

**At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER on MONDAY, 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2021 at 5.30p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Ali, Bewick, M. Dixon, Fagan, P.W.L. Gibson, Hodson, McClennan, Morrissey, Reed, Scanlan, A. Wood and P. Wood

**Also Present:-**

Jo Bell	-	Gentoo
Vicky Gamblin	-	Gentoo
Matthew Jackson	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Julie Maven	-	East Area VCS Network Representative
Nicol McConnell	-	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council
K. Ramanathan	-	East Area VCS Network Representative
Lisa Riddell	-	Community Support Worker, Sunderland City Council
Jon Ritchie	-	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council

**Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received on behalf of Councillor Potts together with Joanne Cooper, Trish Cornish, Shaun Makin, Allison Patterson and Jamie Southwell

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **VCS Area Network Progress Report**

Julie Maven provided the Committee with an update on the work of the VCS Area Network since the last meeting of the Committee. She advised that the network had held two virtual meetings where a number of presentations had been received including from Age UK. The VCS Alliance had held a virtual workshop in May.

The Chair thanked the VCS organisations and their volunteers for all of their hard work.

2. RESOLVED that the update from the VCS Network be noted.

### **Northumbria Police Update**

No representative from Northumbria Police was in attendance however a written update was circulated which detailed the work of the Police in the area.

Members then raised some matters which would be forwarded to the Neighbourhood Inspector for a response.

Councillor Ali expressed concerns over cars racing along Ryhope Road in the evening and asked whether this could be looked into by the Police; there were mobile speed cameras used during the day but these did not address this issue.

Councillor Hodson stated that speeding traffic was also an issue in the area around Thornholme Road and Durham Road which included groups racing each other. He asked whether Officers from the Northumbria Police Traffic Section could attend a future meeting to discuss this issue.

The Chair advised that there had been an accident in Ryhope near to Tunstall Village Green where a child had been knocked over; she felt that there was a need for speed checks to be undertaken along this road towards Burdon Park. Councillor Bewick added that he had spoken with the Highways department about having crossings on this road but he had been told that the road was not wide enough and that there had not been enough accidents to require any work to be done; he felt that something needed to be done to improve safety on this road.

Councillor McClennan asked whether an update on drug related crime could be provided; there were issues with cannabis farms and drug dealing in various wards within the area.

3. RESOLVED that the update from Northumbria Police be noted and Members comments and questions be forwarded to the Neighbourhood Inspector.

### **Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Update**

No representative from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance however a written update was circulated which detailed the work of the Service in the area.

Members then raised some questions which would be forwarded to Mr Makin for a response

Councillor P.W.L. Gibson raised the issue of fires in Blakeney Woods in Doxford Ward; Ms McConnell advised that there was work being done to identify the areas which were incident hot spots and that from looking at the circulated map it looked as though the recorded fires were those at Blakeney Woods.

Councillor Hodson advised that there had been a spate of refuse fires in back lanes in Millfield; there had been this issue previously along the same route towards Pallion; he was concerned that the previous localised issue was re-emerging. He asked whether there was any further information available on this issue.

Councillor Bewick advised that there was a consultation ongoing at Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and he asked Members to encourage residents to complete this consultation. There would be an increase in 46 firefighters across the service area with 13 being for Sunderland. These would be to crew the Aerial Ladder Platform.

4. RESOLVED that the update from Tyne and Wear fire and Rescue Service be noted and Members questions and comments be forwarded to Mr Makin.

### **Gentoo Update**

Jo Bell provided the update from Gentoo, she advised that in March a project had started to improve the security at the City Centre tower blocks which was going well and was planned to be completed by the end of July. The renewal programme was continuing and the sales launch for the latest stage of redevelopment at Doxford was imminent; the whole programme was planned to be completed by 2024.

The garage demolition project to clear blocks of garages which were no longer fit for purpose was ongoing and so far a number of garages in the Ford and Pennywell areas had been identified; there were a number of other garages across the city which were being looked at.

Members were invited to attend a meeting with the South and Central Area Neighbourhood Teams.

Councillor Hodson referred to a consultation which had taken place with residents of the City Centre tower blocks regarding the bin chutes and janitorial services; the residents relied on these and he asked whether there was any feedback on the consultation. Ms Bell advised that there was no intention to remove the bin chutes as none of the residents wanted these removing. There had been a positive response regarding the janitorial services and there would be changes to improve resources, but the service would not be removed. This survey had been an internal consultation so the results had not been communicated to residents although she agreed that it could be beneficial to inform residents of the results.

Councillor Hodson then commented that the service had reduced but some residents behaved as though the service was the same such as leaving furniture in the corridors. He also stated that recycling could be difficult for the residents as they needed to take recycling down to the bin stores and there were heavy doors and high bins to deal with; there were a lot of residents who were keen to recycle more.

Councillor Morrissey advised that there were issues with the front door at South Durham Court and that there were antisocial behaviour issues at D'Arcy Court including broken glass in a stairwell door which had not been repaired. Ms Bell advised that she was unaware of these issues and asked that she be informed of issues so that she could look into them.

Councillor Ali referred to reports from residents about antisocial behaviour that had been made to him and asked who should be contacted at Gentoo about this. He also queried what could be done if a tenant was not living in their Gentoo property. Ms Gamblin advised that she was not aware of any ongoing issues but there were some general nuisance complaints received. She asked that she be informed of the issues. If a tenant was not living at a property then steps would be taken to reclaim the property as it would be considered to be abandoned.

Councillor M. Dixon queried the maintenance schedule for communal gardens; there was hard work done to keep them free of litter however they often felt neglected. Ms Bell advised that there was a schedule and there was also a list of hotspots for maintenance teams to address; she asked that any issues be brought to her attention so that she could pass this information onto the grounds maintenance teams.

5. RESOLVED that the update from Gentoo be noted.

## **East Area Committee Arrangements 2021/2022**

The Chair of the East Sunderland Area Neighbourhoods and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the East Area Committee Delivery Plan for 2020/2023 and an update on the progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor M. Dixon introduced the report and drew attention to the remit of the Committee which was set out in paragraph 3.1 and informed Members that they were all welcome to attend the Neighbourhood and Community Board meetings. He advised that the Board was not a decision making body and that it would make recommendations to the Area Committee for final endorsement. He drew attention to the LMAPS group and advised that the Members who sat on the group would contact Members to ask if they had anything to raise and would feed back any issues. He also drew attention to the priorities which had been identified as part of the delivery plan which were set out in Annex 2 to the report.

The VCS Network meetings were co-chaired by the Chair of the Area Committee; there were already some Members who regularly attended the network meetings and it would be good to see an increase in the number of Members who attend these meetings to have each ward represented at each network meeting. There was a new link officer role which had been filled by Lisa Riddell and her role would help to create a link between the VCS and the Council.

Councillor M. Dixon then thanked Ms McConnell for meeting with all of the ward councillors to look at the priorities and to meet with new Councillors to give them an idea of the work of the Area Committee.

Councillor Hodson stated that the LMAPS was working better now than in previous years; there was much more feedback received which was vital for Members to know what issues there were in the area.

Councillor Scanlan stated that there was a lot of information received from the police and that speeding had been looked at during a previous LMAPS meeting along with drug issues.

Councillor P.W.L. Gibson referred to the priority 'Increase 5G access across all neighbourhoods and support people with digital learning resources' and expressed concerns that the elderly, who often needed support with computers, were excluded from the priority. He also referred to the 'Preserve and celebrate local heritage' priority and advised that there were issues with litter on the George Stephenson Trail and in Doxford Park. Ms McConnell advised that the elderly were a target group and that there was a walking wellness programme. Environmental improvements were planned for the George Stephenson Trail and there would be task group meetings to discuss these.

Councillor P. Wood advised that on page 18 the reference to Leechmere Way should in fact refer to Essen Way. He also referred to the table of priorities on page 9 and queried why the Neighbourhood Watch priority had an X next to it rather than a tick. Ms McConnell advised that feedback from residents had shown that there was a desire to reinvigorate the neighbourhood watch however the pandemic had impacted on the work around this so it would be revisited in the future; it was likely not to be done as part of the delivery plan ; work would be done with residents associations and partners to engage with residents.

