

# **DARLASTON LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

**Tuesday, 14 November, 2006, at 6.00 p.m.**

**At Bentley Leisure Pavilion, Bentley Road North, Darlaston**

## **Present**

Councillor Bill Madeley (Chairman)  
Cath Boneham  
Sandra Borland  
Councillor Rose Burley  
Councillor Keith Chambers  
Inspector Bob Gessie  
Paul Johnson – West Midlands Fire Service  
Keith Middleton  
Ismail Patel  
Rashid Varachhia  
Councillor Graham Wilkes

## **In Attendance**

Tim Challans  
Narinder Singh Chumber  
Dave Haq  
Steve Lewis  
Paul Wilde

### **151/06 Appointment of Vice-Chairman from Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership Nominated Partners**

#### **Resolved**

That Sergeant Lloyd of West Midlands Police be invited to become the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership Nominated Partner Vice-Chairman of the Darlaston Local Neighbourhood Partnership for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

### **152/06 Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were submitted on behalf of Denise Burkett, Andy Clarke and Charlotte Corden.

## **153/06 Introductions**

Each Member of the Partnership and the Officers present introduced themselves and explained in brief the organisation they represented.

## **154/06 Minutes**

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2006, a copy having been circulated to each Member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the addition of an apology for non-attendance on behalf of Sandra Borland.

## **155/06 Public Forum**

### **Mr. Mervyn Jones**

Mr. Jones presented a petition containing 751 signatures requesting that Darlaston Town Hall be re-opened to the public as quickly as possible and definitely for the Christmas period. He reported that he had booked the Town Hall earlier in the year for the Salvation Army International Showband which was due to perform on 14 December. He added that a further petition containing some 1,500 signatures would be available within the next week.

### **Mr. Salt, Stafford Road, Darlaston**

Mr. Salt informed the meeting that, as a driver for Ring and Ride" he used Stafford Road regularly and was well aware of the road humps. He would prefer to see the humps replaced with chicanes as had been done in Pinson Road, Willenhall. He added that chicanes had been provided in Church Hill Road, Bentley, and Queen Street, Moxley. He stated that, as a result of the new development taking place in Stafford Road, there would soon be even more traffic using it.

Mr. Salt advised the meeting that residents had been woken at 2.00 a.m. by lorries driving over the existing speed humps. He added that chicanes would not only be quieter they would also slow traffic using Stafford Road.

### **Mrs. Smith**

Mrs. Smith referred to the fact that residents had requested a 20 mph speed limit on Stafford Road. She added that an Officer from the Highways Agency had been seen measuring the street as part of the new development and had been approached regarding the problems being experienced by residents. Further developments were awaited.

## **Darlaston Town Hall**

Tim Challans (Education, Lifelong Learning and Leisure) reported that Darlaston Town Hall had had to be closed for health and safety reasons concerning the condition of the electrics and the kitchen. Following an inspection of the premises, it had been reported that the Town Hall needed re-wiring, the roof required repair, the kitchen needed replacing because of the presence of asbestos and a new boiler was required. He stated that Leisure Services had been flexible and had allowed some events to continue at the Town Hall, whilst others had been relocated elsewhere. He indicated that the re-wiring work, the roof repairs and the new boiler could be financed from the Council's maintenance budget. It would involve a thirteen week contract and would be completed by April 2007. The Town Hall could then be used again but with no kitchen facility. He added that, once the re-wiring had been completed, the Town Hall would require redecoration. It had been estimated that the cost of replacing the kitchen and redecorating the Town Hall would be in the region of £85,000, but there was no budgetary provision for this. A report would be going to Cabinet to ask for additional funding.

Tim Challans continued that Darlaston Town Hall cost over £100,000 per annum to run and letting fees were currently producing between £8-9,000 per annum. This seemed to indicate that large events were less attractive to people there, although concerts, regular groups like blood donors or Weight Watchers, weddings and parties were still held there. He indicated that a report was being submitted to Cabinet to consider options for the future use of the Town Hall. He added that the Council was keen to improve the building and encourage its future use. The possibility of opening the Town Hall over the Christmas period would be considered. He agreed to consider opening the Town Hall on 14 December for the Salvation Army event, but the kitchen would be unavailable.

