

**Notes of the WASHINGTON PRIDE MEETING  
held at The Millennium Centre, Washington  
on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 at 2.00 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillor Sleightholme in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, Miller, Scaplehorn, Snowdon, Timmins, Trueman, P. Walker and Whalen

Sue Bartlett – Development & Regeneration, Sunderland City Council

Chris Foreman – Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council

Emma Hindmarsh - Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council

Sgt. Ken Robinson – Northumbria Police

Members of the Washington Community

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Chamberlin, Councillor A. Cuthbert, Councillor I. Cuthbert, Councillor I. Richardson, Fraser Kemp M.P., Sgt Ken Robinson, Wendy Cook (Children's Centres) and Karyn Jackson (Fushia).

**Notes of the Last Meeting**

The notes of the last meeting were accepted as a correct record.

**Chairman's Report**

The Chairman referred to the minutes regarding clarification that was to be sought in relation to Council officer support for Pride. He advised that he had spoken to the City Solicitor at Sunderland Council and it had been agreed that Pride would maintain Officer Support from the Authority for the foreseeable future.

## Police Report

P.C. Martin Brace updated the meeting on crime rates in the Washington area and ongoing Police initiatives to tackle crime and disorder.

P.C Brace detailed actual crime numbers committed for the period ending May 2008 in comparison with May 2007

P.C Brace reported the following reductions/ increases in crime rates:-

	May 08	May 07	% inc/dec
Criminal Damage	1,016	1,235	-17.7%
Violent Crime	916	890	+2.9%
Burglary dwellings	421	485	-13.2%
Vehicle Crime	410	560	-28.6%
Overall crime rate	3,952	4,315	-8.4%

P.C Brace stated that increase in violent crime was a national issue.

He advised that over the summer a force-wide initiative would be carried out to tackle youth disorder. During the 6 weeks holidays, off-licenses would be monitored for under age drinking.

Councillor Peter Walker questioned whether blanket checks would be carried out at off licenses in the area or whether Police would be relying on reported cases before investigating. P.C. Brace advised that the Police would be doing both; known 'hotspots' would be targeted all day during the summer holidays and there would also be a reliance on members of the public to report offences taking place.

In response to a question from a member of the public, P.C. Brace advised that the punishment for people caught for the first time illegally obtaining alcohol was a £80 fixed penalty notice. For a second offence a court summons would be issued. P.C. Brace stated that it was an offence for an adult to purchase alcohol to give to a child and this would be subject to the same penalties as previously stated. However it was often difficult to obtain evidence of such an offence.

Regarding what happens to a young person who is caught drinking underage; P.C Brace advised that the Police would take the young person home to ensure their parents were aware of the situation. If young people were repeatedly found to be consuming alcohol underage then Social Services involvement may be considered.

The Chairman thanked P.C. Brace for his attendance

## **Pride Website Update and Demo**

The Chairman welcomed Chris Foreman, Web Analyst, Sunderland Council, and invited him to give an update on the Pride Website.

Chris advised that Issue 4 of the Washington Pride E-Newsletter was available to download.

The committee were able to view the Washington Pride Website and Chris highlighted some of the new information, help, news and advice that was available. There was the facility to view an online calendar of events in Washington on the website.

Chris advised that the calendar of events and the newsletter contained a huge amount of information and approximately twenty times more people read the newsletter than come to the meeting.

The Chairman advised that it would be helpful if organisations could let him know well in advance of items to be included on the agenda.

## **Washington Pride Constitution**

The Chairman circulated a draft copy of the Washington Pride Constitution and requested that people read and forward any comments to Emma Hindmarsh, Sunderland Council. The name of the Group would change to "The Washington Pride Forum".

## **PCT Consultation – GP's – Health Centres**

The Chairman advised that Andrew Robinson, Patient and Public Involvement Lead was unavailable to attend the meeting. However, consultation packs were available for people to collect.

Sharon Hodgson M.P. advised that there appeared to be some confusion regarding the implications of the Darzi proposals for the people of Sunderland. It was her understanding that the exact location of the new GP led health centres would be determined locally and it was important that local people were armed with the facts.

The Chairman advised that it was important that the relevant information was provided by the Teaching Primary Care Trust and he suggested that further information relating to the consultation be printed in the press and released on the Pride website.

## **Lifeline Presentation**

The Chairman welcomed Mark Robert to the meeting and invited him to give his presentation. Mark advised that Lifeline Sunderland was a harm minimisation service commissioned by Sunderland Partnership. The project offered advice and information to people addicted to drugs and alcohol and their carers. They also refer people and offer a needle exchange service, which is provided in all areas of Sunderland.

Mark advised that he was the Community Development Worker and his role was to ensure Lifeline was represented in all areas including Washington and to ensure coverage of services. Mark advised that it was important to educate the community about services that were available. As part of the new Drugs Strategy, there was a priority to empower communities to take ownership. Lifeline was currently looking at a 'Community Interacter Model' whereby members of the public train as Community Interacters in basic drug awareness. Following training they are placed on a mailing list and receive up to date information to empower them to go out to the community and assist in referring people to the appropriate services.

In response to a question regarding needle exchange facilities in Washington, Mark advised that two pharmacies in the Galleries had been approached to provide comprehensive drugs related services including equipment and up to date information.

Mark advised that people with drugs related issues would need access to a range of services and Lifeline did carry out partnership work with organisations such as NECCA for counselling and Turning Point for assessment.

Councillor Trueman emphasised the importance of ensuring support and resources were available for people with alcohol addictions. Mark concurred with Councillor Trueman's comments and advised that NERAF provide support as do Turning Point. He suggested that these organisations could come along to a future Pride meeting to give a talk on the services they provide.

Mark advised that the Drugs Strategy aimed to engage young people at a younger age and training packs were provided to schools.

In response to a question from a member of the public Mark advised that any one witnessing drug use should contact the Police in the first instance. Reports of discarded needles should be made to the Council or Lifeline. Lifeline tended to provide short term intervention and acted as a referral service. Lifeline could be contacted on telephone number 0191 565 8070, NERAF on 0191 565 6688 and Turning Point on 0800 234 6798.

The Chairman thanked Mark for his presentation.

## **Study into Public Realm and Streetscene**

Richard Smith, Living Streets, was welcomed to the Committee. Richard advised that the Council's Environmental and Planning Review Committee, as part of its Policy Review, had commissioned Living Streets to undertake an audit of public realm and streetscene in two locations within the city, one of them being Front Street, Concord, Washington.

Richard briefly outlined the main findings of the audit and community walkabout in Concord; observations were carried out on Victoria Road, Front Street and Speculation Place.

Richard provided a summary of key issues in Concord:-

- Footway quality
- Litter and graffiti on private land
- Greenery
- Accessible routes from residential area
- Promotion and business investment

Richard advised that the Action Plan of recommendations had gone to the relevant senior officers within the Council and it was hoped that the findings would be used to inform the basis of improvements in Concord.

## **Washington Partnership Report**

Sue Barrett, Area Regeneration Officer was in attendance and advised that a funding day was being arranged by Sunderland CVS to raise awareness of funding available for projects in the Washington area. Two community safety days were also being arranged.

## **Bulletin Board – Items for next meeting**

To be considered.

**Date and time of the next meeting to be arranged.**