

WALSALL SOUTH AREA PANEL

Tuesday, 10 December, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room, Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor K. Hussain (Chairman)
Councillor E.B. Russell (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Z. Ali
Councillor D.A. Anson
Councillor M. Arif
Councillor A. Ditta
Councillor H.S. Sarohi
Councillor V. Whyte

Officers in attendance

Steve Pretty - Head of Highways and Transportation
Denise Perry - Area Manager
Paul Leighton - Group Manager (Road Traffic Network)
Mick Edwards - Assistant Operations Manager, Cleansing
Adam Cross - Cycling and Pedestrian Officer
Joe Green - Sustrans
Laura Terry - Partnership Officer
Craig Goodall - Committee Business and Governance Manager

27/13

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I. Azam, Councillor Mrs. R.A. Martin and Councillor M. Nazir.

28/13

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest for the duration of the meeting.

29/13 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

It was noted that there were no items to be considered in private session during the meeting.

30/13 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting that took place on 3rd October, 2013, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

31/13 **Street Cleansing in Walsall South**

The Panel considered details of the street cleansing regimes and fly tipping in the Walsall South area.

The Assistant Operations Manager (Cleansing) informed Members about:-

- The frequency of street cleansing;
- The street cleansing rounds;
- How streets were prioritised for cleansing;
- The budget and staff available for street cleansing;
- How requests for street cleansing should be made;
- Information and statistics about street cleansing and action taken against fly tippers.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:-

Leaf fall

Members raised a number of issues and areas that suffered from substantial problems with leaf fall across the area. Problems were particularly prevalent in West Bromwich Street and its immediate surrounding area.

The Assistant Operations Manager (Cleansing) reported that areas with high leaf fall were prioritised for street cleansing during the Autumn and Winter. At a minimum, areas would be cleaned once a week.

Areas with high density of parked cars

It was explained that it was more difficult to cleanse streets in areas which had a high density of parked cars. When cleansing was due, residents would be requested to relocate their cars to enable works to take place. Co-ordinated deep cleanse and street repair works would then take place.

Performance management

Spot checks on street cleansing routes took place regularly. Each vehicle was fitted with a tracking system so the locations they visited could be easily monitored.

Problem areas and reporting

A number of problem areas were reported at the meeting. Members were encouraged to report all known issues to the Clean and Green service so that full details could be recorded. A discussion took place on the most appropriate channel for Members to use to report issues. If persistent issues continued, Members were encouraged to contact the Head of Service or use the Clean and Green e-mail address.

Resolved

That:-

- (1) the report be noted;
and;
- (2) a map showing the street cleansing route for Monday "A" be circulated to the Panel.

32/13

Gully Cleaning Project

Members received a report on drain and gully maintenance following a report on the issue in March, 2013.

The Head of Highways and Transportation reported on the activity that had taken place since the last time the Panel had considered the issue. He explained the findings of the three month trial with a specialist contractor; the progress and findings of the ongoing project to clear all gullies in the Borough, along with the benefits of this approach and the additional intelligence gathered.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:-

- 22,000 out of 33,000 gullies in the Borough had been cleared. Every street would have been cleared by May, 2014. Following the completion of all streets, the intelligence gathered on each would be analysed to develop a co-ordinated gully clearing regime based on need;
- The intelligence gathered had identified 500 collapsed sewers. Engagement and partnership working with Severn Trent was taking place with the hope of resolving these problems in the future;

- Response times to complaints varied depending on the urgency of the problem. Due to costs, efforts were being made to reduce the amount of reactive work undertaken but all dangerous situations would be dealt with promptly;
- Problems with HGVs damaging drains were discussed. Claims could only be made against vehicle users whose damage was caused by inappropriate access. Replacement drains were able to withstand greater weights;
- A member of the public highlighted the importance of informing residents about the coming works so that vehicles could be moved away from residential streets to maximise the effectiveness of gully clearing. Members agreed that better communication would assist;
- A number of problem streets were identified which the Head of Highways and Transportation agreed to investigate.

Resolved

That:-

- (1) the Head of Highways and Transportation contact Councillor Ditta to discuss issues with gully clearing;
 - (2) the Head of Highways and Transportation investigate reports of a collapsed drain in Ida Road;
- and;
- (3) consideration be given to how communication with residents regarding gully clearing could be improved.

33/13

Participatory Budgeting within Area Partnerships

The Panel considered the outcome of the public consultation regarding participatory budgeting for verge parking.

The Partnership Officer outlined the viable schemes and reported that unfortunately the majority of additional sites proposed at the last meeting were not viable. She explained publicity and consultation methods and the results of the consultation on the five viable sites to the Panel. A report detailing the voting patterns and comments received was tabled at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

Members of the Panel noted the results and supported the views of residents. The meeting noted that there were problems with verge parking at all of the proposed sites that needed resolving in the long term.

The Panel noted the possibility that detailed on site investigation work could identify the preferred site as unviable therefore Members prioritised all schemes.

