

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY, 13TH APRIL, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Wares in the Chair

Councillors Errington, M. Forbes, E. Gibson, Paul Maddison, T. Martin, Mordey and Wood

Also Present:-

Hazel Clark	- Voluntary Community Sector Representative
David Curtis	- Voluntary Community Sector Representative
Paula Hunt	- Voluntary Community Sector Representative
Matthew Jackson	- Democratic Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Janet Johnson	- Deputy Chief Executive and Area Lead Executive, Sunderland City Council
Ray Leonard	- Chief Executive, Back on the Map
Vivienne Metcalfe	- Area Community Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
Jane Peverley	- Communications Manager, Sunderland City Council
Nicol Trueman	- Area Officer, Sunderland City Council
Helen Wardropper	- Area Performance Assistant, Sunderland City Council
Jeremy Wicking	- Media Officer, Sunderland City Council

Members of the East Area Community

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ball, O'Connor and M. Smith and also Ms. Nonnie Crawford.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 1st March, 2010 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th March, 2010

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous Meeting held on 1st March, 2010 and the minutes of the extraordinary Meeting held on 8th March, 2010 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

Questions to Area Committee

There were no written questions to the East Area Committee received.

East Sunderland Annual Report 2009/10

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed the Committee to give consideration to the outcomes of the work undertaken as part of the Local Area Plan throughout 2009/10 and informed the Committee of the outcomes and achievements from each of the themes discussed by the Committee throughout the year. The report was focussed on the following areas:

- The Area, people and place
- Safe theme and priorities
- Learning theme and priorities
- Attractive and Inclusive theme and priorities
- Healthy theme and priorities
- Prosperous theme and priorities
- Area Committee Meetings

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that the report set out the objectives and how the committee had performed over the year.

Ms Trueman advised the Committee that the East Sunderland Area was comprised of five wards: Doxford, Hendon, Millfield, Ryhope and St. Michael's. The area contained the City Centre, the Port of Sunderland and the central campus of the University.

With regards to the Safe theme, Ms Trueman advised that the figures within the report were from the period 2008/2009 as the figures from 2009/2010 were not yet available, these figures would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. The City Centre had an influence on the figures and there would be the information provided to Members at the next meeting with the City Centre statistics removed.

The main objectives were the reduction of Anti Social Behaviour, which included tighter controls regarding the sale and access to alcohol; providing more police and community support officers in the area; addressing the fear of crime; challenging negative perceptions of young people and tailoring services to local needs.

The report highlighted what had been done to tackle the objectives including the introduction of the responsive local services project which focused on tailoring services within the area to tackle problems such as antisocial behaviour, arson attacks, environmental issues and empty properties.

Councillor Wood commented that he had attended meetings with the police where crime statistics had been provided. It was surprising to see so much red on the table in the report when at the meetings he had attended the police had told of how little crime there was within St. Michael's ward; he understood that the figures for the City Centre could be distorting these ward figures.

Janet Johnson, Area Lead Executive, advised that these figures were from 2008/2009 while the police often reported real time figures.

On the Learning theme Ms Trueman advised that performance was good at primary school level but the performance at secondary level was not as good. There had been no youth provision in some wards however the youth contracts had ensured that there would now be at least three sessions of youth provision in each ward every week. The XL youth villages had been shown to have a positive impact on the area.

Ms Trueman advised that with regards to the Attractive and Inclusive theme that the figures shown in the report were area totals rather than city averages and as such it had not been possible to say whether performance was better or worse than the city as a whole. The Total Place Survey results would be available soon and these results would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee and would show the information at a neighbourhood level.

There was a Landlord Accreditation scheme and as part of this there was the Private Landlords Forum, alongside the Empty Properties Strategy it was expected that there would be a reduction in the number of empty properties within the area.

The Voluntary and Community Sector was now represented at the Area Committee by three representatives from local voluntary and community organisations. The Voluntary and Community Sector Network was supported by Vivienne Metcalfe, Area Community Co-ordinator for the East Area.

