need to tackle this.

Mr Bewick informed the Committee that they did see a massive rise after the lockdown but they were starting to see the trend lower and it they were hopeful this would continue.

Councillor Williams wished to congratulate Mr Bewick on the figures and enquired as to the statistics on serious injuries sustained and what his opinion was on the Youths setting fires and their seeming lack of respect for fire/concept of danger and how to get that message across.

Mr Bewick advised that there hadn't been any serious injuries, there had been instances of smoke inhalation, but this was minor and when the names of individuals were obtained they were referred to their programmes and pathways for referrals.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that the Fire Service carried out some great schemes dealing with difficult children and had seen such a change in those who had partook and enquired if the funding received for these schemes was enough, how far it stretched and if they could do with more. Mr Bewick advised that they did get funding but as with any public service this was stretched and they could always do with more. They had great engagement with the users of the schemes but they didn't tend to get the initials numbers referred to it as similar schemes at Gateshead were able to offer more incentives despite our courses being better.

Councillor D. E. Snowdon commented that she was shocked to see the increases in Washington Central Ward and enquired how they were coping with the extra demand and if any staff had been abused. Mr Bewick advised that they were seeing an increase in attacks, both verbal and physical, and had experienced glass bottles being thrown at the during a recent call out to grass fires. They were dragging resources in from other areas and were stretched.

Councillor Farthing suggested the running of a programme next year similar to the money matters project, on the affects of ASB, to run in schools.

Councillor Williams commented that the children needed to see the impacts of their actions, shown by visual aids as shock tactics may be needed.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bewick for his attendance.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**c) Gentoo**

Gentoo provided report to the Committee on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Alan Duffy, Head of Operations, Gentoo informed the Committee that it had been a challenging winter with six named storms after Storm Arwen. There were 200 urgent roof repairs undertaken by 15 two man squad. There were 2000 outstanding fencing repairs and they were employing sub contractors for these.

With regards to the Washington District Heating Programme, the letters had not gone out as stated within the report but they were receiving the boilers from the suppliers now and were installing 10 per week. There was delays however in setting up billing payments due to the utilities market.

Councillor Farthing commented that she was pleased to see the boilers installations were going ahead but hoped that people would not find the usage too expensive after the well subsidised district heating scheme.

In response to Councillor Williams query over a recent tip from Martin Lewis, Mr Duffy advised that residents would have the ability to put as much heating credit on their cards now at the cheaper rate, dependant on the system they were using.

Mr Duffy also replied to Councillor Williams enquiry if Gentoo were still buying up ex gentoo properties. Mr Duffy advised that in exceptional circumstances they were and had purchased 15 this year, however this was less than the amount they were losing through the Right to Buy scheme.

In response to Councillor H. Trueman' s query over the huge rises in timber costs and how Gentoo were budgeting with the increased Fencing repairs costs, Mr Duffy advised that they were using contingency funds but these did not stretch to the hit that they'd taken due to the costs of the storms which had been estimated recently at around £1 -2 million.

The Chairman commented that the regular query raised by residents was around the window replacement scheme and that Nigel Wilson had stated at

the recent Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee that they were due to complete this by December 2023, was this still the case and could more detailed breakdowns be given for Washington rather than across the City. Mr Duffy advised that there was a big programme ongoing across Washington during the next year with more than 1000 properties due to be tackled.

The Chairman thanked Mr Duffy for his report.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

**d) Northumbria Police**

Northumbria Police submitted a report which provided data on crime and disorder in the Washington area comparing 'Year to date' figures with the preceding year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Inspector Patrick Scott presented the report and informed the Committee that Inspector Steve Passey's apologies that he could not attend this meeting.

Councillor H. Trueman requested the Inspectors opinion as to how many Police Officers were needed to police Washington and how many they were short of in achieving this. Councillor Trueman commented that a lot of residents complaints and the peoples perception is that they never see Police officers now, so he appreciated they had a great deal of work to deal with so it was just to try and get an idea of how much manpower they were short on.

Inspector Scott responded that they would like as many Officers as possible but couldn't give a specific answer in relation to this. They did not just have resources specific for Washington and if there was a demand, resource would come from Sunderland and South Tyneside for example and community teams were pulled from across the command.

Inspector Scott added that if the had "x" amount of staff they could do "x" amount of work, if they had double that amount of staff then double the work could be achieved so it was about prioritising and managing the workload in conjunction with partners, where every agency was in the same situation.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that he was sure he spoke for every Councillor within Washington in saying that all Members were fully behind the Police and would do everything they could to help them but equally they had to help their residents and address their concerns also.

Councillor Williams queried as a force if they had a plan, and how many times the plan was disrupted for officers being called to other incidents for example. Councillor Williams referred to the 44% increase in Drug crime, acknowledging that whilst this was only 9 cases, it was becoming an issue and also queried if there was a split between Adult and under 18 figures available for the ASB stats.



Inspector Scott informed that he did not have the figures for this but he would get back to Councillor Williams on that. In relation to a Force Plan, there were lots of departments that come together each morning and allocate resources based on intelligence and if there were spare capacity it would go where needed. The plan was no different now than it was 10-15 years ago and everything was triaged and risk assessed for priority. New I.T systems in place had helped with this regard.

Councillor D. E. Snowden commented that the increase in Drugs Crime figures could actually be seen as a positive as it showed a more proactive approach in tackling the issue and she hoped that this was the case.

Inspector Scott agreed that this was the case and it was a double edged sword as pro active operations to find drug dealers had been successful, which meant the figures had increased. Inspector Scott informed that the trials of these individuals were soon and they expected good results on this.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

### **Planning Applications – For Information Only**

Current Planning Applications relating to the Washington Area for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2022 to 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 were submitted for Members information only (copy circulated).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) S. LAWS,  
Chairman.