

NORTH WALSALL AREA PANEL MEETING

Wednesday, 20 November, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

**Burrowes Street Tenant Management Organisation, Burrowes Street,
WS2 8NN**

Present

Councillor Oliver (Chairman)
Councillor J. Fitzpatrick
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick
Councillor Jukes
Councillor Lane
Councillor Phillips

Officers

Jo Lowndes- Partnership Manager
Vanessa Croft- Area Support Officer
Laura Terry - Partnerships Officer
Paul Leighton - Group Manager (Road Traffic Network)
John Leach – Head of Communities & Partnerships
Matthew Underhill - Committee Governance & Business Manager

Other attendees and organisations

Representatives from Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS)
Representatives from whg
Representatives from Public Health
Imran Suddle -Senior Area Youth Worker
Connie Jennings - whg
Barbara Watt, Consultant in Public Health
Michael Collyer -Youth Worker

20/13

Apologies

Apologies for the duration of the meeting were received from Councillors Harrison, Jeavons, Young, Smith, Thomas and Westley & Michael Greenfield.

21/13

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

22/13

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

There were no items to be considered in private session.

23/13

Presentation: Positive Activities Summer Programme in North Walsall IYPSS, whg & North Walsall young people

The meeting received a presentation on positive activities in North Walsall delivered in partnership by IYPSS and whg. It was explained that a variety of work had been undertaken in response to community and police concerns regarding escalating levels of ASB and concerns that there were not enough activities for young people. It was further explained that the partnership, in conjunction with the police, the Area Partnership, the Black Country UTC and Mirus Academy, had undertaken a series of programme-specific activities for parents, children and young people. These projects were focused on Coalpool/ Harden and Proffitt Street Youth Centre. Youth workers and young people spoke to explain the variety of activities in which they had participated. This included a visit by three local young people to Cambridge University who all spoke of it being a positive experience. A second group of young people and a youth worker spoke of a very positive Team Building day at the Old Vicarage centre. A young person and a youth worker also spoke of the positive impact of the production of art work at Proffitt Street Youth Centre. It had helped transform the Centre into somewhere people wanted to visit with the young people's participation in creating the art work giving them a sense of ownership. This activity has also encouraged families to make much more use of the Centre. This included the parents participating in learning activities while their children were involved in youth activities elsewhere in the building. An activity day at Woodlands had also helped the young people learn the importance of accepting those from different cultures and religions. Other activities included sports days at Mirus Academy and Black Country UTC. In terms of outcomes it was explained that this activity had helped achieve a reduction in ASB. The young people had also gained the confidence to deal with challenging behaviour from others. It was explained that the work across North Walsall with young people would continue with funding received from the council and elsewhere. The Chair and Panel thanked the young people and youth workers for presenting.

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

24/13

Minutes

The meeting considered the minutes of the meeting that took place on 18 September, 2013

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2013, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

Presentation: Work to tackle obesity, including weight management programmes

The presentation was led by representatives from Public Health. It was explained that much of the work was aimed at helping children and young people achieve a healthy weight. It was also explained that both the risk of childhood obesity and other illnesses has grown in recent years. This includes the increased risk of type-2 diabetes which was rare until relatively recently. It was further explained that the data collected indicates that in relation to Walsall's reception year children the West of the borough suffers from higher rates of obesity. It was also explained that a degree of sensitivity had been employed locally when sending letters to parents in relation to the National Childhood Measurement Programme where a child's weight is a concern.

A range of initiatives are being used to address obesity. In terms of the children and young people pathway. A key focus is prevention with the objective of stopping it happening in the first place. This includes the provision of free swimming in Walsall, this scheme continues to run locally even though it has now ceased in most of the rest of the country. However, there is concern that far fewer families actually use local facilities than are signed up for the scheme Panel Member's pointed out that the pressure of the curriculum makes it difficult for schools to identify the space in the time table for young children to learn to swim, in addition to the cost of coaching Other activities include A Stars and sustainable travel to school. In response to Panel queries it was explained that it was not mandatory for schools to participate in the scheme. In relation to Food Dudes it was explained that the scheme focused on encouraging children to eat fruit and vegetables as part of school dinners. The programme lasted for 16 to 20 days with efforts also made to seek to sustain the scheme beyond that period with a number of follow ups. In relation to the Adult Pathway it was explained that there was a focus on prevention, including targeting workplaces. Activities include health walks led by volunteers. A range of treatment services are available and these are promoted in a variety of ways, including via GPs surgeries. It was also explained that the role of Community Health Champions was being developed to further assist in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

