

NORTH WALSALL AREA PANEL MEETING

Tuesday, 7 July, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

**Burrowes Street TMO, Tenant Management Resource Centre,
Burrowes Street, Walsall, WS2 8NN**

Present

Councillor S.F. Fitzpatrick (Chair)
Councillor J. Fitzpatrick
Councillor C. Jones
Councillor T.J. Jukes
Councillor M. Follows
Councillor I.C. Robertson

Officers

Ness Croft – Area Manager
John Roseblade – Group Manager (Highways & Environment)
Steph Hammond – Steps to Work
Steve Gittins - Deputy Manager - Community Safety
David Atkins – Community Safety Officer
Matt Underhill - Committee Business and Governance Manager

111/14 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

112/14 Apologies

Apologies for the duration of the meeting were received from Councillor K. Phillips, Councillor LD. Jeavons and Councillor A. Young.

113/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

114/14 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

115/14 Minutes of the previous meeting

The meeting considered the minutes of the meeting that took place on 31 March 2015.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2015, copies having been previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

116/14

Highways Maintenance Prioritisation

The Group Manager (Highways & Environment) explained that available budgets mean it will not be possible to undertake all current highway maintenance schemes. As a consequence a new scored system for prioritising highway maintenance schemes across the borough by Area Panels has been agreed. The new system will see Members being able to award points in each ward while drawing on their local knowledge when determining which roads required priority. It was originally intended to incorporate Area Panel scores into this year's maintenance programme. However, given that the allocation process is likely to take some time to complete, while the current annual highway maintenance programme is at an advanced stage of delivery, it is proposed to implement the Area Panel scored prioritisation in 2016/2017.

In response to a query from the Chair the Group Manager explained that Members can raise queries and provide information to help influence highway maintenance activities during the current year. It was further explained that guidance Members had previously provided regarding roads that should be given priority would continue to inform the programme for the current year. A further Panel Member observed that it was often difficult to be fair when identifying which roads should be given priority. He also noted the issue of footpaths built for new developments being located in close proximity to much older footpaths that are in a poor state. The Group Manager explained that the council will often ask a developer under a s.278 agreement to reinstate an existing footpath to ensure that both it and the new footpath are in good condition. However, there is a limit to what can be asked of developers and it is not always possible to reach agreement to do this. It was also explained that officers coordinate maintenance with utility companies. For example, planned

resurfacing work will be scheduled for after the completion of utility works. In response to a further Panel question it was explained that claims for damage caused by diversions of motorway traffic onto local Walsall roads would have historically been made to the Integrated Transport Authority. However, the West Midlands region recently successfully applied to the Department for Transport for £40m funding for highway repairs. It will now be possible for Walsall to draw from their share of this which equates to £5.7m over the next 3 years. There are caveats to how this money can be spent for example it can only be used for the classified network.

Resolved

That the Panel will provide officers with their scoring for highway maintenance priority prior to February each year; &

that the update be noted.

117/14

CCTV Briefing

The Deputy Manager - Community Safety and Community Safety Officer introduced the report. It was explained that there are 91 fixed cameras located within a number of areas of Walsall. The Control Room is located within the Streets Corner Response Centre which also monitors 38 re-deployable cameras for various council departments. The cameras are used to gather evidence of criminal activity from acts of violence to fly-tipping. However, most of the cameras are reaching the end of their working life with many already beyond economic repair. At the same time it is recognised that an upgrade of the CCTV infrastructure and equipment is now required to ensure that Walsall benefits from an up to date and effective system. To support this process an independent expert in CCTV will be appointed to undertake a review of the current system. This will

include consideration of the existing cameras, their location and the level of usage for each unit. It is anticipated that possible options for delivery of CCTV in the future might include a capital investment in new equipment or to contract out for supply of this equipment.

It was further explained that the Walsall Intelligence Network had undertaken a mapping exercise of the type and frequency of criminal activity captured by the cameras in each area of Walsall. The North Walsall Area Partnership has 15 fixed CCTV cameras that are located in and around Leamore precinct and Bloxwich Town Centre. Over a 3 year period, from June 2012 to May 2015, these cameras captured 408 incidents which equates to 3% of the borough total. The maps also detailed hot spots for Violence with Injury, Committed Crime and Anti Social Behaviour around this camera cluster. It was explained that the majority of the cameras are in locations that are within identified hot spots for these crime/ incident types. However, any that were not were within or on the edge of locations with higher incidents of crime/ ASB. Members also reviewed maps detailing the location of fixed CCTV cameras and Domehawk/ Apache deployments over a three year period. These would have been utilised at problem locations/ hot spots not covered by the fixed cameras. Officers explained that this supports the need to maintain and or extend the re-deployable CCTV capability. In terms of the number of incidents captured by each camera officers pointed out that in spite of falling within a hot spot for Committed Crime over the three year period ten cameras have captured on average only between 1 – 20 incidents during that time. However, a number of these cameras have captured no incidents since September 2014 or longer. It was further explained that the

top three incident types captured by the cameras in North Walsall are Suspicion, Public Order and Theft. While the number of days lost through faults is at 1,460 over the three year period June 2010 to June 2015. This is the highest number of days lost due to camera faults throughout Walsall.

