

DARLASTON NORTH/BENTLEY/DARLASTON SOUTH AREA PANEL

Wednesday, 26 March, 2014 at 5.30 p.m.

at Darlaston Town Hall, Victoria Road, Darlaston

Present

Councillor Burley (Chairman)
Councillor Underhill

In Attendance

Lyndon Parkes - Area Manager
Sergeant Lee Hale – West Midlands Police
PCSO R Pearce-Platter – West Midlands Police
Rose Collinson – Executive Director - Children's Services
Sally Roberts – Clinical Commissioning Group
Angie Clarke – Darlaston Sure Start
Julie Baroncewicz – Nova Training

45/14

Apologies

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

46/14

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January, 2014, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Panel be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47/14

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

48/14

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

There were no items to be considered in private session.

49/14

Funding Report

The joint report of the Area Partnership Manager and Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Area Manager (Lyndon Parkes) enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the Panel and indicated that there were no new projects to be considered at this meeting. He drew Members' attention to Section 5 of the report which showed projects which had had their funding de-committed because it had not been claimed.

Lyndon Parkes reported that £1299.28 remained to be spent by 31st March, 2014. Any underspent monies would be carried forward into 2014/15 and would be used to make up the Area Panels funding to £40,000 which would be provided for the next financial year.

Councillor Burley expressed concern that groups had put forward projects then not completed them. Lyndon Parkes stated that this would be borne in mind should those organisations apply for grants in 2014/15 or future years.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

50/14

Area Manager's Report

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Area Manager (Lyndon Parkes) enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the Panel.

Councillor Underhill referred to lack of progress in developing the Borough's first "No Cold Call Zone" in Bentley. Lyndon Parkes replied that there had been protracted discussion with partners over the wording for signage. This had now been agreed and signs would be erected shortly. Discussions were continuing with West Midlands Police and WHG to extend the scheme across the Borough.

Lyndon Parkes referred to traffic accessibility at Bentley Cairn which had been discussed at the last Panel meeting (Paragraph 2.12 refers). It had been agreed that Cairn Drive would be made one way to Elizabeth Avenue and Churchill Road would remain two way. The necessary works would be carried out shortly.

Councillor Underhill referred to the exit onto Churchill Road and asked if officers could investigate the parking there. Six parking spaces were

available but people also parked on the grass verges churning them up. She suggested that this site might be considered for participatory budgeting in 2014/15.

After further discussion it was

Resolved

That the report be noted.

51/14

Presentation by Children and Young People's Partnership Board

The Executive Director – Children's Services (Rose Collinson) made a presentation entitled "Better Together for Children" (see annexed) with assistance from Sally Roberts of the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Rose Collinson explained that Walsall's Children's Plan had become outdated so over the last two years a conscious effort had been made to ensure that children in Walsall were happy, healthy and safe. Children's Services had been run by SERCO from 2002 until the contract ended in 2014. It was now being managed differently. She referred to the eight priorities which had been drawn up to protect children:-

- giving children the best start in life
- maintaining healthy weight
- protecting children from sexual exploitation
- increasing opportunities for young people's learning and employment options
- planning more effectively for children and young adults with disabilities
- using the views, contributions and achievements of children and young people to improve services
- improving communication across professional boundaries
- mitigating the impact of poverty

and explained all these in detail.

Councillor Burley referred to the East/West Divide in Walsall which had not been bridged. She asked how it would be overcome. Rose Collinson replied that there was a need to provide something for everyone so the provision of resources was important.

Julie Baroncewicz (Nova Training) informed the meeting that Nova provided incentives to encourage young people to obtain training for life but it was not always successful. There were those who simply refused to be helped.

Councillor Burley referred to the provision of educational and vocational courses. It was felt that for those disillusioned by education, vocational training became more important. Rose Collinson indicated that it was essential that children were not turned away from education. This must

be addressed. She referred to the gap between ambition and reality in parents wanting the best for their children. She added that most people wanted to work and earn an income therefore core skills became ever more important.

Angie Clarke (Darlaston Sure Start) referred to the need to encourage education from an early age. She felt it was important to get schools on board. There was no one from the schools attending these meeting which made transition difficult.

Angie Clarke continued that in Darlaston's industrial past jobs for life were freely available. But unfortunately this was no longer the case so changes needed to be made.

Councillor Burley felt that many children in poorer areas lacked aspiration and must be encouraged to aim higher. Rose Collinson felt that this was already being addressed in the Borough's primary schools.

Councillor Underhill referred to the number of failing secondary schools in Walsall. Rose Collinson stated that Ward profiles had been produced to show how schools were performing. Councillor Underhill referred to underperforming academies. Rose Collinson replied that Ofsted were now inspecting academy chains.

Councillor Burley referred to the fact that 18 Children's Centres had been grouped into six clusters. She asked why this had been done. Rose Collinson replied that it had been done in part to achieve savings and also to achieve economies of scale.

After further detailed discussion it was

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

Councillor Burley thanked those partners who had attended the meeting for this discussion.

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman

Date