

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held in WASHINGTON MILLENIUM CENTRE, on THURSDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2019 at 6.00p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Lauchlan in the Chair

Councillors Armstrong, Farthing, Fletcher, Kelly, F. Miller, Scaplehorn, Taylor, D. Trueman, H. Trueman and Williams.

Also in Attendance:-

Ms. Louise Butler	-	Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Jon Ritchie	-	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Paul Wood	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Andrew Old	-	Environmental Services Manager, Sunderland City Council
Ms. Jacqui Reeves	-	Washington MIND
Members of the Public	-	

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting, inviting introductions from those in attendance and advising of the right to record proceedings.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors G. Miller, D. Snowdon, D.E. Snowdon and P. Walker and also Colin McCartney, Sylvia Copley and Shirley Gillum.

Declarations of Interest

Financial Statement and Proposals for further allocation of Resources

Item 6 – Health and Well Being Priority – Paragraph 3.1 of the report

Councillor Fletcher made an open declaration in regard to the priority as a trustee of the Millennium Centre.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 20th June 2019

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 20th June, 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendment on Page 5 (Paragraph 4) from Susan Williams to Sarah Williams.

Area Arrangements Update

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update to Elected Members on the outcomes of a recent workshop where the Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture, Area Committee Chairs, and People and Place Board Chairs discussed opportunities to strengthen the Council's Area Arrangements.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

Neighbourhood Engagement and Investment

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update to Members on the Neighbourhood Engagement and the various mechanisms to be adopted which would ensure our residents continued to be at the heart of our service delivery, enabling our communities and neighbourhoods to become actively involved in the delivery of the City Plan and developing Neighbourhood Investment Plans, to ensure long -term community resilience..

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman took the Committee through the report and was on hand to answer any queries.

Councillor Williams wished to comment on the consultation strategy and the need to address the barriers many people have in being able to articulate their thoughts/feelings such as those with learning difficulties and she would like to see support put in place so everyone's views could be heard.

Councillor Kelly advised that both reports were there to help increase engagement, but it was important to highlight that Members already engage with residents massively and this was to engage with our Partners also. It

was about putting the Community at the forefront and to have the ability to engage with us.

Councillor Kelly commented that it was important to note that this would feed through to future City Plans for a grass roots up approach to give the public, partners and VCS a stronger voice.

Councillor Kelly also wished to congratulate the Officers and the Area Committees on the fantastic job done in implementing this process.

Councillor H. Trueman agreed on the need to work very closely with and listen to our volunteers as they have been vital but we also needed to be careful not to ask too much of them.

Members having fully considered the report, it was: -

3. RESOLVED that :-

- i) The report be received and noted
- ii) The report be referred to Area People and Place Boards for further discussions on how Members would wish to support and monitor the delivery of
 - Resident Engagement and Involvement Strategy
 - Neighbourhood Investment Plans
 - Crowdfund Sunderland

People Board Progress Report

The Chairman of the Washington Area People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) to update the Committee of the progress of the Washington Area People Board against the current year's (2019/20) Work Plan.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Lauchlan presented the report and highlighted the positive progress and outcomes made to date.

Members having fully considered the report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the Committee considered the progress and performance update with regards to the Washington People Board Work Plan for 2019/2020 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report, and note the items referred to in Item 6 of the agenda for consideration.

Place Board Progress Report

The Chairman of the Washington Area Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) to update the Committee of the progress of the Washington Area People Board against the current year's (2019/20) Work Plan.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor F. Miller presented the report and highlighted the positive progress and outcomes made to date.

Councillor Scaplehorn referred to the Washington Ward Improvement Projects and commented that the intentions of these had been great but in practice, the length of time taken to get the projects even started had severely hindered Members and their constituents due to the red tape involved.

Councillor Taylor agreed with Councillor Scaplehorn's comments adding that Members always take on board and put forward residents' ideas and schemes only for the length of time for Officers to respond or implement practices to derail any progress. Residents regularly query why responses take so long at PACT meetings and such like.

Jon Ritchie, Executive Director of Corporate Services advised that whilst not aware of specific issues raised, between he, Ms Butler and Mrs Purvis, they would look at the concerns raised and make a commitment to look at Officer delays also.

Ms Butler advised that she would take forward those concerns raised and also chase up those start dates to projects that Members should be receiving.

Councillor Kelly commented that he understood Members frustrations and he would raise this at the Area Chairs meetings whilst also ensuring conversations took place on the matter.

Councillor Farthing commented that she appreciated the difficulties faced at the Council due to the limited number of people working there now and the extra pressures they faced, however we did need to look at the beds and bulb planting programmes and the need to get feedback from residents. It was also very frustrating with regards to the obtaining of litter bins, for them then not to be emptied or become damaged.

Councillor Farthing commented that sensible solutions to what Members were asking for were needed and she also welcomed having timescales provided on implementation of projects put forward.

Councillor Williams referred to the bin replacement programme and enquired if Members could be supplied with a list of what was planned to be replaced in each Ward and the cost involved.

Mr Andrew Old, Environmental Services Manager advised that a list could be provided however there were different bin types and costs across the whole City and were allocated by priority with those in the worst conditions to be replaced. If there were something that was determined to be more urgent, this could be looked at.

A resident of Washington wished to echo previous comments made and that this was a frustration amongst residents and if the Council were looking to improve their engagement strategy then this was a perfect example of where to start.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that he understood the frustrations with regard to the Ward Improvement Project and that the work was planned and budgeted for, yet the work was still not undertaken and queried if Council officers did not have the capacity, could the works not be sub-contracted out.

Mr Ritchie advised that whilst not aware of the particular schemes mentioned, if he could obtain specifics he would investigate further. We needed to ensure public money was spent most efficiently but also had to give regard that the projects needed to be delivered in a timely manner.

In response to Councillor Armstrong's query over how to put forward a proposal for Young person's mental health provision Ms Butler advised that the Area Committee agreed its priorities at its June meeting, but any new proposals could be put to the People Board for consideration.

Members having fully considered the report, it was: -

5. RESOLVED that the Committee considered the progress and performance update with regards to the Washington Place Board Work Plan for 2019/2020 as detailed in Annex 1 to the report, and the recommendations referred to in Item 6 of the agenda

Financial Statement and Proposals for Further Allocation of Resources

The Assistant Director of Community Resilience submitted a report (copy circulated) which requested Members to give consideration to a financial statement as an up to date position in relation to the allocation of the Neighbourhood Fund and Community Chest and presented proposals for further funding requests.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Butler, presented the report drawing attention to the recommendations detailed within the report.

Councillor Farthing referred to Paragraph 3.4 of the report and the Can Do Fund, commenting that the project had been very successful, giving young people the opportunity to say what they'd like to carry out, this had been very inclusive with a wide range of applicants coming forward therefore she was pleased it had been agreed to extend this.

In relation to paragraph 3.5 and the Positive Activities/Summer 2020 Programme which looked to address Holiday Hunger Councillor Farthing suggested a Durham County Programme be worthwhile for studying as well

as the North East Child Poverty Action Group was another resource to consider who had researched childhood poverty. Councillor Farthing commented that it was heart-breaking that this was an issue in need of addressing in this modern society.

With regards to paragraph 4.1 of the report and the Washington Clean and Green Project, a resident of Washington commented that this had been a brilliant project which they had benefitted from with grants but queried what would happen next year and the long-term sustainability of the schemes.

Councillor Williams agreed that there was a need to include sustainability in the future grants as part of the brief. Ms Butler commented that she would take on board those comments and look to build in sustainability as part of future briefs.

Councillor Farthing referred to the Washington Tree Management Strategy and commented that she welcomed this as it had been a long time coming and that we needed to have a real comprehensive look at this, not about reducing trees, but their height, and plantation maintenance should be included in this also.

Councillor Farthing also advised that she was very keen this was looked at with the Council's Carbon Neutral strategy in mind and that this was a city-wide issue not just Washington.

A resident of Sunderland wished to advise that many residents were affected by this due to increased home insurance premiums and there would need to be an aligned plan with the Council, its partners, the Woodland Trust and Sustrans also.

