

**At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held remotely on THURSDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021 at 6.00p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor F. Miller in the Chair

Councillors Farthing, Fletcher, Kelly, G. Miller, Scaplehorn, Taylor, D. Trueman, H. Trueman 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
Mrs. Helen Peverley	-	Area Co-ordinator – Sunderland City Council
Ms Allison Paterson	-	Area Co-Ordinator – Sunderland City Council
Ms. Shirley Gillum	-	VCS Representative
Ms. Kathy McKenna	-	VCS Representative
Inspector Nick Gjorven	-	Northumbria Police
Mr. John Chapman	-	Gentoo

The Chairman welcomed everyone, made a short speech to acknowledge the work of carried out by everyone over this trying period of time and opened the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Lauchlan, D. E. Snowdon, D. Snowdon and P. Walker.

## **Declarations of Interest**

### Washington Area Budget Report

Councillor Scaplehorn made an open declaration on the proposal to approve Washington Neighbourhood Capital Investment Funds for the Bowes Rope Haulage Project as a Member of the Board of Trustees for Bowes Railway and left the meeting during consideration of the application.

## **Minutes of the last meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendments of the following typo's:

Page 3 Para 6 – The Chairman referred to the Community Wealth Building Champion role rather than the Community Health Building Champion.

Page 6 Para 5 – Mr Sowerby and not Ms Sowerby.

## **Washington Area Committee 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 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 Taylor referred to a previous meeting in which he had raised questions over Section 106 payments and enquired if there had been any update on this.

Mrs Purvis advised that there wasn't an officer in attendance at this meeting who would be able to provide these responses and suggested that the next Board meeting would be where the answers could be supplied.

Councillor Taylor commented that it had been suggested that an officer be available and expressed his frustration over the length of time this was taking.

Councillor Williams referred to the ERG mitigation measures and the 10 barrier sites and enquired if it could be confirmed which sites these were. Mrs Purvis advised that the sites included 7 in James Steel Park, 1 that Councillor

Williams had proposed in Princess Anne Park (Viewpoint), 1 in Staithes and 1 in Shepherds Way.

Councillor Farthing referred to page 17 of the agenda and the action to develop a co-ordinated approach with relevant partners to support VCS to help the local community eat and learn to prepare/cook healthy meals – Social Kitchen/Learn to Cook Project. Councillor Farthing commented that this was rather a limited undertaking and she felt what we also needed to look at was the growing dependence on food banks and trying to look at a scheme which may wean people off these.

Councillor Farthing advised that she had been speaking with the foodbanks recently and there were several schemes across the City, particularly the SARA scheme which could be looked at, otherwise we were going to have such a high dependency on foodbanks in Washington, especially if the £20 week reduction in benefits was implemented as proposed.

Mrs Purvis advised that Councillor Farthings comments would be well received going into the Board meeting where they would be looking at how to take forward that particular action and it was envisaged that Members may wish to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at this action.

Councillor H. Trueman enquired as to the Section 106 money already put in place for fixed play in the Washington West Ward and if this had been signed off yet. Mrs Purvis advised that the fixed play report had the money aligned to those projects and Item 3 of this agenda showed that and they were looking to align Washington Area Committee funding towards other play facilities on the understanding that there was a contribution from Sunderland City Council and that the Section 106 stays aligned as was.

Councillor Taylor referred to ERG measurers and his offer to meet with officers to discuss suggestions and proposals and this had still not happened.

Mrs Purvis advised that David Guy was currently costing up the proposals/new measures and to put to bed any new issues that may arise at any of the proposed sites so they were liaising with the Rights of Way officer on if they required any additional measures such as horse gates or different gates/barriers on the sites. They were still waiting for Mr Guy to come back with those costings and if there was any need for additional requirements.

In response to Councillor Taylor's enquiry as to if there was an indication when this report would be made available, Mrs Purvis advised the Officer had been working hard on this and they were currently waiting on the confirming of requirements around planning permissions, so once this was done they would be able to submit the report with all the costs of what was needed, whether this includes planning fees and other considerations.

