

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held in THE MILLENNIUM CENTRE MAIN HALL, CONCORD, WASHINGTON on THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 at 6.00p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Lauchlan in the Chair

Councillors Donaghy, Farthing, Fletcher, Guy, D.E. Snowdon, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, P. Walker, M. Walker and Warne

Also in Attendance:-

Mrs. Karon Purvis	-	Area Officer – Sunderland City Council
Ms. Gerry Taylor	-	Executive Director Health, Housing and Communities, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Paul Wood	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Denise Gilholme	-	Community Support Worker
Mr. Colin McCartney	-	Gentoo
Mr Martin Farrow Farrow	-	TWFRA
Inspector Steve Passey	-	Northumbria Police

Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Laws, F. Miller, G. Miller and Williams. Also apologies from Sylvia Copley and Bethan Wilkie

Declarations of Interest

Planning Applications – For Information Only

Whilst the item was for information only and no discussion was had, Councillor Farthing made an open declaration as one of the applications related to her property.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 30th June 2022

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 30th June, 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020-2023

The Chair of Washington Neighbourhoods and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan which would be the focus for the Washington Area Committee during 2022-2023.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Karon Purvis, Area Officer presented the report, highlighting the key points of action within the relevant Task Groups and was on hand to answer any queries raised by Members.

At this juncture, a video presentation was played to the Committee detailing the work of the VCS Support Strategy.

Councillor H. Trueman referred to the contracts and tenders for Play Parks commenting that we needed to be careful we didn't lose the quality and he would rather see things taken out to ensure the quality was provided. Mrs Purvis advised that they were getting good support from surveyors and they were determined to get this tender out so they were hopeful to have some good news soon.

The Chairman referred to the VCS Support Strategy video and commented that it showed it was clearly money well spent.

In relation to Councillor Farthings enquiry, Mrs Purvis advised that they were asking what the options were for Harraton with regards to the disability equipment, designs were still outstanding and it needed costings from procurement in order to find out how much spend could be given on Harraton. It was hoped this would come to December Area Committee.

2. RESOLVED that the Committee
 - i) Considered the progress and performance update with regards to the Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020- 2023, and agreed the proposals for future delivery as contained within Annex 1 of the report;
 - ii) Noted the presentation of the VCS Support Strategy

Washington Area 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.

With regards to Washington Youth Matters, Councillor D. E. Snowdon acknowledged that the project needed to be moved on quickly but raised concerns that the deadline was for the end of the month when most schools would be closed during that time.

Mrs Purvis advised that they were trying to encourage those organisations they have worked with historically and it was hoped that this Brief would be more targeted.

Mrs Purvis also put to the Committee for its determination, the proposal to utilise underspend from the Safety Measures Project (Barriers and fencing) - that instead of taking back the £10,356 underspend, that £8500 be agreed to go to an extra 'Safety Measures' proposal in Glebe Park. It was proposed to install fencing to prevent illegal access to play areas and spaces in the park utilised by the community. Mrs Purvis advised that the balance of £1856 could then be returned to the Capital fund. The Committee unanimously agreed to this proposal.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Noted the financial statements set out in Section 2.1 and 3.1 of the report;
- ii) Considered and agreed the approval of additional NF funding of £10,000 (to be added to a previous approval of £35,000) and the amended Project Brief and Call for Projects for the Washington Youth Matters as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- iii) The Committee agreed to utilise £8500 of the £10,356 underspend from the Safety Measures Project (Barriers and fencing) - to go to an extra 'Safety Measures' proposal in Glebe Park to install fencing to prevent illegal access to play areas and spaces in the park utilised by the community. The remaining balance of £1856 underspend to be returned to the Capital fund
- iv) Noted the 20 Community Chest approvals supported from 2022/2023 as detailed Item 3 Annex 2 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)

Denise Gillholme, Community Support Worker presented the report on behalf of the VCS Network.

Mrs Purvis referred to the Warm Spaces Project, advising that the assessment had been done and Members would receive a briefing on the programme.