Councillor Wood commented that although the figures in the report showed that there were no cycle paths in St. Michael's Ward there were now cycle lanes in both directions along Leechmere Road.

Councillor Wood then commented that he was not aware of any engagement that had taken place with the Churches Trust regarding Holy Trinity Church.

Councillor T. Martin advised that he had attended a meeting about Holy Trinity Church; he shared Councillor Wood's concerns about the need to preserve the church.

Ms. Johnson advised that there had been a briefing note circulated to Members which had provided an update on the discussions, there had been further meetings and it was expected that there would be more meetings taking place as proposals were developed. It was expected that there would be consultation events as part of the planning process. There would be a

need for Listed Building planning consent. The committee would be kept informed of the progress being made.

Councillor Mordey commented that the orphanage was also a cause for concern.

Ms Johnson advised that the orphanage was owned by the Council and that there was a scheme being developed to secure the long term future of the building. A briefing note could be provided to the Members if they wished. It was expected that there would be an application for funding made to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Councillor T. Martin commented that the Landlords Forum had been reinstated and he had attended meetings of the forum. He welcomed the approval from the Secretary of State for the implementation of Selective Licensing within parts of Hendon.

Councillor T. Martin then expressed concerns that police action was often just warning notices; he wanted to see enforcement action. There was dumping of rubbish in back lanes and this detracted from the attractiveness of the area.

He then stated that there had been improvements at Hendon Beach and the beach was now much more attractive however there were still some safety issues to be addressed.

Ms Trueman then introduced the Healthy theme and advised that there had been partnership work with the Teaching Primary Care Trust and there had been 20 natural neighbourhoods identified within the East Area.

With regards to the Prosperous theme, Ms Trueman informed the committee that there had been an increase in unemployment in the area, especially among men. This increase in male unemployment was possibly due to the increase in call centre jobs which attracted more female applicants.

The Working Neighbourhoods Fund had brought £30million of funding into the city and had supported business start-ups throughout the city including 18 businesses in the East Area.

There had been work done to improve awareness of the advice and support available to people who were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).

Councillor Errington commented that next year there was a need to look at transportation in the area, especially bus links. There were problems with bus provision in the evening with Doxford and Ryhope being most affected. There was a need to talk to the bus operators and Nexus.

Ms Trueman advised that the new arrangements for the Committee Meetings had worked well and there were plans to repeat this system next year while delivering further improvements to the system. The attendance levels had

been good however there was a need to involve the Partners more in the meetings. The attendance from the public was poor; the public had no right to speak at the Meetings however there were other ways for the public to be involved.

The volume of papers for each meeting had been reduced and the length of the meetings had also been reduced.

There had been an Area Committee Handbook developed and this would be printed in June 2010 and given to all Members.

Councillor Wood commented that the Area Committee was fortunate to have the Deputy Chief Executive as the Area Lead Executive. It was disappointing that members of the public were not attending the meetings and there was a need to address this. The inability for the public to speak at the meetings was a problem; they could not be expected to attend if they were unable to become involved in the meeting. Planning Committees allowed members of the public to speak on the planning applications. He felt that the Questions to Area Committee scheme was too formal and democratic.

With regards to the Finance and Funding Requests, Ms Trueman advised that there had been an 80/20 split agreed for the SIB funding with 80 percent of the budget being available for projects identified which addressed local needs and were part of the agreed priorities, with the remaining 20 percent being available as an opportunity budget for organisations to be able to apply for. In practice there had actually been a 10/90 split with 90 percent of the funds allocated being awarded to applications within the opportunity budget. There had been £145,027 awarded out of the £287,725 which had been allocated to the committee.

The £145,027 of SIB funding had brought match funding of £182,300 into the area. The majority of the funding awarded was related to the Attractive and Inclusive theme.

