

**At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held remotely on THURSDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2019 at 6.00p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Lauchlan in the Chair

Councillors Armstrong, Farthing, Fletcher, Kelly, G. Miller, F. Miller, Scaplehorn, D.E. Snowdon, D. Snowdon, Taylor, D. Trueman, H. Trueman and P. Walker.

**Also in Attendance:-**

Mrs. Karon Purvis	-	Area Officer – Sunderland City Council
Mr. Jon Ritchie	-	Executive Director of Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council
Mr. Paul Wood	-	Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Mrs. Helen Peverley	-	Area Co-ordinator – Sunderland City Council
Mr. David Groark	-	Senior Environmental Services Manager – Sunderland City Council
Ms. Debbie Hall	-	Environmental Services Manager – Sunderland City Council
Ms. Shirley Gillum	-	VCS Representative
Mr. Phillip Sowerby	-	TWFRS
Mr. John Chapman	-	Gentoo

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence**

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Williams and Inspector Gjorven

## **Declarations of Interest**

Washington Area Budget Report

### Community Chest

Councillor Fletcher made open declaration in the noting of the Community Chest applications as a volunteer for Micky's Place.

## **Minutes of the last meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment on page 6 paragraph 4:-

Councillor Taylor referred to Wormhill Terrace and that the travellers actually left the encampment early, before the 14 days because of the weather.

Councillor Taylor queried if there had been an update with regard to costings for the unauthorised encampments and raised the point that he had still not received a response directly from Mr Scanlon as promised on page 10 of the minutes. Mrs Purvis advised the Committee that within the report that was presented to the Washington Neighbourhood and Community Board there had been some response with regards to the costs but she can appreciate Councillor Taylor requested a response from Mr Scanlon so she would mention that this conversation was still needed.

## **Community Wealth Building Champions**

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise the Committee of the next steps, following Cabinet Approval in March 2020 of the Community Wealth Building Strategy, taking into consideration the additional action to be taken to continue to grow community wealth across our communities.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mrs Helen Peverley presented the report and was on hand to answer Members enquiries.

Councillor Kelly commented that he was involved with a lot of the Community Wealth Building and it was a real positive step going forward, however he did have a lot of concerns around the changes to how the VCS Networks would run and the new posts that were being created.

Councillor Kelly requested clarification as to where the 5 new Area Co-ordinator roles would sit, and if these would be with the VCS or with the Council as preferably he wanted this to sit with the VCS rather than be another bureaucratic element.

Ms Peverley advised that the proposal was to develop 5 support worker roles which would work across the 5 areas, these would be in post within the Council as they need to make sure their activity was co-ordinated. They would be out within the area working with the VCS to support them in funding applications, securing additional funding and bring extra capacity into the area.

Councillor Kelly wished to record his concern that this would become a bureaucratic layer within the VCS movement and suggested a rethink be had on this because ultimately it would be the Council running the VCS rather than supporting the VCS who had over recent months, played a tremendous role for all of us. Councillor Kelly suggested that he personally would make the role a VCS role that could feed into the Council.

Councillor G. Miller commented that these 5 posts were with the Council at the moment but the intention was clearly to have them end up as part of the VCS, we had to do something to support them and the 5 area roles plus the manager to sit above them had to sit with the Council at the moment but the intent was certainly for these to end up where they needed to be with the Voluntary Sector. We could not put them there at the moment as there was no vehicle for them.

Councillor Scaplehorn advised that he had been in agreement with Councillor Kelly's concerns but would be quite happy so long as the roles eventually ended up under the VCS as Councillor G. Miller had explained.

The Chairman commented that he was extremely happy to take on the Community Health Building Champion role but wished to state that he agreed as per the presentation that all Members were Community Champions here and we needed to make sure that this worked.

## 2. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- i) Noted the contents of the report and acknowledged the work undertaken to support the growth of Community Wealth across Sunderland and agree to continue to support the delivery of the Sunderland Community Wealth Strategy; and
- ii) Agreed to support the Area Committee Chair to deliver their Community Wealth Champion role on behalf of the residents of Sunderland, demonstrating the commitment of Washington Area Committee to support growth .