Councillor Bewick referred to the speed surveys that had been undertaken on Stockton Road and Black Road and queried whether there was any update; he had been told that the work on Stockton Road would not be going ahead. Ms McConnell stated that she was unaware of this; she thought that this was part of the work to identify new speed camera sites and would look into it further. She added that the Speed Camera Partnership funded the speed cameras which was why the area committee did not give any funds for this.

Councillor Ali referred to the Empty Properties and Private Landlords priority; he stated that letters had been sent to owners of empty properties and queried what would happen if owners did not want to sell. Ms McConnell advised that the Assistant Director of Housing would be invited to a meeting of the Board to discuss issues in the area and to provide answers to Members questions. It was up to Members to prioritise the different priorities for the Area to establish when to look at each priority.

Councillor Ali then stated that empty properties were a real problem in Ryhope and Hendon and that there were landlords with empty properties which they could not afford to sell but which were not fit to be rented. Ms McConnell stated that she was aware of some issues in Millfield relating to former student housing which was standing empty. Councillor Morrissey added that Back on the Map was working to tackle the issue.

Councillor Scanlan stated that at the March meeting information had been provided that there had been 108 empty properties brought back into use, since then a further 18 had been brought back into use. Councillor Hodson advised that Scrutiny had also been provided with this information and that he had asked for a map showing the locations of the properties which he suggested would be useful to be provided to the Area Committee. Councillor M. Dixon stated that housing was a huge issue and that there was a landlord accreditation scheme; there had been a selective licensing scheme in Hendon however this had been expensive and had not worked as well as planned.

Councillor Hodson asked that someone attend a meeting to discuss highways as there were a number of highways issues within the priority list.

6. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The terms of reference for the Neighbourhood and Community Board, as set out in annex 1 be noted and consideration be

given to the progress and performance update with regard to the Area Committee delivery plan 2020/23 and the proposals for future delivery set out in annex 2 be agreed.

- b. The Area Committee update video which summarised the annual performance of the Area Committee during 2020/21 be noted and it also be noted that a summary of the Area Committee performance be shared at a future meeting of the Council.

## **East Area Budget Report**

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided financial statements in respect of the Area Committee's delegated budgets and presented proposals for funding requests.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms McConnell presented the report and advised that the area budget stood at a total of £605,166 and this was set out in table 1 of the report. Part of this budget was the Neighbourhood fund for which there was £487,352; there had been budget aligned from this for two projects totalling £90,000 and there was one funding proposal for projects totalling £29,570 to deliver the Fancy a Day Out Project presented to the Area Committee which was set out at paragraph 3.2 and in annex 1.

In 2020 there had been Neighbourhood Capital Investment Programme funds of £500,000 allocated to the Area Committee to be spent in the three years to 2023; the remaining balance was £67,814.

Community Chest funds of £10,000 had been allocated to each Ward to be spent over the coming year; Millfield had approved £1,150 to a project which was set out in annex 3.

Councillor McClennan expressed concerns over the reference to 'gaming' in the Fancy a Day Out Project; she told the Committee of the problems that gaming addictions could have and that it was an activity that could cause isolation and have a negative effect on social skills. There had been significant disruption to young people's social interaction over the last year and she was concerned that this activity would not help to promote socialising. She felt that gaming needed to be removed from the activities or that there needed to be clarification of what would be involved.

Councillor Morrissey stated that he did not see any issue with the inclusion of gaming; most people who played video games did not experience harm or addiction. Councillor Reed added that most games that young people played did not have any spending of real money and there was a difference between gaming and gambling. Councillor Ali added that his 12 year old son played games and that there was no issue with this; parents needed to take

responsibility for their children's gaming activities. Councillor Bewick stated that he understood the concerns raised but felt that groups would not do anything that would be irresponsible. Ms McConnell stated that the concerns had been noted and that they would be raised with the group and feedback would be provided.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The financial statements set out in sections 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1 be noted.
- b. Approval be given to the £29,570 from the Neighbourhood Fund to deliver the Fancy a Day Out Programme as set out in section 3.2 and in annex 1.
- c. The approved Community Chest grants from April 2020 to June 2021 as set out in annex 2 and 3 be noted.

**Planning Applications – For Information Only**

Current Planning Applications relating to the East Sunderland Area for the period 1<sup>st</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 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) E. GIBSON,  
Chairman.