Councillor Madeley thanked Tim Challans for his report and commented that the news was better than expected. He reminded the meeting that he had had discussions with Annie Shepperd over Darlaston Town Hall and she had visited the building with Officers and agreed to the re-wiring work, a new kitchen, a new boiler and the refurbishment of the toilets. He added that the boiler was on order and the electrics had now been checked. The roof would be repaired shortly, then the Town Hall could be redecorated. He added that the people of Darlaston were concerned that the Town Hall was standing empty for weeks when the fitness suite at the Gala Baths, Walsall, was re-built after the fire very quickly. He also asked why Darlaston Town Hall was not advertised in the same way that Bloxwich Library Theatre and Walsall Town Hall were.

Councillor Madeley expressed concern that the present pricing structure for the use of Darlaston Town Hall meant that local people were being priced out. He asked if consideration could be given to a reduction for Darlaston residents. He also requested that, when shows were performed at Darlaston Town Hall, the Council should give them maximum advertising and publicity.

Tim Challans replied that the fitness suite at the Gala Baths had been dealt with as an insurance claim. The work could be carried out very quickly because the insurance company paid for it. He re-iterated the fact that the work to Darlaston Town Hall would be financed from the Council's maintenance budget.

Councillor Burley stated that, in her opinion, Darlaston had been forgotten. The Town Hall was not marketed effectively and Darlaston people were charged excessively for its use. To add insult to injury, Darlaston residents had to pay for their own liability insurance now. She indicated that large venues for Asian use were limited so Darlaston Town Hall offered a valuable solution and should be used much more. She added that the £85,000 quoted for the brick built kitchen and redecoration seemed excessive. She also questioned why it had taken three months to get renovation works underway.

After further discussion it was:-

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the verbal report be noted;
- (2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Partnership regarding current charging arrangements and the potential for providing incentives/reductions to Darlaston residents;
- (3) That consideration be given to the possibility of holding events at Darlaston Town Hall similar to those held at Bloxwich Library Theatre or Walsall Town Hall with support from Central Marketing;
- (4) That repairs/refurbishments to Darlaston Town Hall be carried out as expeditiously as possible.

### **156/06 Update from last meeting**

Steve Lewis reported that there was a report on Stafford Road later on the agenda.

### **157/06 LNP Funding - Update**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

A supplementary report was handed to those persons present at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

Narinder Singh Chumber referred to the figures contained in paragraph 3 of the report and amended them to read:-

Total funding spent to date	£8,781
Total allocated but not yet spent	£5,000 (not including mapping project)
Total remaining	£8,219

He drew attention to the feedback from service areas and to the £3,000 which would be needed to repair and refurbish the market stalls in Darlaston Market. Referring for the allocation for 2006/07, Narinder suggested that £1,000 should be used to provide merchandising to promote a cleaner LNP area and that the remainder should be used to implement some of the 26 projects which had arisen from the bus tour, but which could not be assisted by mainstream funding. He added that a mandate should be given to the Safer and Stronger Communities CAG to allocate this funding and to report back to a future meeting of the LNP.

Councillor Burley asked if funding could be provided for a lit Christmas tree in Moxley.

Councillor Wilkes reported that he had approached Amey Plc for a costing for a tree and it could be as much as £2,500.

After further discussion it was:-

### **Resolved**

That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

- (1) notes the progress and current spend on funding priorities in 2006/07;
- (2) supports the following new proposals:-
  - Repair/refurbishment of market stalls £3,000
  - Merchandising to promote a cleaner Darlaston £1,000
  - Lit Christmas tree in Moxley (costing to be agreed)
  - Bus tour projects £10,000
- (3) notes that the deadline for spend for 2006/07 funding is 31 March 2007

Referring to the supplementary report, Narinder Singh Chumber reported on the progress of the mapping exercise. He indicated that the remit would look at provision for the 0-5, 8-12 and 13-19 age ranges.

Councillor Madeley expressed concern at the lack of provision for 5-8 year olds who were not catered for at present.

Councillor Burley stated that she was looking forward to the mapping exercise being completed as there was nothing in the Rough Hay area for young people of any age. This would provide an opportunity to bridge that gap.

Narinder Singh Chumber said that the mapping exercise would be considered at the Health and People CAG on 18 December, 2006.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the mapping exercise be considered at the Health and People CAG to be held on 18 December 2006.

**158/06 Community Action Groups Update**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed

Councillor Madeley asked if the dates and venues for the Community Action Groups could be advertised more widely as people were unsure when and where they were taking place. Councillor Burley reported that the Safer and Stronger Communities Community Action Group would be held at Rough Hay community Centre, 27 Hall Street East, Darlaston, on 20 November. The police would be present to advise on neighbourhood policing. A press release had been issued on 13 November.

**Resolved**

- (1) That LNP members continue in attendance at the Community Action Group meetings;
- (2) That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership note the progress of Community Action Groups.

**159/06 Locality Commissioning Project**

Cath Boneham (tPCT) made a PowerPoint presentation on the Locality Commissioning Project and information was circulated to those present at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

Councillor Burley referred to breast screening and asked if the mobile screening unit could be sited in Darlaston Town Centre. Cath Boneham agreed to look at this.

Councillor Chambers commented that the report contained a lot of information which was difficult to assimilate at this time. He asked whether vouchers could be used to encourage the use of Council facilities. Cath Boneham indicated that this was known as exercise by prescription and was under consideration.

After further discussion it was:-

### **Resolve**

- (1) That the presentation be noted;
- (2) That the Partnership supports the initiative proposed;
- (3) That further reports on the progress of the project will be submitted to the Partnership as and when required.

### **160/06 Stafford Road, Darlaston**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Steve Lewis enlarged on the report and indicated that Stafford Road had a low first year rate of return. As Stafford Road already had speed cushions in place, priority had to be given to those roads with no traffic calming. He suggested that the matter should be kept under review.

Councillor Burley indicated that she was disappointed with the report as it had not taken into account residents' comments or the request for a 20 mph speed limit in Stafford Road. She added that, because of staff shortages, it appeared that previous reports had been re-hashed rather than Officers visiting the area again. She asked why chicanes were acceptable in Dangerfield Lane, but were felt to be less effective in Stafford Road. She also referred to the proposed new developments in Stafford Road and to the effect the increased traffic would create. She asked whether Section 106 monies could be used to fund road safety improvements.

Councillor Burley referred to residents' comments that an Officer from the Highways Agency had been measuring in Stafford Road. She asked if the Highways Authority had produced any reports on Stafford Road and, if so, whether the Council had been invited to respond to them. She referred to the fact that traffic used Stafford Road as a rat-run to the Black Country Route and reminded the meeting that the existing speed humps had only been repaired because residents had reported the damage done to them.

Councillor Madeley expressed concern that the noise and vibration from traffic using Stafford Road was affecting residents' well being. He felt that a 20 mph speed limit was necessary and should be strictly enforced.

Councillor Burley asked if any accident analysis had been carried out in Stafford Road. She requested a more detailed report covering the introduction of a 20 mph zone and the use of Section 106 monies to fund the additional works in Stafford Road.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a further report be submitted, including:-
  - The potential use of Section 106 monies to fund traffic Improvements in the area;
  - Whether a traffic assessment had been undertaken in Stafford Road in conjunction with the new housing development;
  - Was the Highways Agency measuring up in Stafford Road and was a report produced by them?
  - Did the Local Authority respond to their findings:
  - The feasibility of introducing a 20 mph speed limit in Stafford Road
  - The costing of a chicane scheme and the impact on restrictions introduced in Willenhall Street on Stafford Road's traffic flows.

**161/06 Darlaston Town Hall**

This matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

**162/06 Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership would be held on Wednesday, 10 January 2007, at a venue to be determined.

**Termination of Meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....



