

At a meeting of the WEST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 2008 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors Allan, Arnott, Morrissey, Old, J.B. Scott, P. Watson, S. Watson, and T. Wright.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Gofton, L. Martin and A. Wilson.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 3rd July, 2008

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 3rd July, 2008 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 7 – Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) Regeneration Issues Report

Councillor Morrissey declared a personal interest in the Dance Mobility for Children with Disabilities Project, as his son attended Portland School.

Presentation from Northumbria Police on Crime Rates Relating to the West Area

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Acting Inspector Jones of Northumbria Police who presented a report detailing the latest statistics for total crime in the Sunderland West Area.

(For copy statistics – see original minutes).

Acting Inspector Jones advised that there had been a reduction in all the crime categories with the exception of Thefts from Vehicles (18.1% increase), Burglary from Dwellings (22.1% increase) and Other Crime (11.9% increase). The increases in relation to Thefts from Vehicles and Burglary from Dwellings equated to an additional 13 and 17 crimes respectively. With regard to the increase in Other Crime, Acting Inspector Jones informed Members that this was largely due to a growing number of thefts of lead.

2. RESOLVED that the information provided in the crime statistics be received and noted.

Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Groups (LMAPS)

Consideration was given to a report of the West Area LMAP (copy circulated) on issues discussed at meetings of the LMAPS held on 17th June and 22nd July, 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan advised that at the last LMAPS meeting, reference had been made to the provision in the Council's 2008/09 budget to provide each Area with 4 CCTV cameras. He asked Officers to update the LMAP at its next meeting as to current position regarding the provision of the cameras and information as to their type e.g. would they be fixed or demountable so they could be moved between crime hot spots.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted; and
- (ii) an update be provided to the next LMAP meeting on the current position regarding the provision of funding for the 4 CCTV cameras and how they were to be utilised.

Regeneration Issues Report: Feedback on Projects Funded Through Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB)

The Chief Executive (Acting) submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with information on the following project which it had previously funded through its SIB allocation:-

- Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre's Community Education Project.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Richard Parry, Area Regeneration Officer, introduced Maggie Perry, Centre Manager in respect of the Project who proceeded to provide Members with a commentary on her feedback report and answer questions thereon.

Members recorded their thanks to Ms. Perry for the support provided to the community by the Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Perry for her presentation, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the feedback report be received and noted.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) : Regeneration Issues Report

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on the proposed allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) funding to support the following initiatives of benefit to the area:-

- (i) £9,372 as a contribution to the 'Dance Mobility for Children with Disabilities' Project;
- (ii) £5,000 as a contribution to the 'Seated Exercise and Mature Moves' Project;
- (iii) £6,200 as a contribution to the 'Children's Activities' Project; and
- (iv) £60,000 as a contribution to the 'Barnes Burn - Stream and Habitat Rejuvenation' Project.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Richard Parry, Area Regeneration Officer, presented the report and advised that the 4 applications for funding before the Committee were requesting £80,572 in total from the 2008/09 budget. Should the Committee grant these requests, a balance of £79,348 would be left in the budget.

Consideration was given to each application.

With regard to the Barnes Burn application, Members raised concerns in respect of the following issues:-

- (i) a lack of consultation;
- (ii) the request for funding represented approximately one quarter of the Committee's SIB budget. Although the benefits of the project were apparent, it would require careful deliberation and to be weighed against other pressing needs in the West Area; and
- (iii) the West Area Committee was being requested to solely fund a project that would provide citywide benefits. Members felt that contributions should be sought from the other Area Committees

or that the project should be financed through mainstream funding.

Given the concerns raised by Members, the Chairman moved that consideration of the application be deferred to a future meeting to allow additional information to be sought and further consultations to be undertaken. Accordingly, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (a) consideration of the application in respect of the 'Barnes Burn - Stream and Habitat Rejuvenation Project' be deferred to a future meeting to allow additional information to be sought and further consultations to be undertaken;
- (b) approval be given to the allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget funding of:-
 - (i) £9,372 as a contribution to the 'Dance Mobility for Children with Disabilities' Project;
 - (ii) £5,000 as a contribution to the 'Seated Exercise and Mature Moves' Project; and
 - (iii) £6,200 as a contribution to the 'Children's Activities' Project.

Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) 2008/09 Ward-Based Community Chest

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on 7 projects recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest Scheme in respect of the Barnes, Sandhill and St. Anne's Wards.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that approval be given to the 7 projects recommended for support from the 2008/09 Community Chest budget with a total value of £3,127 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report.

Barnes Park Regeneration Update – Parks for People Funding

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated the Committee on the Parks for People Big Lottery Funding application for Barnes Park.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Peverley, Project and Service Development Manager presented the report highlighting the background to the project, the current position following the submission of the Stage 1 Application in September 2007 and timescales in relation to the Stage 2 Application.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor S. Watson, Ms. Peverley advised that the Barnes Burn Rejuvenation and Habitat Project could not be included in the application as it did not meet the criteria for Heritage Lottery funding.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that the Stage 2 Application for Parks for People funding for Barnes Park be supported.

Carnegie Libraries Celebrations

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on a programme of events to be hosted at Kayll Road Library from 1st to 4th July, 2009 as part of the Carnegie Libraries Celebrations.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Progress Report

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) for the period 1st April to 31st July, 2008 which informed Members of the performance of the Benefits Section in the processing of new claims/charges in circumstances in accordance with the new National Indicator (NI 181) together with general developments relevant to the service.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Steve Atkinson, Benefits Manager was pleased to report that the new software had bedded in and with staff now accustomed to the new systems, the average time taken to process a new claim was running at 16.35 days.

Councillor Allan stated that performance had suffered during the implementation of the new systems, however promises had been made that once staff were fully acquainted with the new procedures, performance would improve. He was pleased that Mr. Atkinson had been as good as his word and offered his congratulations to the staff in the Benefits Section.

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) D. FORBES,
Chairman.