

At a meeting of the EAST SUNDERLAND AREA COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY, 12th JUNE, 2017 at 5.30p.m.

Present:-

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors M. Dixon, Emerson, English, Hodson, Hunt, Kay, Marshall, McClennan, Mordey, O'Neil and Scanlan

Also Present:-

John Bailey	-	Neighbourhood Inspector, Northumbria Police
Alan Duffy	-	Head of Operations, Gentoo
Steve Graham	-	Station Manager, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Matthew Jackson	-	Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council
Jen McKeivitt	-	VCS Representative
Gillian Robinson	-	Area Co-ordinator, Sunderland City Council
Nicol Trueman	-	Area Officer, Sunderland City Council

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ball, Oliver and Wood together with Hazel Clark, Sarah Reed, Jamie Southwell and Lisa Wilson-Riddell

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 13th March, 2017 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 2nd May, 2017

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th March, 2017 and of the extraordinary meeting held on 2nd May, 2017 be confirmed and signed as correct records.

VCS Area Network Progress Report

Jen McKevitt introduced the update from the VCS Network and advised that there had been two meetings of the VCS Network since the last Area Committee. The Network had received a presentation on the Tall Ships Race which had received positive feedback from network members. Ms Trueman had met with the network representatives to discuss the Area Committee priorities for the year and this had been well received by the network who were pleased to be involved in the discussions.

The Chairman thanked Ms McKevitt for her report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the VCS Network progress report be noted.

Northumbria Police Update

Acting Neighbourhood Inspector John Bailey introduced the update from Northumbria Police. He advised that in the three months since the last meeting there had been 1865 crimes recorded in the area which was a similar number to last year; it was pleasing to see the number stay the same considering the changes to the recording of crimes which had seen more incidents being logged as crimes. Burglary of dwellings had increased and the main area of concern was Millfield and Ashbrooke; especially in the areas with large student populations where doors and windows were often left unsecured. There was an operation underway to tackle burglaries and this included high visibility and plain clothes patrols as well as providing crime prevention advice to residents. There had been 12 arrests including two who were caught within premises they were burgling.

Theft from motor vehicles had increased; this was mainly in the city centre and Hendon and was where people had left valuables on display including sat-navs and dashboard cameras. An operation was running to tackle this issue and crime prevention advice letters were being sent to the registered keepers of vehicles seen with valuables left on display.

The number of violent crimes and race hate offences had remained about the same as last year.

Antisocial behaviour had reduced significantly with 592 incidents this year compared with 816 last year. A lot of this antisocial behaviour was attributable to the city centre especially in and around Mowbray Park and also in relation to the city centre night time economy. There had been 161 reports of antisocial behaviour in Doxford and Ryhope; the majority of these were in respect of issues around the use of off road motorcycles.

Following the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London there had been an increase in the amount of police resources on the streets. Tensions within the

community remained low. There had been a third demonstration at the weekend; this demonstration had attracted around 5-600 people and had passed without incident; the police had to allow them the right to peaceful protest but could take action should any issues arise. There had also been no issues for the police on the Election Day.

Councillor Mordey stated that he had received reports from parents taking their children to Barley Mow Park that there was drug use taking place in the bushes and drug paraphernalia including needles being left behind. Inspector Bailey advised that he was aware of the issue and that a plan had been put in place to tackle this issue.

Councillor Hodson asked whether there were any figures in respect of the number of notices issued as part of the city centre Public Space Protection Order and what the notices had been issued for. Inspector Bailey advised that the main issue tended to be begging and agreed to provide figures.

Councillor Hodson then referred to the use of the Shackleton building by the university's Islamic Student's Union; he queried whether there had been any issues associated with this and the nearby public houses especially as it was currently Ramadan which meant that there were a larger number of Islamic students staying at the union until later at night. Inspector Bailey advised that he was not aware of any issues and that there would have been engagement with the university through the University Liaison Officer.

Councillor Kay commented that he had been in contact with the University Imam who had told him that the new Islamic Student's Union building was fantastic; there had been one incident of someone receiving verbal abuse from someone leaving one of the public houses which was disappointing however the students felt that it was much better than any of the previous venues. He then referred to the issue of drug use at the rear of the Young Asian Voices building; this issue had improved however there was still drug use taking place. He was happy to see the reduction in antisocial behaviour and asked for information on whether the new A&E department had led to a decrease in antisocial behaviour at the hospital. He felt that the most noticeable antisocial behaviour was related to properties being used as drug houses. Inspector Bailey advised that he did not have figures for the hospital as they were included in the Millfield figures; there were regular visits to areas where there had been issues identified.

Councillor Scanlan expressed concerns over the demonstration which had taken place on Saturday, there had been a large number of people attended and they had been drinking and swearing when shoppers with children were walking past. There were concerns over the tensions in the area becoming worse. Inspector Bailey advised that before the demonstrations there was engagement with the organisers and the community to set restrictions on the numbers of attendees; the routes taken and the assembly points. It was difficult to police such demonstrations as removing people from the crowd would likely inflame the situation; the protests were monitored by the

intelligence team and action was taken after the event where offences were identified. Community tensions continued to be monitored.