In response to a query from the Chair it was explained that more advanced cameras are available which function in low levels of light, such as that emitted by LED lighting lamp posts, or even in darkness. A further Panel Member highlighted the importance of effective technology to enable good quality downloads of incidents to support prosecutions. Officers agreed and confirmed that the cameras now available would enable remote download of footage captured. The Member also noted that there would always be a need for effective CCTV in the town centre to ensure it was safe. In response to a further query it was explained that the CCTV Control Room is manned 365 days a year with at least one operator always being on duty. In response to additional Panel queries it was explained that a number of cameras are no longer functioning but have been left in place as they are beyond economic repair. However, the council is not able to promote the presence of a camera that it knows to be defunct as a way of discouraging criminal activity. This is due to a legal liability created by potential victims of crime assuming that the locality of the camera will offer a degree of protection.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

The Area Manager invited Panel Members to help shape the process of consultation with the community regarding Community Hubs. Panel Members agreed to identify groups within the community who might wish to participate in any consultation. A Panel Member highlighted the importance of seeking to consult with larger community groups to make it as effective as possible.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

119/14

Election of Representative to the Local Police and Crime Board

Councillor Jones confirmed his wish to continue as the representative for further year. This was approved by all Panel Members present.

Resolved

That Councillor C. Jones continue as the North Walsall Area Panel representative on the Local Police and Crime Board for a further year.

120/14

Area Profile Briefing

The Area Manager explained that the report provided a brief overview with a link to the larger comprehensive document. It was further explained that the data analysis provides guidance regarding the difference in the health of communities across North Walsall, while also identifying issues such as levels of deprivation. In addition, the briefing provides guidance on the availability of medical amenities, such as GP surgeries, together with guidance on levels life expectancy, obesity and smoking across this area of Walsall. The Area Manager agreed to provide further information on health trends across North Walsall to help Members better understand how these have been influenced by local political decisions.

Resolved

That the Area Manager will identify health trends over the last three years to enable Members to understand how these have been influenced by local political decisions;

& that the update be noted.

121/14

Area Manager's Report

The Area Manager explained that North Walsall's Big Spring Clean in June saw 4 tonnes of rubbish removed. A number of Members commented on what they considered to be a very successful event which included the emptying of contaminated bins. However, a further Panel Member expressed concern that some residents were waiting for skip days rather than taking large unwanted items to the council household waste and recycling sites. A further Panel Member suggested that further opportunities to fund further skip clean up days should be sought. He felt that such events would bring communities together and encourage them to take responsibility for the local area. He also noted the importance of events that help create community cohesion such as youth projects.

A Member also expressed concern regarding the decision of the Police not to take action following a local resident alerting them to the moving and tipping of a sofa on a street. A further Panel Member noted that some local schools are teaching pupils the importance of not creating litter and expressed hope that they can pass this important message on to their parents.

The Area Manager provided guidance on a number of CCTV cameras in various locations across North Walsall. It was explained that two cameras

were currently in for repair, while a third had either been stolen or was missing.

It was explained that partner organisations in North Walsall will be working together during the summer holidays. This includes the use of the Move truck and Reach Up tower to engage with families and young people to help highlight provision in the area. It is also intended to produce a booklet detailing summer activities.

It was explained that Mossley Big Local have had their plan formally endorsed in principle. A meeting took place in June to revise the year one budget and priorities which will be submitted for full endorsement.

In response to a Panel query the Steps to Work representative explained that the organisation has supported over 1,470 people into sustainable full-time employment over the last 10 years.

122/14

Funding Report

The Panel considered the funding applications as set out in the report.

Community Development Inflatable Goal Posts

It was explained that North Walsall Area Partnership would be the owner of the posts. Should organisations outside of the area wish to use the posts a nominal hire fee would be charged to meet repair costs. The Panel approved the application for £300.

Duke of Edinburgh @ Walsall North

It was explained that the funding would support the expansion of provision, including the purchase of new equipment. The Panel approved the application for £2,515.

Walsall Link Line – Steps in Time

It was explained that the funding was sought for a project which will be aimed at supporting people concerned about their memory or living with dementia. Activities aimed at evoking memories will include singing and dancing. The Panel approved the application for £3,995.

Steps to Work – Raising Aspirations

It was explained that the project was aimed at outreach work to seek to engage with the 80% of people who are on benefits but are not in contact with Steps to Work. The Panel approved the application for £6,000.

Youth Support Service – North Walsall

It was explained that the aim of the project was to involve young women in a variety of new activities, such as multi-cultural cooking and team building. It is hoped that this will empower the young women and help cultural and community cohesion. The Panel approved the application for £1,070.

Youth Support Service – Charity Football Tournament

The aim of the project is to bring young people together from across North Walsall in a football tournament. Members suggested that other types of sports tournaments, such as cricket, should also be considered as a way of bringing communities together. The Panel approved the application for £425.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

123/14 **Councillor suggestions for future sessions**

It was agreed that guidance would be brought to the Panel reporting the outcome of the Youth Services summer activities programme. Also, an update on the progress of the efforts of the multi-agency scrap metal task force.

Resolved

That the Panel Member suggestions for future sessions noted above form agenda items for future Panel meetings.

124/14 **Councillor suggestions for future sessions**

It was agreed that Panel Members would identify community groups who may wish to be represented on the Panel. Members agreed to report to the next meeting of the Panel.

Resolved

That Members will provide details of potential co-opted trustees at the next Panel meeting.

The meeting terminated at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: