

At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held in THE AUTHORITY ROOM, FIRE AUTHORITY SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, WASHINGTON, on THURSDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2022 at 6.00p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Lauchlan in the Chair

Councillors Farthing, Fletcher, Guy, Laws, F. Miller, G. Miller, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, P. Walker, M. Walker and Williams

Also in Attendance:-

Karon Purvis	-	Area Officer – Sunderland City Council
Marc Morley	-	Director of Environmental Services, Sunderland City Council
Paul Wood	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Alan Rowan	-	Retained Education Function Lead, Sunderland City Council
Denise Gilholme	-	Community Support Worker
Shirley Gillum	-	Area Network Representative
Sylvia Copley	-	Area Network Representative
Bethan Wilkie	-	Gentoo
Martin Farrow Farrow	-	TWFRA
Inspector Steve Passey	-	Northumbria Police

And Members of the Press

Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Donaghy, D. E. Snowden and Warne.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

Minutes of the last meeting held on 29th September 2022

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 29th September, 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)

Councillor Laws 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 presentation was provided to the Committee by Sylvia Copley, Area Network Representative on the Washington Individual Support Project (WISP) and the Chairman opened up the debate for any questions or comments on the programme.

Councillor Fletcher queried why we were not funding this project further after the pilot, commenting that SHaRP had been invaluable at Mickey's Place and she felt that we should be supporting this as an Area Committee.

Mrs Purvis advised that the Area Committee would be receiving a new budget in April and if they were to name this as a new priority for 2023/24, then one of the proposals could be to continue to fund this project. Councillor Fletcher commented that she felt it imperative that this be one of the Area Committees priorities as they were carrying out really good work in supporting people.

Mrs Purvis informed the Committee that Ms Copley was busy looking for other funding but if there was to be match funding then this would attract further funds and the picture moving forward would be more positive.

Councillor Williams commented that this was an amazing project and that she agreed with Councillor Fletcher that this should be a priority next year. Councillor Williams wished to express her heartfelt thanks to all involved in the project and it was vital that we funded it properly to give the Officers involved some security so we could keep them in post.

Mrs Purvis advised that a draft of the Area Committees priorities for 23/24 would be coming to February's Neighbourhood Board meeting and she would add this to the list for consideration.

Councillor Farthing wished to thank Ms Copley for the presentation and for her compliment on the partnership working. Councillor Farthing also raised her concerns over the gambling debts that people were accumulating and enquired if these stats were included in her figures.

Ms Copley advised that they did not have full connectivity through WISP but gambling was very much a hidden problem and Ms Lynn, through WISP and Side Spaces in Community Venues had shown that these problems were emerging and it was something that needed to be considered.

Councillor G. Miller referred to the project and agreed that this was certainly something that needed to remain as a priority and that the numbers of people that they were having to help, due to the Cost of Living crisis he genuinely believed they would end up with even bigger numbers in need of help. The Team were providing great work and he was delighted that the Area Committee had been forward thinking and had been able to provide this project as it was very much needed.

Councillor F. Miller commented that as Deputy Cabinet Member for Healthy City she has had discussions over this and it was an area which would be getting worse with more people needing help. This project was most needed for our community and definitely needed to keep going and to keep the Officers in post.

In response to Councillor Williams enquiry, Ms Copley advised that she did not have the exact figures of how much money the Project had successfully managed to obtain in benefits for residents but she could obtain these details and advise accordingly.

Councillor H. Trueman raised the query that as the DWP were due to relocate from Wearview House to Newcastle, if this would have an impact on their ability to get their clients to a local office for their interviews etc. Ms Copley advised that it would have an impact on travel costs and would be something that would be needed to be factored in. It would also impact upon those clients with mental illnesses as the aspect of travelling to unknown places could be traumatic.

The Chairman thanked Ms Copley for the report and for the work the Project had carried out.

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 Washington Individual Support Project (WISP)

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.

