

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held at WASHINGTON MULTI PURPOSE CENTRE on TUESDAY 14TH JANUARY, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Scaplehorn in the Chair

Councillors Farthing, Kelly, F. Miller, G. Miller, Dianne Snowdon, David Snowdon, Thompson, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, Walker and Williams.

Louise Butler	-	Chief Executives
Karon Purvis	-	Chief Executives
David Hardy	-	City Services
Paul Wood	-	Commercial and Corporate Services
Neil Revely	-	Executive Director, People Directorate
Alan Caddick	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Gary Clasper	-	Office of the Chief Executive
John Rostron	-	VCS Representative
Kasia Kurowska	-	VCS Representative
Steve Graham	-	TWFRS
Sergeant Wayne Sinclair	-	Northumbria Police
Colin McCartney	-	Gentoo

Members of the Washington Community.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Fletcher, Lauchlan, Padgett and D. Trueman. Inspector Paul Stewart, Jane Eland and Lorraine Hughes

Declarations of Interest

Item 5 – Financial Statement and Proposals for further allocation of Resources

Councillor Dianne Snowdon made an open declaration as a trustee of Washington Mind and took no part in the discussion.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 26th September, 2013

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 26th September, 2013 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendment that Councillor Thompson was present at the meeting.

Place Board – Progress Report

The Chair of the Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with an update of progress against the current years (2013/14) Place Board Work Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Dianne Snowden, Chair of the Place Board presented the report and introduced Gary Clasper, Principal Policy Officer for Planning to discuss the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and requested Members to help inform the development of the future policy through using their local knowledge.

Councillor Kelly commented that there was a massive concern over the possible reimplementation of the Leamside Line as this could draw the life out of the area with the system being designed to draw people into Newcastle, this would have a major impact on Sunderland and there was a need for other forms of transport also.

In response to Councillor Williams query over housing capacity and timescales, Mr Clasper advised that the plan was aimed for a 20 year period with a housing capacity of 20,000 for the entire city and 900 capacity for Washington. Mr Clasper commented that Washington was fringed with Green Belt land and it was difficult to see where land was available. There were possible options for the use of redundant employment land and officers were looking to build useful relationship with Members to utilise their knowledge and information.

Councillor Williams commented that she would like clarity on what the nature of properties would be on the Glebe and Ayton Primary School sites.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that the piecemeal developments occurring in Washington were creating schooling problems and a lack of places for children. There were dreadful Trading Estates in the area which were no longer used for Industrial purposes and felt that these could be used for nice housing developments rather than the take away establishments currently residing there.

The Chairman agreed but advised that they had attempted to tackle the issue of the trading estates for years and had gotten nowhere and he had asked for a meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive to try and look at this on a corporate level.

Councillor Kelly commented that he felt we needed a social housing plan as waiting lists were growing, their needed to be a balance struck and an approach that benefits the people of the area and not just the developers.

Colon McCartney, Gentoo advised that they were looking at available land and that turnover had increased.

Councillor Kelly commented that we were losing people from the city due to the standards of housing and this was a massive issue which he felt should be looked at as part of the Core Strategy.

Alan Caddick, Head of Housing Support and Community Living informed the Committee that he would also be working with Mr Clasper on certain areas to provide a holistic approach on Social Housing and how to get things moving.

Councillor Farthing commented that in terms of retail in Washington, parking at the Galleries Shopping Centre was reaching crisis point. The Chairman advised that unfortunately the Galleries was privately owned and the Council could do very little in this regard.

Councillor David Snowdon commented that the Galleries should still have a corporate responsibility to deal with the issue and he would like to see more dialogue take place with their management.

Councillor G. Miller commented that as an authority, we had failed in building houses and we must build more as an economic driver for the area. Unfortunately we were seeing in other areas of the City, where residents were objecting to proposed housing developments, but the target figure of building 15,000 new homes was too low and this was a very important issue which he hoped the area committee would support us on.

Councillor Thompson advised that he would like to see consideration being given to the type of housing to be built as there could be a high number of the older generation that required different types of needs such as sheltered accommodation, this could then free up existing property.

Councillor Kelly commented that Washington had a number of trading estates such as Armstrong, Crowther and Swan and felt the Council needed to look at other areas of Sunderland/Hetton/Houghton in considering Industrial uses and not just Washington. Councillor Kelly also commented that we had to reluctantly accept that we would lose some of the Green Belt land but it needed to be sensitively managed.