Councillor M. Dixon commented that the demonstration had been well policed however he expressed concerns over motorbikes being used in pedestrian areas during the demonstration which had been very intimidating for people. Inspector Bailey stated that he had not been aware of this but agreed to look into it.

Councillor Mordey expressed concerns that some of the attendees of the demonstration had been drinking alcohol in public and had their faces covered; he did not think that this was acceptable and asked at what point the police would take robust action against offences. He was also concerned that if the demonstrations got taken over by far right groups then there could be issues and increased tensions, especially if there were also counter-demonstrations held which could lead to clashes between the demonstrators. Inspector Bailey advised that the commanding officer on the day would have an arrest policy in place. It could lead to problems if the police took action during the demonstration so instead evidence gatherers were present and CCTV was used to identify offenders who could then have action taken against them after the event. It was important to consider that everyone had the right to peaceful protest.

Councillor Kay queried whether the Public Space Protection Order could be used to divert the protests into less heavily trafficked areas of the city centre so that they were away from shoppers and children. He felt that the use of Market Square for the demonstrations was wholly inappropriate. Councillor M. Dixon added that he was concerned by the demonstrators being allowed to congregate in large numbers outside of the pubs in the area following the demonstrations. Inspector Bailey agreed to take these concerns back to the commanding officers and advised that it was difficult to put conditions onto the protests as this could lead to more spontaneous protests and a lack of communication between the organisers and the police which would make the policing of the demonstrations much more difficult.

Councillor Hodson commented that he had heard that some businesses had been forced to close early due to the protests. Inspector Bailey agreed to liaise with the businesses and would report the information back to the planning department at the main police headquarters.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Bailey for his report and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the update from Northumbria Police be noted.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Update

Steve Graham advised that he was now the Station Manager for Sunderland Central and Marley Park Fire Stations following a management review within

the service. He presented the figures in relation to fires within the East Area in the last three months. There had not been any fatalities in the East Area however in the North Area there had been one fatality. Work was still being done to promote home fire safety and free safety checks were carried out by the fire service along with free battery operated smoke detectors being given to residents. There had been three injuries as a result of accidental dwelling fires which had been related to cooking.

Between 31st March and 31st May there had been 7 deliberate primary fires and 8 deliberate vehicle fires. There were regular checks carried out on derelict properties to ensure that they were secure and that fire risks were minimised. There had not been any major trends identified in relation to the vehicle fires.

There had been 127 deliberate secondary fires compared with 54 in the same period last year. There had been 51 incidents of loose refuse being set alight and 30 incidents of wheelie bins being set alight. 45 of the deliberate secondary fires had occurred in Hendon and there was work being done with the police to target the hotspot areas. There was also work being done with the LMAPS group and the 3G cameras could be used to collect evidence of offences. There had been 38 deliberate secondary fires in Millfield.

Rubbish fires were an issue with bins and skips being set alight; the fire service were speaking with people to ensure that bins were not left out and that skips were removed once full. Work was being done with the Princes Trust to educate people about not leaving their bins out.

He felt that the cutbacks in waste removal had led to the increases in secondary fires as waste was no longer being removed quickly.

Councillor Mordey stated that he did not think that the change to two weekly bin collections was responsible for the increase in fires; there had been a long history of bin fires in the Millfield and Hendon areas. He asked whether there was any evidence of fires increasing in other areas which had introduced two weekly bin collections. Mr Graham agreed to look into this and do a comparison of the information. He reiterated the need for educating people not to leave their bins out. Councillor Mordey then stated that the Area Committee had a number of overt and covert cameras which would be deployed soon and could be used to tackle deliberate fires. He also thanked the fire service for their hard work in prosecuting the former swingers club for their breaches of fire safety regulations.

Councillor Kay commented that there was an issue with waste being dumped in back lanes and then set on fire; it was prevalent in the areas with a large amount of student accommodation; he thanked the rapid response teams for their hard work in removing waste before it could be set on fire.

4. RESOLVED that the update from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service be noted.

Gentoo Update

Alan Duffy presented the update from Gentoo. He advised that the new allocation system would be going live soon. The new system was based on the homehunt website which was a national website which allowed social housing customers to apply online for properties. There were currently 29,000 applicants registered and the first 6,000 had been contacted to transfer them to the new system; once these had been transferred there would be a six month period for everyone else to transfer. Adverts would start being uploaded to the new system in July with the old and new systems running in tandem until everyone had been transferred to the new system.

Councillor Mordey expressed concerns that vulnerable or elderly customers might not be able to use the online system and asked what safeguards and assistance was in place. Mr Duffy advised that there had been a customer survey undertaken which had identified that two thirds of customers had internet access. There would be support for those who did not have access including allowing people to come into the office or having Neighbourhood Coordinators going out to the customers house to help them complete the applications; the six month window was in place to ensure that there was sufficient time to visit any customers who required assistance.

Councillor Mordey then queried whether the original sign up date would remain as there were people who had been on the waiting list for a number of years. Mr Duffy confirmed that the original sign up date would be transferred to the new system.

In response to a query from Councillor Kay Mr Duffy advised that the new system would require applicants to bid for the properties online and that the properties would still be advertised in the window of Gentoo offices.

Councillor M. Dixon referred to the property repairs that had been carried out including the new roofs on properties in Hill View and asked whether there were any future plans in place. Mr Duffy advised that a stock condition profile was being undertaken by Savills and once this was done plans for repairs would be compiled; it was likely that this information would be available later in the summer.

Councillor Mordey referred to the improvement works that had been done at Darcy Court as part of the previous maintenance programme and asked whether there would be improvements done at South Durham and Hedworth Courts. Mr Duffy advised that it was not yet known what works would be done as part of the new programme.

Councillor Hodson queried who was responsible for the paths around the city centre tower blocks as they were in urgent need of cleaning. Mr Duffy advised that responsibility was split three ways between Gentoo, the Bridges and the Council; there had been one off cleans of these paths done previously.

The Chairman thanked Mr Duffy for his report and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the update from Gentoo be noted.

East Sunderland Area Place Board Proposed Priorities and Governance Arrangements for 2017/18

The Chair of the East Sunderland Area Place Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought Area Committee approval of the proposed priorities to be taken forward as part of the work plan for 2017/18 and which provided an update on the Place Board governance arrangements for 2017/18.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chair of the Place Board, Councillor E. Gibson, introduced the report. She advised Members of the proposed priorities which were set out in section 3 of the report and drew Members attention to the proposed membership of the board which was set out in the table at paragraph 4.3 of the report. She informed Members that there had been an open day event held in Mowbray Park and thanked Ms Robinson and Ms Trueman for their hard work in holding this event.

Councillor Mordey welcomed the new priorities, especially the priority in respect of raising standards in the private and social housing sectors as there was an issue with the quality of housing stock in the area. He also commented that there had been positive feedback from attendees of the open day and thanked everyone involved in this event.

Councillor M. Dixon commented that the event held at the Sikh temple had been a success.

6. RESOLVED that:-
 - a. The East Sunderland Area Place Board Work Plan priorities for 2017/18 as set out in section 3 and annex 1 be approved.
 - b. The area governance arrangements for 2017/18 set out in section 4 and annex 2 be approved.

East Sunderland Area People Board Proposed Priorities and Governance Arrangements for 2017/18

The Chair of the East Sunderland Area People Board submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought Area Committee approval of the proposed priorities to be taken forward as part of the work plan for 2017/18 and which provided an update on the People Board governance arrangements for 2017/18

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chair of the People Board, Councillor Marshall, introduced the report and advised Members of the proposed priorities which were set out in section 3 and the proposed membership of the board; the children's centres local area board (CLAB); and the local multi-agency problem solving group (LMAPS) which were set out in section 4 of the report.

Councillor Scanlan asked for an update on the priority relating to reducing demand on A&E services targeting BME residents. Ms Trueman advised that representatives of the BME network had attended a meeting of the board which had opened up a line of engagement with the network and proposals had been presented. These were early discussions and there was still work to be done; more information would be brought to the July meeting of the board. 1 in 10 residents of the East Area were from a BME background and there were a number of these residents who did not know how to engage with services so attended A&E when a visit to the GP would be more appropriate.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The East Sunderland Area People Board Work Plan priorities for 2017/18 as set out in section 3 and annex 1 be approved.
- b. The area governance arrangements for 2017/18 set out in section 4 and annex 2 be approved.

Area Budgets Report

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update on the financial statements for Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) and Community Chest.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Trueman introduced the report and advised that the new SIB budget allocation had been approved and the committee had a starting SIB balance of £277,456 for 2017/18. There were two SIB projects recommended for approval totalling £30,000 and if these were approved there would be a remaining SIB balance of £247,456 for 2017/18. The SIB financial statement was set out in the table at paragraph 2.1 of the report and details of the applications for consideration were set out in annex 1.

The Council had approved the allocation of £100,000 to supporting youth services with £20,000 allocated to each Area Committee. Members were asked to accept this allocation to fund the VCS Network to deliver youth activity projects in addition to the £74,693 which was aligned, in March 2017, to delivering targeted activities for young people. The People Board would discuss and propose how this grant could be best utilised and would report their findings back to the Area Committee.

The financial statement in respect of Community Chest was set out in table 2 at paragraph 3.1 of the report; each ward within the area had a starting balance of £10,000. There had been 11 requests for community chest funding and these were set out in annex 2.

8. RESOLVED that:-

- a. The financial statements set out in sections 2 and 3 be noted.
- b. The two SIB requests totalling £30,000 from the 2017/2018 budget, as set out in annex 1, be approved.
- c. The £20,000 of funding from Sunderland City Council to support activities for young people be accepted.
- d. The financial position for Community Chest and the eleven approved Community Chest funding proposals, as set out in annex 2, be noted.

Planning Applications – For Information Only

Current Planning Applications relating to the East Sunderland Area for the period 1st April to 11th May 2017 were submitted for Members information only (copy circulated).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) E. GIBSON,
Chairman.