Councillor Williams commented that the cemetery in Washington Village had become overgrown and was in need of maintenance/plantation control as many people visit this site and its appearance could be disrespectful.

Councillor Scaplehorn wished to highlight that many of the plantations around Washington had been neglected for the last 15 years which had attracted fly tipping and such like. Almost every estate within the area was surrounded by such plantations and the tree management strategy as it currently stood doesn't include these, therefore he must reiterate that they needed to be considered.

Councillor Kelly commented that the issues raised were Washington Place Board business and needed to be brought to those meetings for consideration. The documents have been circulated to all Members and they needed to put forward their issues with task and finish groups to investigate as a suggestion.

Councillor Kelly advised that there wasn't enough budget to cover all the issues involved with regards to Tree Management, but a strategy was needed, and he suggested that the Area Lead Executive take this back for

further discussions as it should not be the Area Committee bearing the brunt of these costs.

Councillor H. Trueman advised that as he sat on the Gentoo Operations Board, he was aware they were tackling the issues of trees due to the increase of insurance costs on the properties they owned and that the original trees had been put in as a sound buffer, but they were becoming a problem.

Ms Butler advised that Item 6 – Annex 7 of the report did specify the remit of the proposed strategy and many of the concerns raised were included in that.

In relation to paragraph 4.6 of the report relating to the Events Programme 2020, Ms Butler advised that the proposal was subject to their being an expression of interest received on file by the organization concerned, if not then an open call for projects would be progressed in line with our Neighbourhood Fund procedures.

Councillor Kelly commented that the funding was not including all events and that as it did not cover the Remembrance event for example, that this would require the need for some Community Chest to be used. Councillor Kelly also advised that the notice for road closures would also be needed soon.

Ms Butler advised that she would check the paperwork and ensure this was considered.

Having fully discussed the applications and Members having had any questions answered, it was: -

6. RESOLVED that the Committee: -

- (i) Received and noted the financial statements as set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the report;
- (ii) Considered and approved the award of £15,220 from the Neighbourhood Fund 2019/20 and £40,000 CCG funding for applications for Healthy Action in the Community as presented in Annex 1 to the report;
- (iii) Considered and approved the award of £40,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund (2018/19) to Washington MIND for the Washington Safe Care Project as presented in Annex 1 of the report;
- (iv) Considered and approved £50,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund (2019/20) for the Project Brief and Call for Projects for Washington Social Isolation Project (Small Grants) as set out in Annex 2 of the report;
- (v) Considered and approved £10,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund for the Washington VCS Support Project as detailed in Annex 3 of the report;
- (vi) Considered and approved £15,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund (2019/20) to extend the Washington Young Peoples Can Do fund as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report;

- (vii) Considered and aligned £28,114 from the Neighbourhood Fund to develop a new approach to delivering young people's activities programmes as set out in Paragraph 3.5 of the report;
- (viii) Considered and approved £10,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund 2019/20 for the Project Brief and Call for Projects for Washington Clean and Green Local Action (Small Grants) as set out in Annex 4 of the report;
- (ix) Considered and approved the Change of Project for the 'Support for Friends Project' as detailed in Annex 5 of the report;
- (x) Considered and approved £5,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund 2019/20 to Environmental Services to update the Princess Anne Park Master Plan as detailed in Paragraph 4.3 of the report;
- (xi) Considered and approved £20,800 from the Neighbourhood Fund 2019/20 to Environmental Services to purchase additional grounds maintenance equipment for Washington as detailed in Annex 6 of the report;
- (xii) Considered and approved £30,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund 2019/20 to Environmental Services for the Tree Management Project as detailed in Annex 7 of the report;
- (xiii) Considered and approved £45,000 (subject to expression of interest being on file) from the Neighbourhood Fund 2019/20 for the Events 2020 programme as detailed in Paragraph 4.6 of the report;
- (xiv) Noted the Washington Ward Improvement balances as detailed in Paragraph 5 of the report; and
- (xv) Noted the Community Chest balances as detailed in Paragraph 6 and Annex 8 of the report,

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

(Signed) L. LAUHLAN,
Chairman.