

## **NORTH WALSALL AREA PANEL MEETING**

**Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Walsall, WS3 1LZ**

**Thursday, 17 September, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.**

### **Present**

Councillor L.D. Jeavons (Chair) (left at 7.40pm)  
Councillor J. Fitzpatrick  
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick (arrived 7.10pm Chaired from 7.40pm)  
Councillor K. Phillips (left at 7.40pm)  
Councillor T.J. Jukes  
Councillor P.E Smith  
Councillor A. Young (left at 7.40pm)

### **Officers**

Jo Lowndes – Partnership Manager  
Sandy Urquhart – Planning Officer  
Inderjit Nijjer – Employment Skills Officer  
David Hughes – Public Health  
Nina Chauhan-Lall – Public Health  
Sarah Heath – Community Safety Officer  
Nikki Gough - Committee Business and Governance Manager

01/15

### **Welcome**

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

02/15

### **Apologies**

Apologies for the duration of the meeting were received from Vanessa Croft, Councillor S. Fitzpatrick, Councillor C. Jones and Councillor I.C. Robertson.

03/15

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

04/15

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

There were no items to be considered in private session.

05/15

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The meeting considered the minutes of the meeting that took place on 7 July 2015.

## **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2015, copies having been previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

The Panel agreed to receive agenda item 6 prior to agenda item 5.

06/15

### **Consultation on drafts of the Site Allocation Document, Walsall town Centre Area Action Plan, and Community Infrastructure Levy.**

The Panel was informed that the Council is undertaking a consultation on 3 important planning documents, to help deliver the approach to regeneration, growth and environmental protection set out in the adopted Black Country Strategy. The consultation commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and was to run for 8 weeks, to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.

Officers discussed the prominent issues in North Walsall including the proposals to allocate gypsy and travellers' sites in Goscote, Ryecroft and Birchills-Leamore. Members raised the concern that permanent gypsy and traveller sites would not meet the need for travellers who wanted to stay in a location for a short time. The lack of this provision led to sites being used in an unregulated way. Officers explained that the Government expects Local Authorities to identify sufficient sites to meet needs for all housing, including that of gypsies and travellers for permanent and transit sites. .

Members of the Panel expressed concern that the proposed pitches were on land that was also proposed to be allocated for new housing and that they did not wish anything to undermine the regeneration of the area. Although 3 sites had been proposed Members suggested that one of the proposed sites was contaminated. Concern was also raised about whether there were adequate numbers of school places, and healthcare provision to deal with such sites.

The Chair stated that this was an important document and he recommended that Members spent time considering the proposals in order to provide feedback to officers.

**Resolved that; -**

**The report was noted.**

07/15

### **Profile Presentations**

This item (profile presentations) had been requested at a previous meeting. It provided specific information relating to the North Walsall Area on health and the economy.

A profile was provided relating to anti-social behaviour statistics for the North Walsall Area Partnership. It was agreed to receive a presentation to the next meeting of the Area Panel.

Public Health officers presented (annexed) prominent health issues in the North Walsall area. Officers explained that there was a younger age population in this area. Breastfeeding rates vary from year to year and within each area – Members questioned if levels of uptake were associated with particular GP practices. Children in North Walsall at reception age have a tendency to be overweight or very overweight and officers stated that various programmes such as Food Dudes and Fun for life and Make it Count programmes aimed to address this problem. Members asked when the impact of programmes would be seen to be contributing to reduce excess childhood weight and asked for any information on this. The Area Manager stated that this was an initial wave of information and more would be provided on this basis. Officers also stated that it may take 5/6 years for the impact of programmes to be seen in the health profiling of the area. It was confirmed that more resources were put into areas which suffered from higher levels of deprivation. The presentation showed that North Walsall, Leamore and Beechdale have significantly higher alcohol specific admission rates than the Walsall average. The graph showed that dementia prevalence was high in Leamore and North Blakenall and this was thought to be because of care homes located in those areas.

The Panel asked to receive a presentation in a year's time to show progress within these health areas.

Councillor S Fitzpatrick took the Chair.

An Employment Skills Officer presented (annexed) the strategic economic priorities for the area. Key Issues in North Walsall Area Panel; -

- Low number of workplaces, below borough and national average density.
- Construction sector important locally.
- Much lower level of economically active adults than Walsall average, with especially low numbers in employment: 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men are economically inactive (i.e. out of the labour market altogether).
- Much higher than borough and national average levels of out-of-work benefit dependency.
- Levels of adult basic skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT) below borough average, and a high number of adults with no formal qualifications.

Officers explained that one of the skills shortages in Walsall was for HGV drivers however this was an expensive course and it was difficult to cover the cost of that. Members suggested that employers could cover the cost of this course.

Councillors A. Young, L. Jeavons and T. Jukes left the meeting.

**Resolved that;**

- **The presentation was noted**
- **The theme for the next meeting would be 'anti-social' behaviour**

- A presentation is received in a year's time to show progress within health priorities.

08/15      **Area Manager's Report**

The Area Managers report was noted.

09/15      **Funding Report**

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

**Green Rivers Community Association – Safe & Eco**

Lighting to centre is 30 years old and no longer connected since new building installed. This makes the drive unsafe during the winter. This project aims to install solar, safe and eco friendly lighting to ensure continuity of use through the winter months. The Panel were concerned that electrical work would be installed by volunteers and asked for further information. **It was agreed that the Chair would work with Officers to seek further information and to make a decision outside of the meeting.**

**Cresswell Wanders Under 7s – Cresswell Wanderers**

Funding required for two new under 7s teams to purchase training equipment, goals, astro turf pitch hire, tracksuits and celebration event. The funding will build the team, create strong friendships and confidence as well as promote healthy lifestyles. The club is open to all and play competitively in the Walsall Junior League. Volunteers manage and train the children. **The Panel approved the application for £2444.16.**

**Community Action Day – Oak Tree Trust**

Funding required for skips on two organised skip days to build partnership working and community cohesion. Reward will be a fun day aimed at under 10s and families. **The Panel approved the application for £950.**

**Resolved that; -**

- That the Area Manager, along with the Chair, are given delegated authority by the Panel to make a decision on the funding application from Green Rivers Community Association for their 'Safe & Eco' project subject to satisfaction with further information on the project application.
- Cresswell Wanders Under 7s – 'Cresswell Wanderers'. The Panel approved the application for £2444.16.
- Community Action Day – Oak Tree Trust - The Panel approved the application for £950.

10/15

**Dates and venues for future meetings**

Noted.

The meeting terminated at 8.05 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....