There was a large amount of SIP funding still available to be allocated in the next municipal year and the funding allocated had attracted match funding of £103,900 into the area.

Councillor M. Forbes expressed concerns over the lack of communication between departments. The other departments needed to appreciate the importance of the Area Officers. The area could have been enhanced a lot more had there been better communication between the council departments.

2. RESOLVED that the Annual Report be received and noted and that the information be used to analyse and reflect on the work that has taken place throughout the past year and help to inform the June meeting as the Committee moves towards a new work plan.

East Sunderland: Towards a new work plan 2010-11

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed the Committee to examine the Local Area Plan priorities as part of the process of identifying the work streams for 2010/11.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Nicol Trueman, Area Officer, presented the report and advised that this report would allow proposals for the next year to be discussed in preparation for the work programme setting meeting which would be taking place in June. Suggestions for agenda items would be coming from a variety of sources and additional suggestions could be made if the Committee felt they were necessary.

Councillor Errington stated that Housing and Speed Management had been discussed by the Scrutiny Committees; he felt that these were important for the Area Committee to look at. There was a need to improve the links between the Scrutiny and Area Committees.

Ms Trueman advised that more areas of work could be looked at; the list in the report was merely suggestions. In June there would be an update on the key statistics. It was recommended that at the June meeting the committee agree on a maximum of six areas of work, including Responsive Local Services. During the last year there had been a lot of priorities discussed, fewer priorities would allow for a greater impact to be made and there would be an impact within a shorter time.

Lead agents for the priorities would be identified and they would provide support to the development of the priorities. Task and finish groups would be set up and the Members and partners would be able to work together on developing the priorities before feeding the information back to the Committee. There would be a more proactive role taken outside of the Area Committee meetings.

It was proposed that some SIB funding would be made available to the task and finish groups to assist them in carrying out the work. The funding requests would still need to be approved by the full Area Committee. There were plans to modify the application forms so that there was an area focus to the forms. There was a need to ensure that the directors and portfolio holders were aware of internal funding applications.

The amount of paperwork presented would be reduced; reports would now only be two or three pages long and would be written in a more accessible style. Information reports would not be presented to the committee and instead would be distributed using the e-bulletin service.

Councillor Mordey expressed his support for the proposals; he was especially keen to see the approach to task and finish groups. He did however have concerns regarding trying to solve all problems within 12 months; some

proposals would need to be given time to progress to see what effect the proposals were having.

Councillor E. Gibson also welcomed the task and finish groups as a way of getting results.

Councillor T. Martin asked whether the safety issues at Hendon Beach would be looked at as one of the priorities. This was an important issue and he did not want to see any more deaths occur at the beach. He stated that he had been trying to raise this issue for a year.

The Chairman advised that the work programme had already been set before Councillor T. Martin had raised the issue.

Ms Trueman added that all of the issues looked at last year would be ongoing. The e-bulletin would be useful as it would allow information on these issues to be provided to Members quickly and on a regular basis.

Vivienne Metcalfe, Area Community Coordinator, asked whether the voluntary community sector representatives would be included in the circulation of the e-bulletin.

Ms Trueman confirmed that they would be included.

3. RESOLVED that:

- a. The Local Area Plan priorities be examined and the efforts of the Area Committee be focussed on areas where the Committee can make a real difference.
- b. The principle of the work programme for 2010/11 to consist of 6 priorities including Responsive Local Services would be agreed at the June 2010 meeting of the Committee.
- c. The governance processes be examined to ensure that the Committee's work programme and priorities could be delivered.

The Chairman thanked Members, Officers and Partners for their support over the years he had been Chair of the Committee. He also conveyed his thanks to Councillor M. Smith who was retiring at the forthcoming elections.

Councillor Wood expressed his thanks, on behalf of the Committee, to the Chairman for his work over the years. Councillor Wood extended his best wishes for the future to the Chairman.

(Signed) D.R. WARES,
Chairman.