

At a meeting of the NORTH SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held at COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 23rd JUNE, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Wilson in the Chair

Councillors Bond, Chequer, Chisnall, Doyle, Foster, Hartnack, McKeith, Samuels, A. Smith, Stewart, Usher and Vera

Also in Attendance:-

Ms. Catherine Auld	-	Assistant Director of Economic Regeneration, Sunderland City Council
Mr Steven Bewick	-	Station Manager, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Ms Jude Britton	-	Area Network Representative
Ms. Joanne Coulson	-	Community Support Worker, Sunderland City Council
Mr Richy Duggan	-	Area Network Representative
Ms. Liz Highmore	-	Area Network Representative
Mr Matthew Jackson	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Colin McCartney	-	Head of Operations, Gentoo Housing
Ms. Vivienne Metcalfe	-	Area Community Development Lead, Sunderland City Council
Ms. Ruth Walker	-	Area Network Representative
Insp. Stephen Prested	-	Northumbria Police

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 Butler and S. Johnston and also on behalf of Mr Peter Curtis, Mr Shaun Makin and Mr. Peter McIntyre.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Wilson and Foster declared interests in the applications for Hylton Castle Trust under Item 3 – North Sunderland Area Budget Report and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of these applications.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 24th March, 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

North Sunderland Area Neighbourhood Delivery Plan 2020 – 2023

The Chairman of the North Sunderland Area Committee Neighbourhood and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the North Sunderland Neighbourhood Delivery Plan 2020-2023 and provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan and which also provided an update on the Neighbourhood and Community Board Governance Arrangements for 2022-23.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Foster took Members through the report providing a summary of the key areas of action and/or progress of the Board, with greater detail set out in the annex to the report, which informed the Area Activity Tracker to allow residents to monitor Area Committee's progress throughout the year.

The Committee also received a presentation from Mr Richy Duggan on the St Peter's Raising Aspirations projects. This detailed the partners involved and the program of delivery. The presentation highlighted the work of the Kidz Klub; the activities undertaken through detached youth work and centre based youth work; the adventurous activities; the work of the St Peter's Cycle and Sports hub; and Community Support for vulnerable and elderly residents.

Consultation with young people and families had identified clear needs for this provision within St Peter's Ward and the programme would offer access to a range of activities to promote personal and social development and provide new experiences, opportunities and challenges. A safe space for children, young people, and older members of the community to come and socialise, gain information and support from the team had been provided.

Councillor McKeith commented that there was excellent work done in St Peter's Ward and the presentation had highlighted this excellent work. There were antisocial behaviour issues in all wards and this project had helped to reduce the issues.

In response to Councillor Vera, Mr Duggan advised that the cycling hub was open 6 days a week and was open at different times on different days. There was a lot of information on the Facebook page including details of the activities.

In response to Councillor Chisnall, Mr Duggan stated that staff would support people by going riding with people who had not ridden for a long time or who were disabled. There was also a static cycle and adapted bicycles including hand cycles and trikes. The support of the staff helped to build confidence.

Councillor Samuels referred to the Invest in Parks priority and questioned the timeline for the plan from Design Services for Thompson Park. Ms Metcalfe advised that the report showed the timeline for the priorities; the work by Design Services had been completed in September 2021 and there had then been further design proposals submitted in February 2022; there had then been a meeting with Peter McIntyre before the matter had been taken to the Chief Officer Group.

The Chair commented that he had heard good reports about the work at Cato Street; Ms Parker agreed that it was amazing and that residents were now using the space. Councillor Samuels provided some further information on this matter; the SARA project was based in Southwick and had initially focused on Cato Street to tackle the issues which were in this area. There had been some derelict land which was suffering from antisocial behaviour; there had been a community orchard; planters; a picnic area; and a memorial garden installed in the space and this area was now well used by residents.

The information in the report and video having been fully considered, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- The progress and performance update with regard to the North Sunderland Neighbourhood Delivery Plan for 2020/23 be received and noted and the proposals for future delivery as set out in annex 1 to the report be agreed;
- The Area Committee Governance Arrangements for 2022-23 outlined in section 3 and annex 2 be noted.
- The Year in Numbers outlined in section 4 and annex 3 be noted.
- The communications plan outlined in section 4 and annex 4 be noted.

