

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1 of the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY 26th SEPTEMBER, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors, Blackett, Crosby, D. Dixon, Greener, Haswell, McDonough, Mann, O'Brien, G. Smith, P. Smith, Tye, Watson, A. Wilson and K. Wood.

Also Present:-

Fiona Brown	Executive Director of Neighbourhoods	Sunderland City Council
David Noon	Principal Governance Services Officer	Sunderland City Council
Helen Peverley	West Area Co-ordinator	Sunderland City Council
Gilly Stanley	Area Community Development Lead	Sunderland City Council

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Atkinson, Mullen, and Waller.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12th June be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the reference to 'Cornelius Ave' being amended to read 'Cornelius Close'.

Place Board Progress Report

The Chairman of the West Sunderland Area Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the Place Board's 2019/20 Work Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor K. Wood presented the report drawing Members' attention to the initiation of action towards achieving key priorities as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report together with a summary of key areas of influence and achievements of the Place Board in relation to the Performance Management of Local Services, Highway Maintenance

Capital Programme, Supporting local Shopping Centres, Developing a volunteer led West Clean and Green Programme, West Walk and Talk Programme, the delivery of a further themed event in Barnes Park for 2020 and Safety Works as at 20th September, 2019.

There being no questions or comments on the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the report be received and noted and;
- ii) the progress and performance update with regard to the West Area Place Board Work Plan for 2019/20 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report be noted;
- iii) consideration be given to the financial issues arising from the Place Board report later in the meeting at item 6 on the agenda.

People Board Progress Report

The Chairman of the West Sunderland Area People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the People Board's 2019/20 Work Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Watson presented the report drawing Members' attention to the initiation of action towards achieving key priorities as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report together with a summary of key areas of influence and achievements of the People Board in relation to monitoring the performance and delivery of Children's Centres, maintaining the partnership with Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, Working with Vulnerable Communities, Activities for young people and Holiday Hunger, Community Led Local Delivery (CLLD) EU funding, West NEET Project and Tackling Worklessness and Raising Aspirations as at 20th September, 2019.

There being no questions or comments on the report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the report be received and noted and;
- ii) approval be given to the focus for the West Health Fund as detailed on page 18 of the agenda papers
- ii) the progress and performance update with regard to the West Area People Board Work Plan for 2019/20 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report be noted;
- iii) consideration be given to the financial issues arising from the People Board report later in the meeting at item 5 on the agenda.

Area Arrangements Update

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided elected members with an update on the outcomes of a recent workshop where the Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture, together with the Area Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs discussed opportunities to strengthen the Council's Area Arrangements.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Helen Peverley, West Area Co-ordinator presented the report briefing members on the key issues raised, the agreed actions and a summary of progress made to date. Members were informed that the Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder together with the Area Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs had agreed to meet again in October to discuss progress on the actions and any members comments from this evenings meeting would be submitted for consideration.

The Chairman then invited questions and comments from members.

Councillor O'Brien referred to paragraph 3.8 of the report in relation to the development of Area Communication Plans. He drew members attention to the passage which read "...utilising a package of opportunities that are already available, as well as, Area Committees considering feeding into a 'you said – we did' leaflet for circulation at an area level." He stated that he believed the responsibility for informing residents lay with the individual Ward Councillors rather than through the use of the Area Committee's budget to produce and circulate a leaflet. Councillor O'Brien stated in the strongest possible terms that he was against the production of the newsletter as part of the Communications package and asked that it was put to the vote. The Chairman advised that the report before the Committee was for information only with a recommendation that it be noted. Members were not being asked to make a decision and therefore he was not prepared to put whether the report should be noted or not to the vote. The Chairman asked the Committee to continue to consider the report.

Councillor Haswell spoke to support Councillor O'Brien's position. In addition he stated that he was nervous about the use of the phrase 'strengthening of the Boards' and wished to see detail around proposals to merge the Place and People Boards.

