

DARLASTON NORTH/BENTLEY/DARLASTON SOUTH AREA PANEL

Tuesday 17th January, 2017 at 6.00 PM

At Darlaston Methodist Church, Slater Street, Darlaston

Present:

Councillor Burley (Chairman)
Councillor Chambers (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Underhill

In attendance:

Nicola Holmes	- Area Manager
Adrian Stephenson	- Darlaston Rep
P.C. Richard Collins	- West Midlands Police
Sergeant Lee Nicholls	- West Midlands Police

Apology

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor James.

187/16 Minutes

Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November, 2016, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Panel, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

188/16 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Burley, Chambers and Underhill declared an interest in the following funding item:-

Darlaston Remembers and indicated that they had obtained a dispensation so that they could speak and vote on this item.

189/16 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

Carol Boughton made a presentation with the aid of PowerPoint regarding safeguarding training.

(see annexed)

She reported that it was everyone's responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and that any organisation with concerns had a legal obligation to report it to the appropriate authority. She continued that Serious Case Reviews were carried out after a child's death and it was a very common complaint that someone knew something but did not share that information.

Carol reported that violence was usually perpetrated by a family member and that significant harm had to be proved in the case of children. The same standard did not apply to adults. She indicated that abuse could take many forms: physical, psychological, sexual, financial, domestic but self neglect did not apply to children under the age of 18.

Carol reported that when concern was raised over an individual the information would come to MASH and be considered by all partner organisations to assess the risk and agree what action should be taken. She added that on 16th January 2017 there were 357 children in Walsall with Child Protection Plans in place which was about right for a borough of its size. These could be broken down into the following categories:-

- Emotional 172
- Neglect 150
- Physical 22
- Sexual 13

It had been found that people were more willing to talk about domestic abuse/ violence than they were to discuss sexual abuse.

Councillor Burley asked about children being taken in to the care of the Local Authority. Carol replied that the authority tried to keep children with their parents whenever possible.

Carol then referred to the Care Act, 2014 which was the first legislation introduced to safeguard adults. Care and support had to be provided by the Local Authority through Social Workers. If an adult refused assistance then the Local Authority had to carry out a needs assessment on that individual which was carried out by Deprivation of Liberty Officers (DOLs).

Councillor Chambers thanked Carol for a thought provoking presentation and indicated that as a Ward Councillor he was out and about in the community and if he saw anything untoward then he would report it.

After further discussion it was

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

191/16 Funding Report

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Members considered the funding applications in the report and it was:-

Resolved

That:-

Project	Amount requested	Match Funding	Approved/Not approved
Health Watch Walsall- Funding to organise a large community based event in Darlaston Town Hall	£500	Health Watch will pay for entertainment and activities as a match funding contribution	Application withdrawn
Darlaston Remembers- to pay for the organisation of a Remembrance Day Parade in Darlaston	£2,000	£3,000	£2,000 approved
Darlaston All Active Community website- to pay for the upgrade of current website in order to make it more accessible to all, mobile friendly and with more up to date and attractive information available	£578	£1050	£578 approved

192/16 Area Manager's Report

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Nicola Holmes enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the panel.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

193/16

Void properties

The Area Manager (Nicola Holmes) asked if there were any properties causing concern. She reported that the owners of the Boat Public House had appealed the demolition notice served by the Local Authority. Members expressed concern over safety issues at the former Darlaston Town Football Club Ground. It was suggested that the stand damaged by fire should be demolished. Nicola reminded the panel that as the Football Ground was in a conservation area, permission would need to be obtained to demolish the stand.

Councillor Chambers reported that the former weights and measures building could not be demolished as it was a listed building.

Resolved

That the present position on void properties be noted.

194/16

Neighbourhood Community Officers and the Community Leaving Directory

As there was no one from Adult Social Care present at the meeting, this item was deferred to the next meeting of the panel.

195/16

Police and Crime Matters

P.C. Richard Collins and Sergeant Lee Nicholls of West Midlands Police were welcomed to the meeting. Sergeant Nicholls gave apologies for Chief Inspector Sophie Worthington who was unable to attend this evening's meeting.

Sergeant Nicholls reported that he would be stationed in Darlaston until 2020 so there should be some uniformity in policing until then.

Councillor Burley commented that in the past, meetings had been held between the Police Sergeant and Ward Councillors for the Darlaston and Bentley North Ward to discuss policing issues. She asked if these meetings could be re-introduced so that Councillors could raise issues put forward by residents at surgeries etc. She referred to the fact that the Police no longer attended the Town Centre Partnership meeting and asked if this would be addressed. She also asked for the re-introduction of a Police presence in King Street, Darlaston.

Councillor Chambers felt it was essential to have a good working relationship with West Midlands Police. He asked if Councillors could

contact the Officers at Darlaston Police Station. Sergeant Nicholls agreed to give his contact details to Councillors.

Councillor Burley asked about the present situation regarding crime and anti-social behaviour in Darlaston. She asked what had happened to the Darlaston North Neighbourhood Watch. P.C. Collins replied that until recently there were only two Police Officers covering Darlaston and they were often called over to Walsall when there was heavy demand. Now Darlaston had additional Officers and PCSO's, so this should not be a problem.

Councillor Burley asked if Police surgeries would be revived. Sergeant Nicholls replied that they would not be brought back as they were not successful and were seen as a waste of Police resources.

Councillor Burley asked about the proposed closure of Willenhall Police Station. Sergeant Nicholls replied that it was likely to happen in the next few months but when Willenhall did close, Police resources would be transferred to Darlaston Police Station.

Councillor Underhill asked if the closure of Walsall Police Station had had any effect on Darlaston. Sergeant Nicholls replied that a good response point for Walsall Town Centre had been lost with its closure.

Councillor Burley commented that if Police Officers were seen on the streets of Darlaston it would help build confidence in the community.

Councillor Burley asked about crime figures for the area. Sergeant Nicholls stated that the total recorded crime figures since August, 2016 were running at between 160-170 incidents per month. He continued that January had been a quiet month with only 70 incidents reported so far. Burglaries from homes were running high in Walsall as a whole at present and theft from vehicles had been recorded at 15-20 per month. He added that anti-social behaviour fluctuated massively with peaks at Halloween and Bonfire Night.

After further discussion it was

Resolved

That the verbal report be noted.

196/16

Dates and venues for future meetings

Resolved

That the date and time for future meetings of the Area Panel be noted:-

Monday 20th March, 2017- Darlaston Methodist Church

Councillor Burley reported that Nicola was leaving Walsall to take up a post with Wolverhampton City Council. She thanked Nicola for her services to Darlaston Area Panel and wished her success in her new employment.

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.26 p.m.

Chair.....

Date.....