

## **DARLASTON NORTH/BENTLEY/DARLASTON SOUTH AREA PANEL**

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2016 at 6.00 p.m.**

**At Darlaston Methodist Church, Slater Street, Darlaston**

### **Present:**

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

### **In attendance:**

Paul Gordon	- Head of Business Change
Sioux Beddow	- SureStart
Tahra Hussain	- SureStart
Friends of Darlaston Town Hall	
Tony Marshall	- Darlaston Boxing Club

### **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors James and Underhill.

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### **Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2016, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Panel, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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### **Declarations of Interest**

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

Darlaston and The Spirit of Christmas and Darlaston In Bloom Winter Projects indicated that they had obtained a dispensation so that they could speak and vote on these items.

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### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

**Early Help Process**

A report was circulated to those present at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

Tahra Hussain (SureStart) enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the panel. She indicated that the service worked with 892 children and 502 families across the Borough. 273 children and 158 families were involved in the Western area. The West Family Support Team consisted of 60 family support workers. She drew attention to page 3 of the report and to the 234 stars which had been completed. She added that parenting support was also provided.

Sioux Beddow (SureStart) reported that schools, Children's Services and the police were all involved in providing support to vulnerable families. 15 schools in the Darlaston Area were involved in the work and two school liaison panel members ensured that children were at the centre of every intervention. The panel met monthly and mental health, domestic abuse and substance abuse were the top problems to tackle. The 16 family support teams had a wide range of experience and training which could be tapped into.

Reference was made to the budget consultation programme and dates and times were referred to in the report.

Councillor Chambers asked for a point of contact. Tahra Hussain replied that Sioux Beddow, the Family Support Lead, could be contacted at Darlaston Children's Centre, Ilmington House, Crescent Road, Wednesbury.

Councillor Burley asked if the team got people walking into the centre from the street to obtain advice. Tahra Hussain replied that very often victims of domestic abuse walked in for support.

After further discussion it was:

**Resolved**

That the report and presentation be noted.

**Funding Report**

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Members considered the funding applications within the report and it was:

## Resolved

That:-

Project	Amount requested	Match Funding	Approved/Not approved
Pass It On Furniture and Charity Shop – funding for signage on a second hand van purchased recently and external signage	£1106.80	Volunteer time in the Pass It On shop	£1000 approved
Deck the Halls with Darlaston (SureStart Xmas Event) – To host a Christmas event on 10 <sup>th</sup> December for the whole community in Darlaston.	£1250	Staff and volunteer time at event	£1000 approved
Darlaston The Spirit of Christmas – Christmas event in King Street, Darlaston on 10 <sup>th</sup> December, 2016.	£4000	£13,086.20	£1000
Darlaston In Bloom Winter Project – funding for planters, bulbs, winter bedding, compost and additional related supplies.	£4000	£13,086.20	In total

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## Area Manager's Report

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(See annexed)

## Resolved

That the report be noted.

**Darlaston Town Hall**

The Head of Business Change (Paul Gordon) reported that rumours that Darlaston Town Hall was to close and the land to be sold off for housing was incorrect. He indicated that the Council was involved in a bidding process to obtain a new owner for the Town Hall and it was helped to then grow and develop it successfully. He added that the Council was also considering leasing it to a third party to ensure its future. Current users would be encouraged to remain there and further community use would be encouraged.

Tony Marshall (Darlaston Boxing Club) used the Town Hall for training and had removed a lot of children from the streets with its activities. He was concerned that he would not be able to renew his bookings for the foreseeable future.

Councillor Burley reported that she had heard rumours that the Town Hall would be closing in March 2017 and as a result no further bookings were being taken. She felt that this misinformation needed to be quashed. She advised all those organisations who used Darlaston Town Hall to continue to book it for future events.

Councillor Chambers commented that he was reassured by Paul Gordon's comments and was delighted that Darlaston Town hall would continue to provide a venue for community activities and events.

Tony Marshall (Darlaston Boxing Club) asked if he would be able to renew his contract. Paul Gordon replied that all existing arrangements would be honoured but any new applications would have to wait until the new establishment was in place.

Councillor Burley asked if the activities of the Friends of Darlaston Town Hall would also be protected. The Friends of Darlaston Town Hall stated that concerts at the Town Hall were already being cancelled and the organ recitals were switching to Walsall Town Hall. She added that Darlaston residents did not want to go to Walsall for an organ recital when they could enjoy one at Darlaston Town Hall. A brass band concert had also been transferred to Walsall Town Hall and ticket prices had increased as a result. She asked if arrangements could be put in place to ensure that these events returned to Darlaston.

Paul Gordon indicated that Darlaston's organist had agreed to the move of the recitals to Walsall but he had agreed to hold other concerts in Darlaston Town Hall because he wanted to maintain a core of events there.

Councillor Chambers asked if the dedicated space enjoyed by Tony Marshall would be maintained. Paul Gordon indicated that it would be protected.

A Friend of Darlaston Town Hall asked if a press release or a social media message could be sent out to the effect that Darlaston Town Hall remained open for business to ensure that rumours of its closure were quashed.

Paul Gordon reported that parts of Darlaston Town Hall including the bar area and kitchen were in need of refurbishment. Some of the outbuildings were in poor condition and further investment would be required. He reiterated the fact that Darlaston Town Hall was not closing and would arrange a press release to confirm this.

Councillor Burley referred to the fact that a fish and chip supper event was being held at Darlaston Town Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2016. She felt that this could be used to further promote the building and its use and scotch the rumours of its demise.

Councillor Burley commented that if the Darlaston organist was to perform future concerts at Darlaston Town Hall then it was imperative that the Town Hall's organ was maintained in working order. Paul Gordon reported that the people of Darlaston contributed to the upkeep of the organ and Walsall Council had agreed to provide monies to maintain it despite the authority's present financial difficulties.

A Friend of Darlaston Town Hall referred to the house at the side of the Town hall and asked if it could be renovated. Paul Gordon replied that the Council did not have the funds to restore it but it was possible that the successful bidder to take over Darlaston Town Hall would be able to obtain funding to restore it that the local authority was unable to access. He then reiterated the fact that Darlaston Town Hall was not to be closed or sold off and it would hopefully have a successful future under its new owner.

### **Resolved**

That the verbal report be noted.

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### **Neighbourhood Community Officers and the Community Living Directory**

Councillor Burley reported that the representative from Adult Social Care who was to speak on this item was unavailable this evening so consideration on the matter would be deferred to the next panel meeting in January.

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### **Dates and Venues for future meetings**

### **Resolved**

That the dates and times for future meetings of the Area Panel be noted:

Tuesday 17 January 2017

– Darlaston Methodist Church

**Termination of meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.30 p.m.

Chair.....

Date.....