Councillor Blackett stated that he had briefly researched the issue of leafletting and advised that the Royal Mail charged £100 to print and distribute 1,000 leaflets. He felt that this would not be a cost-effective use of the Committee's resources. He also highlighted the recent notices of motion regarding the environment considered by full Council and the decision to declare a climate emergency. With this in mind, he suggested that the publication of a newsletter was at odds with the Council's drive to produce less paper.

Councillor McDonough stated that he had no firm view either way on the matter however he was wary of the potential danger of such leaflets becoming a 'Townhall Pravda'. With regard to paragraph 2.1 of the report and the stated need for the Area Committee to play a much stronger role in re-engaging with residents, Councillor McDonough believed that the re-engagement should also include the local business community.

Councillor O'Brien reiterated his position that he would not be prepared to support the production of a newsletter. Councillor A. Wilson replied that members were not being asked to make such a decision and were simply being asked to note the report.

Councillor Mann welcomed the proposals to re-engage with the city's residents and stated that it was imperative that the Council reached out to the people. She added that not all residents were IT literate or users of social media (particularly the elderly) and they would probably value being able to receive information via a leaflet.

Councillor D. Dixon strongly supported the proposals to produce a resident engagement strategy and to develop an area communications plan. He acknowledged that the detail was still under development however he believed it was only right and proper that the Council sought to adopt these strategies and it would be madness not to do so.

Councillor Tye added that it was within the gift of Cabinet to unilaterally impose the operation of the revised Area Arrangements on the Area Committees however they had chosen not to do that and were developing the new arrangements in conjunction with the Area Chairs and Vice Chairs. He presumed that the report before members represented the current position in respect of the discussions with the Portfolio holder and that any comments made by members this evening would be fed back for consideration at the next Area Chairs meeting. Ms Peverley and Ms Brown confirmed that this would be the case.

There being no further questions for Ms Peverley or Ms Brown, the Chairman moved the recommendation in the report that it be noted.

Councillors O'Brien and Haswell having reiterated their request that a vote be taken on the matter, Mr Noon, Principal Governance Services Officer advised that it was custom and practice that information reports which did not require the Committee to make a decision were received and noted by affirmation. In circumstances such as this where individual members had strong feelings about particular aspects of the report, these would be recorded in the body of the minute. In addition members had the right to have it recorded in the minutes whether or not they supported the decision made by the Committee.

Councillors O'Brien and Haswell having recorded their objection, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Neighbourhood Engagement and Investment

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided elected members with an update on Neighbourhood Engagement and the various mechanisms which would ensure residents continued to be at the heart of the Council's service delivery, enabling communities and neighbourhoods to become actively involved in the delivery of the City Plan and the developing Neighbourhood Investment Plans, to ensure long-term community resilience.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Helen Peverley, West Area Co-ordinator presented the report briefing members on the key issues arising with particular reference to:-

- the Resident Engagement and Involvement Strategy
- Neighbourhood Investment Plans, and
- Crowdfund Sunderland

Ms Peverley having addressed comments and questions from members in relation to the start up costs of space hive and the mechanism for hosting the space hive site on the Council hub, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that the issue be referred to the West Sunderland Area Place and People Boards for further discussion on how members would wish to support and monitor the delivery of the Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy and Investment Plans.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest – Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Helen Peverley, Area Coordinator, presented the report highlighting the Committee's financial statement, details of 15 projects approved under delegated powers for support from the 2019/20 Community Chest budget and details of proposals for the allocation of SIB funding.

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

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Area Committee's funding statement be received and noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the granting of £120,000 Neighbourhood Fund (formerly SIB) funding towards the West Sunderland Play Area Improvement Programme;
- (iii) approval be given to the granting of £40,000 Neighbourhood Fund funding towards the delivery of a 3 day event in Barnes Park during 2020;
- (iv) approval be given to the recommendation of the People Board to align £90,000 the Neighbourhood Fund towards the priority of West Youth activities,
- (v) approval be given to the development of a Call for Projects to support the West Health outcomes as detailed in item 3 on the agenda, and

- (vi) the approval of the 15 Community Chest applications from the 2019/20 budget as detailed in Annex 1 of the report be noted;

(Signed) P. GIBSON,
Chairman.