Resolved

That the proposed schemes for verge parking be prioritised in the following order:-

- (1) Primley Avenue;
- (2) Gower Street;
- (3) Hough Road 2;
- (4) Slaters Lane 1;
- (5) Hough Road 1.

34/13

Funding Report

The Panel considered funding applications for local projects.

The Area Manager highlighted each project in turn to Members. Following this, a discussion took place on each item.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:-

Tackling Diabetes with lifestyle changes

Following re-assurances that each project was monitored and evaluated, Members were supportive of this scheme.

Security improvements to Brace Street

Members were supportive of this project.

The Chuckery - pocket places for people

The Area Manager advised that whilst the project application form had requested £10,000, the sum of £7,500 would be acceptable to undertake and complete it.

Following questions, Members were informed about many aspects of the project, including:-

- Sustrans was a sustainable transport charity that had been in operation since the 1970s. The company had developed a national cycle network;

- £112,000 of funding was being provided by the Public Health Trust. This money had been gained through the People's Health Lottery and was required to be spent in areas where tickets had been purchased;
- In addition to this cash could only be invested in areas that were considered to be in the most 25% deprived in the country;
- Further details about the project's success in other areas was outlined;
- No contribution from local businesses was included in the project budget.

Members were supportive of the project due to its aim to encourage sustainable transport and the potential knock-on benefits for health, however, there was discussion on the level of funding that the Panel should award. Some Members felt that other Council budgets should meet the full match funding allocation whereas others felt that the Panel's contribution should be lower with local businesses encouraged to contribute.

The Panel agreed to provide £5,000 towards the project and requested that local businesses be encouraged to contribute the remaining match funding.

St. Michael's car park

Members discussed the level of funding they wished to contribute to this scheme. In response to a question, the Panel were informed that unless the full amount £4,240 was provided, the project would be unable to go ahead.

It was **proposed** and **seconded**:-

That £4,240 be provided to the project.

Following a question, the Committee Business and Governance Manager clarified procedural issues regarding the proposing of, seconding of and voting on motions. The motion was put to the vote and declared **lost**.

It was **proposed** and **seconded**:-

That £2,000 be provided to the project.

The motion was put to the vote and **carried**.

Woodland Learning Garden Path Restoration

Members agreed to support the project.

Protecting the victims of burglary

The Area Manager advised the Panel that the project could be adequately supported by providing £1,235 funding rather than £2,470 requested.

A Member of the Panel explained that the latest crime figures were showing large increases in the number of burglaries taking place. Therefore, it was important that the local community was assisted with methods that could prevent them from becoming victims of crime.

The Panel agreed to fund the project in full.

Youth Leadership Development Project

The Area Manager advised the Panel that funding had been requested for a year long project. However, the Area Panel could only provide funding for expenditure up to 31st March, 2014. Discussions had taken place with the UK Islamic Mission and they had indicated that approximately £6,000 of expenditure would be completed by March, 2014. She explained that if the Panel awarded funding to the project that could not be spent before March, 2014 then it was likely that this funding would be lost. She added that the group could apply for further funding in the new funding year.

A Member spoke in support of the project and explained that the organisation did good work in the community and the benefit to young people taking part would be excellent. Another Member was also supportive of the scheme and expressed some concern about the amount of match funding that participants in the project were required to contribute.

It was **proposed** and **seconded**:-

That the project be awarded £10,000.

Members voted and the scheme was declared **carried**.

Resolved

That:-

- (1) £2,690 be awarded to the Tackling Diabetes with lifestyle changes project;
- (2) £200 be awarded for security improvements to Brace Street;
- (3) £5,000 be awarded to 'The Chuckery - pocket places for people Project; and local businesses be contacted and encouraged to provide further match funding;
- (4) £2,000 be awarded towards St. Michael's car park;

- (5) £1,648 be awarded towards the Woodland Learning Garden Path Restoration project;
- (6) £2,470 be awarded towards the Protecting the victims of burglary project;
- and;
- (7) £10,000 be awarded to the Youth Leadership Development Project.

35/13

Ongoing updates on the actions for Walsall South Area Plan

The Panel received an update from the Area Manager regarding ongoing activity in the Walsall South area.

The Area Manager explained that the CCTV camera on Caldmore Green would be relocated shortly to tackle problems with fly tipping in Woodward's Road. Members stated that more CCTV cameras would help combat problems with anti-social behaviour across the area.

She also highlighted leaflets that were going to be distributed to residents in Caldmore and Chuckery to encourage recycling. The Chair encouraged the Area Manager to provide similar leaflets for the Pleck Ward.

Resolved

That:-

- (1) subject to the identification of sufficient funding, leaflets encouraging recycling in the Pleck Ward be printed and distributed;
- and;
- (2) the report be noted.

36/13

Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 4 February, 2014.

Termination of meeting

The meeting closed at 8.26 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: