

Willenhall North, Willenhall South and Short Heath Area Panel
Community Hubs
26 March 2015

Please note that is a brief summary and does not comprise of all the details outlined in various reports.

A report called 'Community Hubs - Shaping a fairer future' was provided to Cabinet on 4th February 2015.

Summary of Cabinet Report

- 1 The purpose of the Cabinet report was to seek cabinet agreement to a policy statement describing the cabinet's ambitions for more localised service delivery through a network of community hubs, and to a proposed approach to develop this model through area partnerships.
- 2 The purpose of community hubs is to provide locally-based focal points for the delivery of services. They will encourage greater community involvement in decisions about what services should be provided and how they are designed.
- 3 Engaging with local residents, partner organisations and the voluntary sector will help to inform the design of the community hubs. To this end it is intended to invite the six area partnerships to consult locally on the right configuration of community hubs for their area and to prepare a business case which will be brought back to cabinet for approval.
- 4 A project team has been established to support the work to be done in area partnerships.

Appendix A of the Cabinet report provides additional details as to the types of impact community hubs could have

Community Hubs – Shaping a Fairer Future

- The purpose of community hubs is to provide locally-based focal points for the delivery of services.
- They will encourage greater community involvement in decisions about what services should be provided and how they are designed.
- The outcome we want to see is better access to all services and more localised delivery.
- This does not just cover council services and is not just physical access to buildings.

From this definition it is clear that community hubs are intended to support several distinct but closely related objectives:

- How we make better use of physical assets to co-locate services (council and partners) for the benefit of residents
- How we involve local people more in the design of services provided in their community
- How we encourage more innovation in delivery models using the voluntary sector where appropriate
- How we devolve more responsibilities to local levels
- How we improve access more generally across all channels.

On 6th March 2015 the Leader of Walsall Council wrote to the Area Panel Chair outlining how Walsall Council is committed to empowering local communities in order to enable people to help themselves, using different models of engagement. Community hubs being one such mechanism.

Karl Dipple, Community Hubs Project Lead, 01922 658982, karl.dipple@walsall.gov.uk is the lead officer, and he will be working with the Area Managers to further develop the business case on how a community hub or network of hubs could look in each of the six areas of the borough.

To assist this process there are a series of questions that could be used to aid discussion.

Community Hubs

Questions to Prompt Area Partnership Discussions

1. What do our local area profiles tell us about the main priorities for our area?
2. What are the main outcomes we are trying to achieve through our area plan?
3. What more can we expect local people to do for themselves in our area, to reduce reliance on public services?
4. And what measures would you use to track progress in your area?
5. Where are public services provided from at the moment in our area?
6. What do we know about the accessibility of these places?
7. What would the advantages be of co-locating and integrating services together?
8. And what are the impediments to achieving this?

9. Are there assets in our area which could be the basis for community hubs?
10. How can we best engage with the local community on this?
11. How can we best engage with service providers (council and other public services) on this?
12. Where are the main opportunities for greater involvement of voluntary and community organisations?
13. What is the potential role of schools in improving access to services?
14. How are we going to organise local consultation on these issues?

What should the Area Partnership do next?

Councillors are asked that they share their initial thoughts around how to shape community hubs at the Area Panel meeting on 26th March, or directly to michael.greenfield@walsall.gov.uk or Karl Dipple 01922 658982, karl.dipple@walsall.gov.uk

Michael Greenfield
Area Manager

☎ 01922 654684

✉ Michael.Greenfield@walsall.gov.uk