Mrs Purvis also advised that she hoped they would have the final sums to move forward with this within the next couple of weeks.

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 Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020- 2023 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report, and the reports from the Task Groups as detailed under Paragraph 4 of the report.
- ii) Agreed the recommendations for the completion of Highways Maintenance Capital Maintenance programmes 2021/22 in Washington, as detailed at Item 2 Annex 2 of the report
- iii) Noted the Area Committee Video presented at the meeting

**Washington 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 wished to refer to page 52 of the agenda and a typo with the Recommendation to align two amounts of funding to Usworth Park Development Plan and one should be to Princess Anne Park Development Plan. Mrs Purvis confirmed that this was indeed a typo and would be noted.

With regards to the noting of Community Chest applications, Councillor Scaplehorn wished to compliment Natalie Hewison on her work in processing these applications.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Noted the financial statements set out within sections 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1 of the report;
- ii) Approved the 6 projects as detailed in Section 2 and Annex 1 of the report using the Neighbourhood Fund;
- iii) Approved the 3 projects as detailed in Section 3 and Annex 2 of the report, using the Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme;
- iv) Noted the approved Community Chest grants between April 2020 and March 2021 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)

Mrs Purvis presented the report on behalf of the VCS Network.

Councillor Williams wished to comment on the amazing support the VCS are and we would be stuck without their flexibility and abilities to work with families and cut through the issues that as a council we cannot be as effective with. We were really fortunate that we have such a strong group and Councillor Williams wished to thank them for their work.

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) 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 Gjorven presented the report and expanded on the figures provided, adding that it was a strange period with figures reducing but call figures remaining exactly the same. Overall crime had received a drop of around 20% but they were not taking their eye off the ball with plans in the future to improve the service and the issues around Sulgrave/Concord and the perennial problem of motorbikes in which he was taking charge of an operation to look at tackling this issue.

With regards to the Northern Area Playing fields where cars had been driving on, causing damage, Work had been done with video evidence to track a perpetrator down and they will be charged for the damage caused and hopefully this will be a deterrent going forward.

Inspector Gjorven advised that whilst ASB was down, the figures were creeping up and this had been noted since the Governments roadmap out of lockdown had been published and they would be looking to get back into the schools now that they were open.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Gjørven for the report and all the hard work undertaken by his staff.

Councillor Taylor enquired if any update could be given on the attack of firefighters in the Penshaw Park district. Inspector Gjørven advised that there had been two, over three nights which it was believed would be a continuing trend so plain clothes officers had been placed there, they were still waiting for the CCTV also but the perpetrators never returned so it may have been that the press release had frightened them off but it hadn't happened since. They were still keeping an eye on this and the Fire Authority were keeping them updated as to what was happening.

Councillor Taylor wished to inform Inspector Gjørven of a recent trend he was witnessing, which was untaxed vehicles parked on the public highway. Inspector Gjørven advised that the vehicle excise enforcement had been taken off them a number of years back and whilst they do receive reports, unfortunately this was not something they looked at anymore.

Councillor Scaplehorn advised of an untaxed vehicle in Blackfell that had been reported for close on a year now which was blocking the pavement. Pictures had been sent in and the DVLA had been notified but it was still there blocking the pavement and enquired if there was anything that could be done. Inspector Gjørven commented that due to COVID, the DVLA had admitted that they hadn't been visiting locations as much but suggested that Councillor Scaplehorn send him the details of this issue and he would look into this.

Councillor Scaplehorn enquired if there had been any update on the new Neighbourhood Watch Scheme being introduced in North Tyneside. Inspector Gjørven advised that an inspector based at Southwick was looking at this and they were trying to roll this out but with the restrictions we have had of late, they couldn't sit down and have meetings with people or explore who would be part of that but it is something they were looking to review and bring back in some way, shape or form.