In terms of future planning it was explained that work included development of the school food plans, strengthening links with the voluntary sector. In response to a query from the Chair officers admitted that the level of funding for free school meals for infants provided by the government under its new initiative presented challenges in terms of providing good quality meals. This challenge was increased given that many schools did not have their own kitchens. Panel Members also noted that often there was a lack of space at schools for children to be able to sit down for school lunch, as well as a lack of time.

The Panel were also advised regarding the Black Country Emotion Programme. It was explained that this was a three-year funded programme across the Black Country. It was explained that it was a 14 year old + programme and work will be undertaken with schools. In

response to a Panel query it was explained that individuals to participate in the scheme would be identified through local community groups, but in addition a marketing campaign will be used together with social media.

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

26/13

Participatory budgeting: Revised list of possible verge parking schemes

Officers explained that following the Panel request at the previous meeting a short-list of suitable schemes had been produced. It was now intended to consult with local residents on each of the proposed schemes. This included gathering votes for preferred schemes as well as comments and views. The Chair explained that he did not consider verge parking as a suitable issue for participatory budgeting. He further explained that there was a real danger of raising expectations in those areas where schemes were not selected and other Panel Members agreed. Members were also concerned regarding the level of criticism that might be received from local residents given the relatively high cost of the proposed schemes. Additional concerns were also raised in relation to the difficulty for Members in approving anything other than the scheme which received the most votes, regardless of any other comments made by residents. Officers explained that the reason for using verge parking as the theme was that previously it did not attract a budget from the council. Officers also acknowledged the issues raised by Members and explained that a different approach would be taken in the future.

Members explained that they would reluctantly agree to continue with the process and hold a special meeting to consider the schemes identified through the consultation process.

Resolved

That a special meeting be held to consider the schemes identified through the consultation process; &
the report be noted.

27/13

Area Manager Update

The report of the Area Manager was submitted. The Chair expressed best wishes to the Area Manager for a speedy recovery on behalf of the Panel.

A Panel Member highlighted a spate of car vandalism in Mossley. These attacks have been referred to the local neighbour police sergeant.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

Funding Report

The report was submitted:-

At the previous meeting the Chair and Panel has asked officers to confirm if all alternative funding options for a dropped kerb had been exhausted. Members had highlighted that this was important as there were up to forty other potential sites for dropped kerbs. Officers confirmed that no alternative funding was available for the dropped kerb at Stoney Lane.
The Panel approved installation of the dropped kerb without the inclusion of a tactile surface.

Officers explained that Sparkle into a Bloxwich Christmas was a community funday aimed at promoting the town/ wards in a positive manner.

The Panel approved the funding application.

In relation to Ashley Road it was explained that security improvements were aimed at reducing local crime and ASB.

The Panel approved the funding application.

In relation to Mary Street it was explained that security improvements were aimed at reducing local crime and ASB, with a particular focus on the removal of graffiti and the use of an anti-graffiti coating.

The Panel approved the funding application.

In relation to the Fitness and Dance Studio at Blakenall Community Centre it was explained that the funding would be used to install a sprung floor. In relation to a Panel query it was explained that a charge was made for use of the studio. Councillor S. Fitzpatrick declared an interest as a trustee of New Horizons Community Enterprise

The Panel approved the funding application.

In relation to the Me, Myself and I project it was explained that this was in relation to an IYPSS led project aimed at working with young people in addressing gang related issues and cultural identity. This work would be focused at the Proffitt Street Youth Centre.

The Panel approved the funding application.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

Termination of the meeting

The meeting terminated at 8.01 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: