

**At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY, 23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019 at 5.30p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors M. Dixon, Essl, Fagan, Hodson, Hunt, Marshall, McClennan, Mordey, Oliver, Potts, Scanlan, A. Wood and P. Wood.

**Also Present:-**

Matthew Jackson	-	Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Nicol McConnell	-	Area Officer, Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	-	Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
Sarah Reed	-	Strategic Director of People Communications and Partnerships, Sunderland City Council
Nicky Rowland	-	Environmental Services Manager, Sunderland City Council

**Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised Members that this was an additional meeting and due to the short notice given it had been considered that it would not be fair to expect partners to attend the meeting and as such at this meeting there would not be updates received from the partner organisations; the updates would be received at the next meeting of the Committee.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received on behalf of Councillor Bewick together with Joanne Cooper.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2019**

Councillor Hodson stated that he had not received any update on the issues at Solar House Car Park that he had raised with Alan Duffy at the last meeting. Councillor Essl agreed to chase up this matter. Councillor Hodson also asked that Nexus be invited to attend future meetings to provide updates.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **Area Arrangements Update**

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the outcomes of a recent workshop held between the Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture and the Area Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs where opportunities to strengthen the Council's Area Arrangements were discussed.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Helen Peverley presented the report and advised that it had been agreed to increase the number of area committee meetings from three per year to four and this was the reason for this additional meeting being held today. The People and Place boards were being reviewed to ensure that their remit was in line with the new directorates of Neighbourhoods and Communities and to ensure they were linked to the priorities of the Neighbourhood Plans.

The Strategic Initiatives Budget was being renamed the Neighbourhood Fund and the rules and procedures were being reviewed to improve clarity, consistency and efficiency. There would also be improvements to performance management of actions delivered through the fund to demonstrate the impact and a focus on 'you said – we did'.

The Area Communication Plans were being developed and the Community Facebook pages for each area had been introduced. There would be a volunteering strategy developed to get residents involved in social action.

2. RESOLVED that the update report be noted.

### **Neighbourhood Engagement and Investment**

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented Members with an update on Neighbourhood Engagement and the mechanisms to be adopted to ensure that residents remained at the heart of service delivery and became actively involved in the delivery of the City Plan and developing Neighbourhood Investment Plans to ensure long term community resilience.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Helen Peverley introduced the report and advised that it had been identified that there needed to be improvements to individual and community resilience through engagement, participation and listening. An Engagement and Involvement strategy had been developed to support residents and partners to share information and ideas to improve transparency and accountability of the council.

The council in partnership with the VCS would be working with residents to produce Neighbourhood Improvement Plans for each area to develop new ways for the community to engage with their neighbourhoods; it was clear from the residents survey that there needed to be deeper and earlier engagement to build more community and partner capacity to deliver the right services to improve neighbourhoods. The plans would align with the area committee priorities and would be long term plans. Progress would be easily tracked by residents and partners.

A crowdfunding platform would be set up in conjunction with Spacehive which would allow residents to put forward projects and also to provide funding to projects which they felt would benefit their area.

Councillor McClennan commented that the different wards within the areas had different needs and issues and queried whether the responses received from the Residents Survey had differed between wards. She also queried how the Neighbourhood Fund would be shared out as some wards were more vocal about requesting funding than others. Ms Peverley advised that over 60percent of residents surveyed wanted to be involved in the community but did not always know how to become involved with volunteering; it needed to be made easier for people to find information on volunteering so that they could become more involved. The data provided to her from the residents survey had not gone into ward level detail so she would ensure that this information was made available for the next board meeting. Residents often felt there was a disconnect between them and the council and they did not know what was being delivered or why. Spacehive would allow residents to come together to provide projects that they wanted. The Neighbourhood Fund would continue to be controlled by the Area Committee which would ensure that it was spent appropriately and the Area Committee priorities would reflect what residents had said they wanted.

Councillor Essl expressed concerns over the suggestion that the Neighbourhood Fund could be used to fund council posts; there had been a decision taken a number of years ago that SIB should not fund posts; it would not take a lot of posts for the whole budget to be spent. He also expressed concerns over the use of Facebook which he described as a vile, unpleasant place and stated that it was used for organised bullying; he had received death threats after disagreeing with people on Facebook. He also asked how the Spacehive projects would be controlled to ensure that only projects which were of genuine benefit to the area were allowed. Ms Peverley advised that

the projects funded through the Neighbourhood Fund were to address residents concerns and there may need to be additional resources put into areas to address issues and in these cases it may be necessary to fund posts; this could include paying for an enforcement officer or litter picker. Ms McConnell added that previously SIB had been used to fund posts for VCS organisations however the potential to use it to fund council posts as well was being looked at for the future. Ms Peverley then advised that Spacehive would ensure that projects met the mission of the city and projects would be assessed for suitability before they went live. Facebook was a vital communication tool and it was necessary for the area to have a presence on social media; the council needed to be able to respond to residents comments online and demonstrate that they were doing the work residents wanted.

Councillor McClennan then queried whether Spacehive would receive a percentage of the income earned. Ms Peverley advised that they received 5percent and that this was built into the amount of funding requested for projects. Spacehive worked with residents to ensure that there was more likelihood of funding targets being met and also worked with businesses to encourage them to fund projects. If more was raised than had been requested the system would explain to donors what the additional funds would be spent on. Spacehive was a national company with experience of working with local authorities; there were not any local companies with the experience or ability to carry out the work.

Councillor Mordey commented that Spacehive would build in additional capacity allowing more projects to be put forward and more funding to be brought into the area.

Councillor Hunt commented that there should be more than just financial support to projects looked at; a lot of people did not have sufficient disposable income to be able to donate to projects however they may be able to give their time to support projects. The council needed to be seen to be doing work; people considered cleansing to be the council's job but were happy to do some litter picking themselves; it would not be appropriate to expect residents to be doing litter picking all of the time.

Councillor A. Wood expressed his support for more Facebook engagement; it was a useful communication tool for community groups; there needed to be proper two way conversations taking place on social media and he queried whether there would be additional staff to ensure that social media was monitored effectively and that comments were responded to quickly. He also queried how ongoing maintenance would be funded after projects had taken place.

Ms Peverley replied that there was an awareness that there was a lot of information on social media which the council was not capturing, including from residents forums which were used by residents to express concerns about their local areas; it was important to identify ways of extracting the information from these sources. There would need to be an investigation into staff resources as dealing with social media would be an additional job; as the

engagement increased so would the workload. Projects set up through Spacehive would only be accepted if it could be demonstrated that there would be resources available for any ongoing maintenance; Spacehive would work with the council to ensure that the implications of projects were known before they went ahead.

Councillor Mordey commented that there would be an increase in capacity for social media in the corporate communications team. He felt that there was a need to look at how to engage residents more and ensure that residents comments were responded to. There would also be the development of further online communications tools including the use of live chat facilities.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The report be noted
- b. The matter be referred to the People and Place Boards for further discussions on how Members would wish to support and monitor delivery of:-
  - i. Resident Engagement and Involvement Strategy
  - ii. Neighbourhood Investment Plans
  - iii. Crowdfund Sunderland

### **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)

The Chair of the Place Board, Councillor Scanlan, presented the report and advised Members of the work that had been done by the board which included the Meet Your Neighbour events; Walk and Talk; Communication Channels; Strengthening Partnerships; East Rangers and the Highways Maintenance Programme.

Councillor Hodson commented that the Leonardo Da Vinci exhibition at the Museum and Winter Gardens had been put up for an award and encouraged everyone to vote online for the exhibition. Councillor Scanlan added that the Northern Spire bridge was also nominated for an award and encouraged Members to vote for this as well.

4. RESOLVED that Members are requested to:-

- a. Advertise and encourage resident's engagement at the Meet Your Neighbour events and Walk and Talk sessions.
- b. Promote @eastsunderlandcommunity Facebook page as a tool to find out what is happening in the East Area.
- c. Note the partnership developments between the Area Committee and the Cultural Partnership, Sunderland BID and

- University of Sunderland and the update of the East Rangers project.
- d. Receive bi-monthly progress updates on the Highways Maintenance Programme 2019/20.

### **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 work around More Males and Positive Parenting; Community Connectors; Fancy a Day Out; 1<sup>st</sup> Tier welfare advice contracts; Get Online (GO) project; East OSCARS; and an update from Raich Carter Centre. Attention was also drawn to the change in membership for Ryhope Ward with Councillor Bewick now being the core member in place of Councillor Hunt.

5. RESOLVED that Members are requested to:-
- a. Note the update provided on the Community Connectors (4) Programme, Fancy a Day Out, GO Project, OSCARS and Raich Carter Sports Centre
  - b. Note the approval to split the underspend from the Valuing Volunteers project between hosting a further two OSCAR events in either 2020 or 21 and purchasing additional ICT equipment to develop smaller IT hubs at CHANCE, Sunderland MIND and Sans Street
  - c. Note the change in membership for the Ryhope Ward from Councillor Hunt to Councillor Bewick.

### **Neighbourhood Fund (Formerly Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB)), Community Chest – Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources**

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 (formerly SIB) and Community Chest.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms McConnell presented the report and advised Members that there were no applications for consideration by Members at this meeting. There had been Community Chest awards made which were set out in annex 1 to the report.

6. RESOLVED that the financial position at September 2019 and the Community Chest funding awards between July and August 2019 be noted.

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

(Signed) E. GIBSON,  
Chairman.