

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

**Tuesday, 24 March, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.**

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

### **Present**

Councillor Burley (Chair)  
Councillor Chambers (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Underhill

### **In Attendance**

Nicola Holmes - Area Manager  
Steve Gittins - Deputy Community Safety Officer  
Karl Dipple - My Money, My Home, My Job

95/15

### **Apology**

No apologies were submitted for this meeting.

96/15

### **Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January, 2015, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Panel be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

97/15

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

98/15      **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

99/15      **Funding Report**

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

(see annexed)

The Area Manager (Nicola Holmes) enlarged upon the report and explained the projects contained therein.

**Crime Prevention Items - Darlaston/Bentley**

The Area Manager reported that the aim of the project was to supply the victims of burglary with items such as door chains, window alarms etc which would enhance the security of their homes in order to prevent further crime. Funding requested was £3,000.

Councillor Chambers expressed concern that there was no matched funding for the project.

Councillor Underhill asked how vulnerable people would be identified under the project. Steve Gittins replied that officers would check for “crime hot spots” and select people who had been burgled before and might be targeted again. He added that this project would target victims more distinctly than setting up a stand at an event and handing out items to everyone who attended.

Councillor Burley suggested that the project should be more pro-active and target those who were in danger of being burgled rather than simply selecting those people who had already been the victims of crime.

After further discussion it was,

**Resolved**

That funding in the sum of £3,000 for crime prevention items in Bentley/Darlaston be approved.

**Fencing improvements - Alexander Road allotments**

The Area Manager reported that the project aimed to tidy and secure the area between the allotments and the residential area in Alexander Road and Wilkes Avenue, Darlaston by clearing old fencing; removing waste and installing new fencing in the sum of £1,600.

Councillor Chambers referred to the match funding provided by officer time and asked if a value could be attributed to this in future reports.

After further discussion it was,

### **Resolved**

That funding in the sum of £1,600 for fencing improvements at the Alexander Road allotments be approved.

### **Darlaston and Bentley Environmental Activity Programme 2015**

The Area Manager reported that this project would provide a range of health, wellbeing, food growing and environmental activities based in the three community garden sites in Darlaston North, Darlaston South and Bentley in the sum of £3,765. Because of the timing of the project, 1 April, 2015 to 31 January, 2016, the funding would come from the 2015/16 funding allocation. She added that the project would be targeted at vulnerable adults.

Councillor Chambers asked if a report could be provided to the Area Panel at the end of the project to indicate how successful it had been in achieving its aims. The Area Manager agreed to investigate this.

Councillor Underhill asked if officers ever monitored projects to ascertain that take up and value for money were achieved. The Area Manager replied that officers intended to introduce such measures shortly.

Steve Gittins suggested that the Group should be invited to a future meeting of the Panel to explain how the funding had been spent.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That funding in the sum of £3,765 for the Darlaston and Bentley Environmental Activity Programme 2015 be approved;
- (2) That the Group be invited to attend a future meeting of the Panel to explain how the funding was spent and how successful the scheme had been in achieving its aims.

100/15

### **Area Manager's Report**

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Nicola Holmes enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the Panel and drew attention to the following:-

- Car cruising had been outlawed in a High Court judgement. The three year injunction against street racing and driving in convoy covered the whole of the Black Country but the Black Country Route around Moxley had been identified as a hot spot. Signage was now in place and an injunction was now in place to assist the Police to tackle this issue;
- West Midlands Fire Service are currently promoting their Community Volunteer Programme across the area and seeking local residents to become volunteers.
- A joint piece of work is underway between WHG, Police and Walsall Council Community Safety and Environmental Health to address how noise complaints are dealt with. The pilot will look at how reports are dealt with, how information is shared and ways of co-ordinating a joint approach to raise awareness of the consequences of noise nuisance and working together to reduce the number of incidents reported.
- Darlaston Local Family Co-ordinators are now in post. Richard Upton and Maria Khan are working under Children's Services and currently based at Darlaston Children's Centre. Their role will probably be working with families over the next twelve months.

Councillor Underhill expressed concern that this seemed to be a duplication of effort.

Councillor Burley concurred with Councillor Underhill's remarks and felt that opportunities would be missed.

Councillor Chambers requested that an agenda item regarding this matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel so that officers could explain why the Co-ordinators had moved into Children's Services.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That an item on Darlaston Local Family Co-ordinators be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

101/15

### **Community Hubs**

Karl Dipple reported that at the Area Panel Chairs' and Vice-Chairs' meeting on 19 March, 2015, Community Hubs were discussed and it was agreed to carry on the discussion and consider how best to engage at a local level through the Area Panel meetings. It had been scheduled onto a number of Panels but needed to be a late item here at Darlaston as this

was the first meeting at which it would be discussed. He then led a debate on the development of Community Hubs/Community Networks and how to obtain the support of partners for this initiative. He reminded the meeting that each Area Panel would have to provide a Business Case for the project to Cabinet. As each area was different, with differing problems, so each community network would differ.

Councillor Chambers expressed concern that community engagement with the existing Area Panel was very low. He felt that the Local Neighbourhood Partnership (the predecessor of Area Panels) had been more successful in achieving community involvement.

Councillor Burley referred to a meeting on 23 March, 2015 attended by the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK. She indicated that in order to get key players onboard, duplication and parochiality would have to be removed and added that social landlords would have a key part to play.

Councillor Underhill referred to the importance of a single point of contact. Karl Dipple indicated that this could be provided quite easily using the Money, Home, Job model. She added that she would like to see Area Panels gaining a planning function similar to the former Area Planning Committees. This would speed up the planning process and be beneficial to the area.

Members felt that Community Hub suggested a particular building and wanted to move away from this concept so that communities could identify with whatever was developed. They agreed that the former Local Neighbourhood Partnerships had been more “user friendly” than the Area Panels had become.

Councillor Burley referred to the fact that themed meetings had worked well in Darlaston attracting people to meetings of the Area Partnership. She felt that community involvement should be developed further at the next meeting of the Area Panel.

### **Resolved**

That the discussion on Community Hubs be noted.

102/15

### **Public Space Protection Orders**

The report of the Deputy Community Safety Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Steve Gittins enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the Panel, who considered the report and stated that they were happy to go with the considered opinion/legal guidance and that their main concerns were that whatever order was in place we needed to ensure that it was effectively

policed. The panel supported an informed decision which included consideration of the current usage of the DPPO and any signage/consultation requirements. Support was also expressed for the use of PSPOs and other Tools and Powers through a locally based, problem solving and evidence based approach. This could include, if deemed necessary and done correctly, the removal of the DPPO and its replacement with smaller, locality based and effectively policed PSPOs. The proposed process to obtain a PSPO which included Elected Member consultation was outlined and was supported by the Panel. The Panel also expressed concern around potential displacement and that this should be considered in our approach as we move forward.

Councillor Burley asked if the Police would have the resources to enforce PSPOs. Steve Gittins replied that the Police would be asked this question.

After further discussion it was,

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the Area Panel supports the introduction of smaller PSPOs targeted on problem areas rather than a Borough-wide one.

### **Termination of Meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.57 p.m.

Chair .....

Date .....