## **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 Shirley Gillum, presented the report and wished to comment that the Council's contribution to the Hub Network carried out with the residents of Washington had been really successful. People had been most appreciative of support through the COVID crisis and they continued to do this. It really had been positive and proactive.

Members having considered the report, it was: -

3. 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 Gjorven had been unable to attend the meeting therefore the Chairman suggested that if Members had any comments or questions that these could be passed on.

The Chairman commented that the report looked good with the crime figures appearing to be down.

Councillor Taylor wished to inform that in relation to Motorcycle ASB, he had witnessed quad bikes riders during a walkabout of James Steel Park and had managed to take of video of these and had gotten the registration numbers, unfortunately they were putting black tape over their numbers and Councillor Taylor was not quite sure if a long lens camera was the right approach as we needed to think more outside of the box.

Councillor Taylor suggested collaborative working possibly using the Councils Gator vehicle on weekends as we knew where the riders were going to be there. These incidents were annoying a lot of people with lots of reports by members of the public so there was a log now.

Councillor F. Miller commented that they had caught these Quad Bike riders on numerous occasions but the problem was that even if you could get there registration plates, they were often false so queried how we would be able to distinguish who these people were. We had purchased the smart water previously yet Councillor F. Miller felt it would ultimately be down to local intelligence to identify and report these people.

Councillor F. Miller also wished to add that there could be an element of intimidation stopping people from coming forward to report perpetrators. She was willing to try the long lens camera option to get this sorted and queried if the Fire Authority could have any input.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that the Committee had paid for the smart water as mentioned previously, this was still sitting unused in the Police Stations and queried why this had not been successful when Councillor Taylor has been able to provide dates and times of the perpetrators using the area.

The Chairman commented that he did not believe the Inspectors were a great advocate of the usage of the smart water as it was a possible health and safety aspect involved in order to gain close proximity to the quad bikes etc.

Councillor Scaplehorn agreed with Councillor H. Trueman and commented that Washington West and North Wards had spent a considerable amount of money on this Smart Water and queried if this money would be returned if the water was not going to be used.

Councillor Taylor advised that the smart water would require someone to get up close and on this occasion there had been 6-7 quad bikes there. Some of the bikes aren't necessarily on false plates but they haven't changed the ownership/log books so are still in previous owners name. Councillor Taylor also suggested the smart water could be used in tackling underage drinking by possibly asking shopkeepers to tag their bottles and asking the Youth Teams to go out and confiscate drink which could be traced back to the original point of sale then.

Councillor Fletcher agreed with Councillor Scaplehorn that the Washington North and West Ward spent a considerable amount of money on the smart Water upon the advice of the Police and suggested that if they were not going to be using this then the money should be returned. Councillor Fletcher also advised that she had been quite vocal in the sense that she would not support the implementation of a long lens camera, along with many other Members who did not wish to throw more money away on top of what had already been spent.

Councillor Kelly commented that he was sick of buying Police equipment. This was the Police's responsibility to tackle and felt if they were to use the Council's Gator, it would result in our equipment becoming damaged and out of order, therefore the jobs it is meant for couldn't be done.

Councillor Kelly commented that he felt it was time the Police stepped up to the mark. The motorcycles were being rode illegally, this was a crime and therefore a Police responsibility to tackle. We had paid a tremendous amount for both Police time and equipment and it needed to stop.

Councillor Scaplehorn commented that without a shadow of doubt it was Police responsibility to tackle crime. We could assist wherever we could but he agreed with Ward Members that we would be paying out money for something that they knew wasn't working and this would be the same with the long lens camera. Councillor Scaplehorn acknowledged the pressures the Police were under but this Committee should not keep funding initiatives that would not work.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

**c) TWFRS**

The Tyne and Wear Fire Service submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided performance-monitoring details in relation to the Local Indicators for the Coalfield Area Committee (Washington) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020, compared with the same period in 2019.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Phil Sowerby, Station Manager provided the report and commented that the report timescale was mirrored over the COVID period and felt it worthwhile to give a blanket report during this period.

Ms Sowerby advised that the Service had continued to prioritise their front line appliances to save life so that meant their community involvement was triaged and limited to essential work to protect staff and ensure the fire engines remained on the road.

COVID had seen a big impact on the figures within the report possibly due to less movement of people.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**Washington Area Committee Delivery Plan 2020-2023**

The Chair of Washington Neighbourhoods and Community Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented the Washington Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020-2023 and also provided an update of progress against the Area Priorities associated with the Delivery Plan

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mrs Purvis presented the report and was on hand to answer any queries raised by Members.

Councillor Scaplehorn referred to the action to involve the Police with Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and commented that as we all knew the Police were unfortunately so understaffed that they could not support the existing schemes in place so he did not see the point in the request to start new ones.

Mrs Purvis advised that at a recent joint Police and Councillor meeting this was raised with the Inspector and he had informed the meeting that there is an alternative scheme being trialled in North Tyneside and he was going to feed back to us on that and what the options might be for implementation.

Councillor Farthing referred to the Love Where you Live and Bloom activities and enquired if the groups the additional planters were to intended to go to had to be a constituted group or if it could be an informal group of residents.

Mrs Purvis advised that nothing had been cast in stone and she had been having discussions with Ms Debbie Hall and some of the stored planters were usable and the idea was to use them as part of a local action scheme or encourage organisations to take them on or possibly include as part of clean and green work. This was being worked out at the moment but obviously if an independent group took them they would have to have the wherewithal around maintenance etc.

Councillor Farthing advised that she had been approached by a group of residents who wished to enhance their area and had suggested having a planter so she would try and provide Mrs Purvis with the contact details once available.

Councillor Kelly commented that there had been a lot of work done through the task and finish groups but there was a mention of the Clean and Green programme and he would like to put on record the tremendous effort of Clean and Green and the volunteers we've had on that, they had done an absolutely outstanding job and we should be writing to those volunteers again at some point to thank them.

Councillor Scaplehorn wished to add that the same acknowledgement should be given to the Keep Washington Tidy group also.

Councillor F. Miller commented that she agreed wholeheartedly and that they had been prolific in the work they'd carried out and she was sure all Members would agree with that.

6. RESOLVED that the Committee considered the progress and performance update with regards to the Washington Neighbourhood Investment Delivery Plan 2020- 2023 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report, and the reports from the Task Groups as detailed under Paragraph 4 of the report.

## **Washington Budget Report**

The Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Directorate submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided a financial statement as an update position on progress in relation to allocating Neighbourhood Investment Capital Programme, Neighbourhood Fund 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.

Councillor Kelly referred to the Usworth Hall Project and that we had been trying to get this progressed for a number of years and apparently it was requested that the Washington North Ward pay £6,000 for a Traffic Regulation Order. There had been an agreement that the TRO's would be done in bulk, therefore reducing the cost and given the fact this had gone on for well over three years he had replied to the Officer involved to suggest that the Council may wish to pay on this occasion and Councillor Kelly requested that this issue be picked up as it was an ongoing problem costing the Council a fortune in dealing with fly tipping and burnt out cars.

Mrs Purvis advised that she would contact Mark Jackson in relation to the cost of the Traffic Regulation Order and get back to Councillor Kelly

### **7. RESOLVED that the Committee:-**

- i) Noted the financial statements set out within the report;
- ii) Approved £9,000 Neighbourhood Capital Investment to Sunderland City Council for Usworth Park, as set out in Annex 1 of the report;
- iii) Approved £28,000 Neighbourhood Capital Investment to Sunderland City Council for a Tree Management Programme as set out in Annex 1 of the report;
- iv) Approved £62,000 Neighbourhood Capital Investment to Sunderland City Council for mitigation measures as set out in Annex 1 of the report;
- iv) Noted the Ward Improvement Project Statement as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report; and
- v) Noted the approved Community Chest grants between April 2020 and November 2020 as set out in Paragraph 5 and Annex 2 of the report.

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

(Signed) L. LAUHLAN,  
Chairman.