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) Gentoo

Gentoo provided a report to the Committee on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities for the period March 2022 to June 2022.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Colin McCartney, Gentoo presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

Councillor Donaghy raised an issue of some constituents not receiving their documentation in relation to the District heating upgrades. Mr McCartney advised that he would speak to Councillor Donaghy after the meeting to obtain more details.

Councillor Farthing referred to the appearance of garages especially within the Oxclose area which she felt were horrendous and were causing distress to residents and enquired if there was a programme to deal with these. Mr McCartney advised that he did not have the detail but he would find out where Oxclose sat within the 5 year plan and make further enquiries.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that garages within Washington was a very emotive issue to residents and Gentoo had recently taken a decision to demolish a number of garages which were owned by elderly residents in bungalows, who did not have a great deal of storage, therefore he felt communication should be better by Gentoo.

Councillor D. E. Snowdon informed of the support meetings that were on offer at Columbia to residents and suggested that it would be nice to see a representative from Gentoo in attendance.

Councillor Snowdon also commented that many residents were raising queries over their fence repairs and when these would be done. Mr McCartney advised that there was still some to complete city wide with over 1000 fences damaged during the storms, this had coincided with a timber shortage so work was ongoing all the time but he would check to see if there was a communication plan.

Councillor Fletcher wished to praise Gentoo with the response received recently on dealing with a constituents broken fence and requested her thanks be passed on to the team.

In response to Councillor P. Walkers enquiry over private garages which residents pay land rent to Gentoo, Mr McCartney advised that they were looking at site garages with the aim to remove many of them. Work was ongoing with the asset team as some were maintained well whilst others were not and this would be part of the garage strategy moving forward.

Councillor Guy referred to the rendering scheme in Harraton and wished to comment that the area was looking massively improved. Councillor Guy also wished to raise the issue over fences and that certain fences were only being painted on one side whereas others on both sides and he believed this may be due to their height but residents were querying why some were receiving different treatment than others. Mr McCartney advised that he would make further enquiries on this.

The Chairman referred to the window replacement scheme and commented that it was nice to see this progressing as he had received complaints on this historically going back to 2011. Mr McCartney advised that this programme had accelerated massively in the last two years.

The Chairman thanked Mr McCartney for the report

5. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

c) 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 Steve Passey presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

Councillor Fletcher referred to the Sulgrave Project and commented that this had been a really helpful and well received project. Inspector Passey added that it had been really impactful and that they were doing amazing work.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that he was amazed at the amount of people who would not report crimes, particularly around Albany Shops, which he had been made aware of by residents. These residents did not report the suggested drug dealings witnessed and enquired if we needed a campaign to get people back on track of reporting crimes.

Inspector Passey informed that it was about building trust and they were trying to achieve this through the Sulgrave project and through proactive policing. They were working on some things relating to drug dealing and motorbikes but the challenge was to improve and they needed to get the community on side with a big push to get information out there but he would look into the Albany Shops issue raised.

Councillor Guy informed of a recent consultation with Barmston residents and what their priorities were and he hoped that the work ongoing there would help reduce ASB. In relation to Motorcycle issues at Mount Pleasant, Councillor Guy added that the changing of light sequences at Fatfield Bridge had hopefully helped the issue.

Councillor P. Walker commented that the issues of Motorcycle disorder had appeared to have calmed down this year but he had noticed upon driving around the City, the increase in electric bikes and enquired what the law was around these. Inspector Passey advised that there was some legislation with some rules applying such as licenses/insurance required but as the bikes were quite expensive they were not seeing as much use fortunately.

Councillor M. Walker wished to thank the Police for the work done on the projects and feedback from residents had shown these to be very impactful. Councillor M. Walker also suggested that an app for reporting motorcycle issues may be useful.

Councillor D. E. Snowden commented that she was pleased to see that the Police were working with the team in the Galleries Shopping Centre as this had always been a hotspot for disorder, so it was pleasing to see a police presence there now. Inspector Passey advised that it had been a hotspot in the past but this wasn't the case now so it showed that efforts made had helped.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Passey for his attendance

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

Planning Applications – For Information Only

Current Planning Applications relating to the Washington Area for the period 1st August, 2022 to 31st August, 2022 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) L. LAUCLAN,
Chairman.