North Sunderland Area Committee 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 Neighbourhood Funds, Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme and Community Chest and presented proposals for further funding requests.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Metcalfe, Area Community Development Lead, presented the report drawing attention to the recommendations detailed within the report.

The Chair and Vice Chair, Councillors Wilson and Foster, had declared interests in the applications for Hylton Castle Trust and withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of these applications. Councillor Stewart was nominated to Chair the meeting during the consideration of these items and with all Members being in agreement Councillor Stewart took the chair.

The two applications for Hylton Castle Trust for £100,000 each were considered and agreed by the Committee and following this Councillors Wilson and Foster returned to the meeting and Councillor Wilson retook the Chair.

Ms Metcalfe advised that there were changes being made to the Community Chest application process including the creation of an online application form. This would make it easier to apply and would also ensure that all required information was provided before the application was submitted.

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

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the financial statements as set out in tables 1, 2 and 3 of the report be received and noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the allocation of £100,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund to the Hylton Castle Trust for the Castle Project;
- (iii) approval be given to the allocation of £100,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund to Hylton Castle Trust for the Christmas at the Castle Project;
- (iv) approval be given to the allocation of £100,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund to Community Opportunities Ltd for the Downhill Hub Project; and
- (v) the approvals for Community Chest supported from 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 be noted.

Partner Agency Reports - Report of the North Area Voluntary and Community Sector Network

The Voluntary and Community Sector Network submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update with regard to the North Sunderland Area Voluntary and Community Sector network.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Oxley, Area Network Representative, took Members through the report advising that the network had met in June 2022 and shared the agenda items that had been covered.

Members of the Committee were advised that the network had received the Area Committee Call for Projects for youth activities and applications had been submitted.

Ms Coulson advised that the VCS Alliance had been formed around 1 year ago and was intended to support VCS organisations in becoming sustainable by assisting with access to funding and volunteers. The CLLD funding stream had allowed for the creation of the Community Support posts however the funding for this was expiring next year. The setting up of an independent alliance was being considered and work was

being done with the VCS groups to see how they wanted the alliance to look; it was hoped that information would be able to be shared soon.

Ms Metcalfe added that there had been an event which had showcased the VCS and that the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, Gerry Taylor, had visited VCS organisations in the city. She also advised that the call for projects for youth activities had gone out and that the applications would be sent to Members as a responsive decision with the Task and Finish group being sent the recommendations on the applications.

The Chairman commented that the VCS was the bedrock of the North Area and that the youth consortium would be invited to future meetings.

The report having been considered, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Partner Agency Reports - Gentoo Update

Gentoo submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update with regard to the work done by Gentoo between March and June 2022.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr McCartney, Head of Neighbourhoods, Gentoo, presented the report and took Members through the figures relating to the citywide performance. Total arrears had increased by £52,000 over the year however this was still exceptional performance in the current environment and Gentoo benchmarked well against its peer group. Relet times had been longer than desired due to the impact of Covid on customers and staff; this was a key area for improvement for 2022/23.

Councillor Bond commented that the crisis fund of £50,000 was a low amount and Mr McCartney advised that it was a significant increase on the £10,000 that was available last year.

Councillor Samuels queried when the properties at Leeway Green, Carley Hill would be available and Mr McCartney advised that the adverts had been published and viewings would be commencing soon.

The Chair referred to the excellent work done at Cato Street by the SARA project and asked whether Gentoo would join in with planting wild flowers in the area.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Northumbria Police Update

Inspector Prested of Northumbria Police gave an update to the Committee on the current position with regards to crime and anti-social behaviour data and of any on-going issues in the North Sunderland area.

Members were provided with a verbal summary of crime figures within the area and were advised of successful and forthcoming operations in relation to the North Sunderland area of the city.

As part of his presentation Inspector Prested had advised that there had been significant issues around Cato Street before the SARA project had started and that the work of the project had been used as a blueprint for partnership working across the force area.