Mr Clasper informed the Committee that the Core Strategy was at a crossroads and the housing issue was driving the agenda. 15,000 new homes was a modest number and they were making the first initial steps with a new plan due in the summer which he felt would be radically different and officers were keen to involve Member as much as possible.

Mr Caddick suggested that as a city, it would be advisable to see what extant planning permission applications were approved and speaking to the developers about their intentions for the land as looking at sites was a good way to get things moving.

Mr Clasper advised that the next steps were for a new plan next summer with a green belt review and another round of public consultation as officers were desperate to widen the debate and they would publicise the next round of consultation.

Highways Capital Maintenance Programme

In relation to the Highways Capital Maintenance Programme for 2014/2015 the Committee was advised of a proposal to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss the allocation of resources and it was asked that Members identify to Officers any areas they wish to be considered for works so that they can move forward.

Concord Shopping Centre Improvements

The Chairman advised of a very positive meeting that took place with the Traders of Concord Shopping Centre in order to implement a similar project to the Coalfields Area Committee project that is underway and that he had stated that this Area Committee would try to help as much as possible.

A Cultural Identity for Washington

Councillor Snowden introduced Councillor Kelly who requested consideration be given on how the local offer could contribute to the City's Cultural Strategy. Councillor Kelly commented that it was a review for the entire city and it was extremely important that Areas feed into this. Washington has some fantastic sites available which unfortunately needed work doing to them and he requested that the Area Committee indicate where they see their priorities lying as this was an opportunity for Members to feed in and tell them what was important in their area.

Mrs Purvis advised that she would arrange a date for the Members workshop to take place with the relevant partners.

Councillor G. Miller commented that there was no better time than the anniversary of the new town to look at our cultural heritage and felt that all Members should feed into this review.

Events 2014

Mrs Purvis advised that there would be a proposal under Item 5 to ringfence SIB to fund Washington based events.

Mr Caddick advised that as Chairman of the Veterans Forum, they had a programme of events also, and he would liaise with the Washington Area Committee Chairman to join things up and circulate a programme.

2. RESOLVED that the Committee

- (i) Considered the progress and performance update with regard to the Washington Place Board's Work Plan for 2013/14

- (ii) Noted the issues raised during the Core Strategy update presentation
- (iii) Supported the Place Board recommendation to align SIB funding as detailed under Item 5 to implement the Village Centres Improvement Project
- (iv) Noted and Supported the People Board recommendation to align SIB funding as detailed under Item 5 to implement 'A Local Approach to Employment and Enterprise' including the Concord Shopping Centre Initiative.
- (v) Agreed to a Culture and Heritage Workshop in February 2014
- (vi) Supported the Place Board recommendation to align SIB funding as detailed under Item 5 to deliver an Events 2014 programme.
- (vii) Agreed the proposals and recommendations of the board regarding Public Protection and Regulatory Services.
- (viii) Considered the Performance Report of all SIB funded Place Projects.

People Board – Progress Report

The Chair of the People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with an update of progress against the current years (2013/14) People Board Work Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Williams presented the report and advised that there was a SIB proposal under Item 5 to allocate funding in relation to Transformation of Adult Social Care.

Mrs Purvis advised of the Health Champions Course which had taken place in the Coalfield area which had been most successful due to it being very informative and well delivered

Future Library Services

Councillor Dianne Snowdon enquired if the reduced Library Services would mean that there would be reduced Customer Service Centre hours also. Councillor Kelly advised that the Customer Service Centre hours would remain unaffected and that as part of the new arrangements the Library Services on offer had actually increased not reduced.

The Chairman commented that Kate McCubbin, Community Engagement Librarian for Washington had arranged a book exchange at a local residents association and they had been most pleased with the service.

Councillor Kelly advised that a lot of positive feedback had been received over the new provision with people being able to access services that they couldn't before.

Ensuring services addressing young people's mental health issues are provided at a local level

Councillor Kelly commented that there was a specific issue with young people who were struggling immensely and that he felt special consideration was required to tackle this and requested the Committee reconsider the proposal of including the issue in the wider health agenda.

Councillor G. Miller advised of a safeguarding meeting in which it was informed of suicides being on the rise amongst young people and agreed with Councillor Kelly that it should be given special consideration rather than included in the wider health agenda.

Councillor Williams also agreed and commented that schools were limited in the help they could give and young people were under a great deal of stress currently so we needed to do something.

Councillor Kelly commented on the need to work and develop the Young People Champions.

Councillor Williams commented that she was surprised to see the issue pushed into the general health agenda as it had been a chronic problem for a number of years, especially now as there was a great deal of temptation at present with drugs, alcohol and legal highs for example and felt we needed to look at specific safeguarding.

The Chairman advised that Washington Mind did run support groups. Mrs Purvis proposed that the issue be left on the workplan and the Committee look at this in the future as a possible priority.

John Rostron suggested the secondary schools be consulted to get their input on how to influence and take forward. Biddick School was ready to progress on a suicide prevention/mental health programme with Washington Mind but was in need of help from the Council. Mrs Purvis advised that she would get in touch with the relevant personnel.

A local approach to employment and enterprise

Councillor Williams introduced Councillor G. Miller to give an update on the establishment of the business engagement and enterprise working group. Councillor Miller advised of the need for a jobs fair/business directory as a way to engage with the workforce in the area.

Mrs Purvis commented that the group had only met twice but had achieved a lot of work and it had been very positive.

Sulgrave Flat Complex

Mr Caddick provided an update advising that the ongoing work did not just include Sulgrave, but Concord as well. We were starting to see positives already with reductions in Crime and Anti Social Behaviour.

Mr Caddick also advised that unfortunately, the funding bid for further resource from the Rogue Landlord Fund had been unsuccessful.

Councillor Kelly commented that this needed to be a longer term project if it were to have any significant impact.

Councillor H. Trueman commented on the issues involving funding and advised that Vera Baird had mentioned many times the success of the interventions taking place in Sulgrave and the problem we faced now was that the Leaders of the other authorities wanted the funding to do the same.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee

- (i) Considered the progress and performance update with regards to the Washington People Board Work Plan for 2013/2014
- (ii) Considered the People Board recommendations in relation to the successful applicants to take forward the Addressing Social Isolation Project for Older People as detailed under Item 5 Financial Statement SIB and Community Chest Report
- (iii) Considered the People Board recommendation to determine a local approach to supporting communities to cope with dementia.
- (iv) Noted and Supported the People Board recommendation to align and approve SIB funding as detailed under Item 5 to implement 'A Local Approach to Employment and Enterprise'
- (v) Considered the Performance Report for all SIB funded People Projects.

Financial Statement and Proposals for further allocation of Resources

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to request the Committee's consideration of proposals for the allocation of the Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB), Healthy City Investment Funds that would benefit the area and to note the Community Chest initiatives that would benefit the area.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

In relation to the returning of £15,000 from the Heritage Banner Project, Councillor Thompson commented that he was disappointed to see this occurring and that the

schools were going to miss out. Councillor Thompson suggested that if individual schools came forward to do a similar project, they should be supported.

Councillor Kelly proposed the money be used to look at other schools and if there was no take up, the money should be kept and used as match funding for next year. Councillor Kelly also commented that he felt sure the Washington Arts Centre would oblige in helping.

Mrs Purvis advised that for Audit purposes this money would need to be reclaimed from Beamish and then awarded to another provider via submission of an application.

The Chairman commented that he personally had to encourage every single school to display their banner and felt they shouldn't have to be cajoled. The Chairman advised that he was supportive of the project but when all of this work was carried out and schools didn't attend then it needed to be taken into consideration.

Councillor Farthing commented that she felt it was important for this project to continue.

It was agreed for the money to be returned from Beamish for audit purposes and further investigation be made on Washington Arts Centre's willingness to submit a proposal to take this project over.

In relation to the SIB Application 1 – Village Centre Improvements Project, Councillor Kelly commented that he agreed with the proposed Option 2 in principal but would like to remind officers that the Area Committee was not a 'cash cow' for supplementing reduced department budgets and advised that Groundworks were in possession of massive profits which we were owed and these should be used for projects such as this.

Mrs Purvis requested Members consideration of the Washington Logo's that would be used for the Washington 50 celebrations and could be found on pages 49-52 of the agenda.

Councillor Kelly commented that he felt they should just use the Washington badge as it was simple and most people recognised it.

Councillor Farthing commented that she liked the corporate badge containing the street names.

In relation to SIB Application 3 – Washington 50 Community Programme, Councillor Kelly commented that he was supportive of providing funding but had raised concerns that it needed to be a coordinated approach, that all info was captured and all events that took place were recorded.

Mrs Purvis advised that this was something that could be built into the Call for Projects.

In relation to SIB Application 4 – A Local Approach to Employment and Enterprise, Councillor Kelly commented that there were a number of older people who had lost their jobs that were maybe not as skilled as others and requested that we look at including those also.

Councillor H. Trueman advised that he had taken on the role of apprenticeship champion and had been told by a number of workforces that our children were not good enough or ready to be employed and he felt this was most harsh on our youngsters and an element of leeway should be granted for children starting out in their first jobs to acclimatise.

Mrs Purvis advised that this might be something that could be picked up on through the skills conference.

Councillor G. Miller agreed with Councillor H. Trueman's comments and felt that big businesses should be ashamed for blaming the young people for not being ready, it was unfair to expect a 16 year old to have the life experience and confidence of an adult and it was up to the employer to help them gain these skills which would come with time.

4. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Noted the financial statements set out in the report.
- ii) Approved the return of £15,000 from the Heritage Banner Project to the SIB budget
- iii) Approved the return of £10,000 from the Enterprise Grants for Young People Project to the SIB budget
- iv) Approved the SIB Call for Projects applications to address social isolation in older people as detailed under Paragraph 3.2.1 and Annex 1 of the report totalling £5,915
- v) Approved SIB (2013/14 budget) of £80,000 to deliver the Village Centre Improvements Project as detailed under paragraph 4.1.3 and in Annex 2 of the report.
- vi) Approved SIB (2013/14 budget) of £50,000 to deliver the 3 Washington events as detailed under 4.2.1 and in Annex 2 (subject to SIB appraisal, assessment and consultation)
- vii) Approved SIB Call for Projects for the Washington 50 Project as detailed in Annex 2 totalling £50,000
- viii) Approved SIB (2013/24 budget) of £28,000 to deliver a local approach to employment and enterprise as detailed in Annex 2

- ix) Noted the 26 applications for Community Chest agreed and supported from the 2013/14 allocation, between September – December 2013 as set out in Annex 3 of the report.

Partner Agency Reports

Area Community Voluntary Sector Network

The Washington Area Community Voluntary Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of activity, progress, issues and concerns of the sector.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Rostron advised that the 3 VCS representatives were working with Mrs Purvis and the Chairman as they wanted to see as many VCS groups become more involved, especially with the Washington 50 celebrations and they were going to look at engaging with the smaller groups.

Mr Rostron felt it would be beneficial to sit down with Members and have a Washington specific debate over priorities for Wards/constituents to develop self help groups and to implement community development for when the Government cuts started to take hold over the next three years.

Mr Rostron also commented that he would like to have a meeting with Members in the next 3-4 weeks to unpick the issues and get a much more focussed people priority for the Network and they would like Members feedback on this.

Mrs Purvis advised of the forthcoming VCS Transition Project which was to look at what the Networks would become and how they needed to be evolved and there would be a formal process for the Area Committee to identify priorities.

Councillor Kelly commented that he whole heartedly supported Mr Rostrons comments and that work had to be done now and for the role of the Network we had to give a degree of freedom to engage with the smaller groups.

Councillor G. Miller commented that the volunteers were a major resource and we had to give the VCS their desired meeting with Members to have that discussion.

Councillor Farthing agreed that we needed to have that meeting with the Network as part of Members Community Leadership duties.

Councillor Thompson advised that he also supported this as he felt Community Development brought about sustainability.

Mr Rostron informed the Committee that Surann Valentine was leaving the centre. The Chairman requested that Members thanks be recorded to Ms Valentine for her dedication and involvement with the Area Committee over the years.

The Chairman then introduced Sergeant Sinclair of Northumbria Police who gave a brief update on statistics and advised that Inspector Stewart would provide the year end figures at the next meeting. Councillor G. Miller requested that the 2006 crime figures be supplied as a comparator.

The Chairman then welcomed Steve Graham to introduce himself to the Committee as the new Station Manager of Washington Community Fire Station.

5. RESOLVED that Members noted the contents of the report and considered the opportunities and issues raised by the Washington ACVSN

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting

(Signed) B. SCAPLEHORN,
Chairman.