Councillor Williams noted that ASB was rising due to Covid related figures and that we had given out the majority of fines in the area and enquired if this had been Northumbria or Sunderland in particular. Inspector Gjørven advised that this was Northumbria as a whole and had been for people gathering in houses, unnecessary car journeys. Public spaces was a difficult area and had proven a challenge.

Councillor Williams commented that it didn't seem fair that Covid be included with ASB as we knew it, as this distorted the figures and should have been a separate category.

Councillor Williams also commented on a recent attack made in Princess Anne Park and how to balance the fear of crime and the actual crime itself. Inspector Gjørven commented that social media was so powerful now and crimes can be embellished, and this reaches a far wider audience than used to historically. Inspector Gjørven commented that it may be time for him to

meet with those in charge of residents associations social media pages to give them the facts and statistics to back those up that you are very unlikely to be attacked in the parks, to alleviate those fears.

Councillor Williams referred to a recent correspondence with a resident who had reported ASB in one of the subways and the officer had suggested that they get in touch with the Council, which was disappointing to see the buck being passed and it wasn't particularly helpful terminology and angered residents. This issue may need an LMAP's camera and this was the partnerships camera, not the Council's.

Inspector Gjorven advised that he had looked at this and there had been no Neighbourhood Officer who had gone to any of those instances so he had tracked back and they would be speaking to the resident who had reported the issue.

Councillor Farthing firstly wished to thank Inspector Gjorven and his officers for the work carried out in Lumley Close on behalf of residents there that had suffered a great deal by those causing disturbance.

With regards to Violence against a person figures, Councillor Farthing enquired if this included Domestic violence figures. Inspector Gjorven advised that violence against a person included a mix of things such as harassment, which a lot of this was carried out over the internet, some of it was domestic violence, which had increased slightly but there was an expectation that this would decrease once the restrictions were lifted. It had been quite challenging but they had dedicated domestic violence cars out and about, working with partner agencies and was something they were trying to get a hold of.

Councillor Farthing also commented that motorbikes in Oxclose was an issue both in subways and around Holley Park School. Inspector Gjorven advised that these areas could be added to his operation and he had the hotspots mapped out and wherever he got the calls from he would send somebody out.

In response to Councillor Farthing's enquiry if Operation Modero would be brought into their part of Washington to tackle speeding as it was time people were fined for this as they took no notice of signage, Inspector Gjorven advised that if he was given the names of streets he could send officers out to asses if these could be included in the operation.

Councillor Taylor referred to Motorcycle disorder and suggested that James Steel Park in the vicinity of the Coast to Coast cycle path route was one of the main spots that the Police may wish to consider.

Inspector Gjorven advised that it was a really difficult issue to tackle as they had a pursuit policy based on threat, harm and risk so if someone had committed an armed robbery or a really serious assault, then the need to pursue would be much higher than if we just assumed they haven't got any driving documents.

Inspector Gjorven informed the Committee that he had contacted Durham and Cleveland who also suffer issues with off road motorbikes and their policy on chasing motorbikes was slim to none and very rare so certainly wasn't something that would solve our issues. As a force they were looking at drones but this involved a significant cost and was not just about buying the drones and flying them but they needed a licence to do so, with only one person in the force who had one of those. So it was something that was being looked at, and if it came in, he would utilise this as soon as he possibly could but it wasn't envisaged to happen any time in the near future. In the meantime the area would be flooded with officers to provide added visibility.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

**c) 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> December 2020 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021, compared with the same period in 2019/20.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Phil Sowerby, Station Manager could not be in attendance therefore the Chairman requested that any comments/queries be sent to Mr Sowerby.

Councillor Farthing referred to Page 63 – 3.4.1 which mentions that Oxclose was in Central ward and was in fact Washington South Ward.

Councillor Williams also raised a discrepancy with para 3.4.4 and queried where Washington referred to and queried if this meant there were no fires in Washington Central Ward. Mrs Purvis advised that she would contact Mr Sowerby so he could clarify the issues raised.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) F. Miller,  
Chairman.