Work was being done to identify a suitable piece of land for off road motorbikes to be used legally; there had been a site at Follingsby identified. It was difficult to stop riders but work was being done around identifying the riders and where the bikes were stored so that action could be taken; this included the use of drones. Work was also being done with Gentoo and petrol stations to try and tackle the issue. The DART team was visiting the quarry on Sunday nights. There had been over 3000 leaflets distributed in South Tyneside to ask people to inform the police of where the bikes were being stored; there had been no response to this leaflet. There were around 80 access points to the quarry which made it difficult to police however cameras had been installed; the quarry was a location that people travelled to in order to use off road motorbikes. Different forces had different rules around the pursuit of motorbikes; there was a need to consider the increased risks if a chase took place and the officers involved and the control room officers would decide whether a pursuit was safe to be undertaken. Durham Constabulary had a different policy on tactical pursuits than Northumbria.

Councillor Stewart referred to the issue of off road bikes being used to visit the shopping areas in Downhill and Witherwack and queried what support local businesses were giving to tackling the issue. Inspector Prested advised that if the matter was reported then the police would investigate including looking at any CCTV from the shops.

Councillor Samuels queried how the area compared to the city as a whole for total crime and antisocial behaviour. Inspector Prested advised that the area was not top; there had been a significant increase in commercial burglaries however antisocial behaviour was more of an issue within the city centre. There were areas which were of more concern than the North area.

In response to queries from Councillor Usher, Inspector Prested advised that there had been a number of officers had retired and there had been 3 PCSOs moved into the area with a further two coming into the area in July. There was a continuous recruitment drive and the university graduates would be joining in July. There were a number of different schemes for joining such as the graduate entry route and the direct detective entry as well as the more traditional route of joining.

Councillor Doyle referred to the commercial burglaries, these were similar to the additional offences in the city centre; he queried whether the suspects were the same. Inspector Prested advised that the issue had been discussed with the team and it was known that burglars did travel to commit offences. There were forensic opportunities and suspects had been identified; it was the same suspects who appeared time and time again. Crime prevention work was done with the victims and advice was given on security however it could be difficult to secure against unsophisticated offences such as

bricks being thrown through windows. Councillor Doyle then commented that some businesses had been targeted repeatedly and that the Council was able to offer some funds towards the installation of roller shutters so this information needed to be circulated.

Members having thanked the Officer for the update and had their queries answered, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the update from the Northumbria Police be received and noted.

Partner Agency Reports – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Steven Bewick, Station Manager, TWFRS, presented the update report and provided the Committee with a verbal update on the current numbers for fires in the area. The figures referred to Quarter one which was April to the date of the meeting.

There had been 134 deliberate fires compared with 117 in the same period last year and this included 19 deliberate primary fires compared with 15 last year. 14 of these were deliberate vehicle fires compared with 13 last year. A break down by ward was provided.

115 of the deliberate fires had been secondary fires and this was 14 more than the 101 such fires during the same period last year.

Liaison work was done with the police and partners to ensure that all deliberate fires were monitored and investigated. Work was done with the Council to ensure that fly tips were removed to prevent them from being set on fire.

Safe and well checks were now being undertaken in the community again and smoke alarms were being installed where necessary. There was also education work taking place including school visits and an engagement session at Thompson Park.

Having been asked for a definition of Primary and Secondary fires; Mr Bewick advised that primary fires were fires involving anything insurable such as buildings or vehicles while secondary fires were those involving, for example, rubbish or grass.

Councillor Doyle expressed concerns over a motorbike which had been burned in Mere Knolls Cemetery; there had been issues with getting it removed as it was on the boundary between Sunderland and South Tyneside Council areas; he queried what role the fire service had in the removal of burned vehicles. Mr Bewick advised that it would depend on the damage; the service would look to find an identity on the vehicle and if found then it would be the responsibility of the vehicle's insurer to remove it. Otherwise, it would be the responsibility of the Council to remove it and the service would work with them so that this could be done.

Members thanked the Officer for the update, and it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the update from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be received and noted.

Prior to the Chairman closing the meeting, Councillor Chequer suggested that the Committee should be meeting within the area. Ms Metcalfe advised that it was proposed that an update from an organisation involved in the raising aspirations priority would be brought to each meeting and that the meeting would be held in the ward that organisation was based in; there was a list of proposed venues. Councillor Foster added that suggestions for venues from Members were welcomed.

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

(Signed) S. FOSTER,
Chairman.