In relation to Application No.3 Love Where You Live- Invest in Parks (Princess Anne Park Master Plan, Councillor Williams commented that it was disappointing it had taken so long to get to this point and that now there were additional costs due to this and therefore we hadn't gotten the best value for money. Councillor Williams also informed that she hadn't received any contact from the Officer relating to this, Mrs Purvis advised that she would pass this on.

With regards to Application No. 4 Love Where You Live- Invest in Parks (Delivering Washington Play Strategy) Councillor G. Miller enquired as to what this was going to deliver. Mrs Purvis advised that this was to go to the procurement of equipment and as Harraton Play Park had never had a high amount it was suggested that the remaining capital be used towards this.

Councillor Williams commented that Harraton was seen as the big play park in Washington and one of the better ones over the years and enquired over any sensory equipment installations.

Alan Rowan, Retained Education Function Lead, Sunderland City Council advised that the swing would cost around £37,000 and was an expensive item but something that could be included in the design that they wanted to bring back for consideration however the item would be a significant proportion of the budget.

In response to Councillor Laws enquiry over when they would see design options, Mr Rowan advised that these would come around the easter period and suggested that a number of Members be nominated to have conversations with the Officer over this.

The Chairman suggested that Officers attend the next Board meeting. Mrs Purvis also advised that there was a Play Working Group that could be reinstated.

Councillor F. Miller commented that residents from all over Washington used Harraton Play Park and she would like to see some of the smarter equipment

put in if it was going to be the showpiece of Washington and she would like to be part of the discussions moving forward therefore requested that Ward Members be included in consultations.

In relation to Application No. 5 Albany Wheel (Installation and Enhancement) Councillor Fletcher wished to raise her objection to this proposal as she did not agree it should be costing the Washington Area Committee. The original request was made stating that there would be no cost to Washington therefore had been agreed with Washington West Members. Councillor Fletcher added that they had waited years for the Washington F Pit budget and now a significant part of the budget was to be allocated for this and advised that she would be voting against this application.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that Councillor Fletcher was entirely correct in her comments but the Leader had summed up the situation perfectly at the last meeting of the Board in that there was a need to put this issue behind us and move forward as the Village Centre had a hole in it at present and for the betterment of the people we needed to progress this to enhance the village and do the best we could for the residents of Washington. Councillor H. Trueman added that he understood the annoyance of Members on this but at the end of the day we were going to get a nice Village Centre out of it.

Councillor G. Miller agreed that they had been sold a proposal which wasn't supposed to cost Washington but had not turned out to be the case, however he did not think this had been intentional, things had changed and there was a need to move things on and give the best installation they could for the people of Washington. Councillor Miller commented that the negativity would vanish once the new installation was in and would ease residents frustrations. We had to move onto how we fixed this issue and agreed with Councillor H. Trueman's comments. It was a problem we should never have had but it needed fixing.

Mrs Purvis advised that there would be consultations due to be considered at the March Board meeting.

Councillor Williams commented that she was not particularly happy about this either and she had very strong discussions about it as the Portfolio Holder, that there was no guarantee the Wheel in place would be from Washington was frustrating and she was really disappointed in the situation but it had to be promoted ultimately as a positive for the resident of the Village but urged that we never got into this situation again.

Councillor P. Walker commented that he felt this application should be the responsibility of the West Area Committee and for them to approve out of their funds. The Chairman raised the Question if Members wanted to approve this now or continue with a whole in the ground.

Councillor P. Walker suggested that the money could be found from Central budgets and had been done previously from Capital funding.

Councillor Williams agreed with colleagues and commented that she was happy to agree the recommendation but to make the request that West Area Committee provide the funding.

Having fully discussed the application, the Chairman put the recommendation to a vote as detailed on Page 34 with the addition that the Officer contact the Chairman of West Area Committee requesting that this funding be reimbursed.

With 6 Members voting in Favour:-

Councillors	Lauchlan Laws	F. Miller G. Miller	D. Trueman H. Trueman
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4 Members voting against:-

Councillors	Fletcher M. Walker	P. Walker Williams
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And 2 Members Abstaining:-

Councillors	Farthing	Guy
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The Chairman advised that the recommendation to approve the funding had passed and that Mrs Purvis would ask the Officer to contact the Chairman of West Area Committee and to also investigate the use of Central budget funding also.

In relation to Application No. 6 Washington Outreach Project; Extension. Councillor Farthing commented that she fully supported this proposal and suggested that it should be brought back for future years also.

With regards to Application No. 8 – Project Brief for Washington Youth Matters, Councillor Williams enquired if there were plans to engage with the other two secondary schools in the area. Mrs Purvis advised that it was a capacity issue and the amount of residents they had that they had gone with the two schools they already had relationships with so therefore would not use up as much resource. Mrs Purvis also added that they did recommend that if the pilot worked and they could get some buy in from the Council that they could roll this out to further schools.

Ms Copley advised that there had been a very tight deadline to get the partnerships right and the two schools named in the bid they had direct links and firm commitments from and they were happy to establish further links if they could.

Councillor Farthing commented that it was regularly raised by young people at the State of the City events about the need for financial education and this was something that would help get financial understating embedded so thanked Officers for the proposal put forward.

Councillor Guy commented that this type of scheme would have been brilliant when he was attending school and at the moment there was no guidance within schools so this structure was needed and the project would be well received.

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 £35,000 Neighbourhood Fund to Sunderland City Council to extend the Neighbourhood Enforcement Project, as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- iii) Considered and agreed the approval of £10,000 Neighbourhood Fund to Sunderland City Council to contribute to delivering the Usworth Park Development Plan, as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- iv) Considered and agreed the approval of £10,312 Neighbourhood Fund to Sunderland City Council to contribute to delivering the Princess Anne Park Master Plan, as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- v) Considered and agreed the approval of £40,000 Neighbourhood Fund to Sunderland City Council to deliver the Washington Fixed Play Strategy, as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- vi) Considered and agreed the approval of £20,000 Neighbourhood Fund and £3,856 Neighbourhood Investment Capital funding to Sunderland City Council to contribute to delivering the Albany Wheel Project, as detailed in both Paragraphs 2.3 and 3.4, and as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report; with the amendment that conversations be had with West Area Committee Chairman over possible reimbursement;
- vii) Considered and agreed the approval of £7,000 Neighbourhood Fund to Oxclose & District Young People's Project to extend the Washington Outreach Project, as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- viii) Considered and agreed the approval of £10,000 Neighbourhood Fund to Community Opportunities to extend the Washington Events Programme, as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report;
- ix) Considered and agreed the approval of £45,000 Neighbourhood Fund to ShARP to deliver the Washington Youth Matters Project as set out in Item 3 Annex 1 of the report; and
- x) Noted the 23 Community Chest approvals supported from 2022/2023 as detailed Item 3 Annex 2

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)

Ms Copley presented the report on behalf of the VCS Network and advised that Denise Gilholme was doing sterling work in getting new partners on board. Meetings had been positive and valuable presentations had been provided on illegal money lending which had ripple effects on providing advice to the community.

Denise Gillholme, Community Support Worker informed that they were taking stock and it was important to encourage people to complete the surveys for what they required etc. Mrs Purvis added that they wanted their “shopping list” ready which was why they were asking everyone to obtain the information.

Councillor Williams wished to thank the VCS for the work they do which was absolutely amazing and commented that the Council couldn't function as a service without them.

Councillor H. Trueman informed that he had been delighted to attend an event for Warm Spaces and suggested if there were a way to allocate Community Chest into these projects

Mrs Purvis advised that she would circulate the details/presentations to all Members in relation to the Illegal money lending.

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) 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 wished to thank all partners for their work in helping to reduce the figures on Anti-Social Behaviour and also on the Sulgrave Project which due to their work could result in a further pilot.

Councillor Fletcher informed the Committee that she received many people wanting to report issues when she was at School Grounds and previously she referred these parents to the Police and that she was having to do this a lot less now. Inspector Passey advised that they were trying to get the word out to report incidents and to publicise as much as they could. They were heading in the right direction and he viewed more reporting as a good sign at present as it resulted in more intelligence being gathered and so long as they were getting the rewards in seeing reductions in incidents.

Inspector Passey also added that there was a need to manage people expectation and to educate the public on what sort of response could be expected and the reasons for these.

In response to Councillor H. Truman's comments over the poor performance of reporting through 101, Inspector Passey acknowledged that this was not very good and it was a national issue. Inspector Passey advised that reporting could also be done online, contacting local teams and this was really simple to carry out and Officers in his team could help assist anyone in the use of the website if needed but he did acknowledge that not everyone was comfortable using online technology and the 101 number was still available.

Councillor Farthing commented that an issue regularly reported to her was one of speeding and sought clarity as to whose responsibility this was and if powers were being passed onto the Council for this. Inspector Passey informed that the Police had responsibility for a Community Speed Watch Programme which hadn't been rolled out for Washington as yet but he could easily create a programme and he would speak to the Officer to see if there's a need for community based operations. In terms of out and out enforcement it was a Police responsibility and he hoped that Operation Butternut would also have an indirect impact upon the issue and also suggested that if Members had any details of issues to pass these on and they would send out the speed camera van.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Passey for his attendance

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

c) Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

The Tyne and Wear Fire Service submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided performance-monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Washington Area Committee from 1st September 2022 to 30th November 2022, compared with the same period in 2021

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Martin Farrow, Station Manager presented the report and expanded on the figures provided. Mr Farrow also wished to echo Inspector Passey's comments and thank all partners for the collaborative working which had driven their figures down.

Councillor Williams wished to congratulate the Authority on the good news of the reductions in figures and the great teamworking.

Councillor H. Truman referred to the Princes Trust programme at Farringdon Station and commented that this was a great initiative.

Councillor Farthing highlighted the incidents in Washington South Ward and commented that they were very much centred around one area/underpass and was an issue that needed to be kept under consideration.`

The Chairman thanked Mr Farrow for his attendance.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

d) 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)

Ms Bethan Wilkie, Gentoo presented the report and advised that in relation to paragraph 3.6 of the report that 546kg of food had been collected.

Councillor Fletcher referred to the setting up of a dedicated helpline to report damp/mould and commented that she was pleased to see this and it was just a shame that it had taken such a tragic event nationally in order to deal with the issue. Ms Wilkie advised that Gentoo always had dedicated staff for these issues.

Councillor Fletcher also informed that tenants had been over the moon with the window renovations and that the contractors used had been excellent for residents as they left no mess or damage and these measures would also likely have an effect on any mould/damp from occurring.

Councillor Farthing agreed with Councillor Fletcher that the issue of damp and mould had been around a long time and it was welcome that positive steps had been made to address it. Councillor Farthing also commented that she received regular issues from constituents on the doorstep in relation to Gentoo garages which they believed to be such an eyesore and was an issue that appeared to matter greatly to residents.

Ms Wilke advised that the asset team were developing a Strategy and she believed that Oxclose was programmed in for 2025 but she would share this information once she had it. If there were any specific information, Members could contact her in the first instance and she would pass this on to the team.

In response to Councillor F. Miller's query over brickwork in Barmston, Ms Wilkie advised that she was unaware of any ongoing works in Barmston but she could liaise with Members and look at the programmes.

The Chairman thanked Ms Wilkie for the report

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

Planning Applications – For Information Only

Current Planning Applications relating to the Washington Area for the period 1st October, 2022 to 24th November, 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 at this juncture wished Mrs Purvis a happy retirement on behalf of the whole Area Committee and thanked her for the many years of service.

(Signed) L. LAUCLAN,
Chairman.