

## **WALSALL SOUTH AREA PANEL**

**Tuesday, 30 November, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Conference Room, Council House, Walsall**

### **Present**

Councillor M. Arif (Chair)  
Councillor D. Anson  
Councillor A. Ditta  
Councillor A. Nawaz  
Councillor G. Sohal  
Councillor H. Sarohi  
Councillor V. Whyte

### **Officers in attendance**

John Morris - Area Manager  
Gary Fulford – Chief Executive (WHG)  
Karen Marshall – Director of Governance and Compliance (WHG)  
Nikki Gough - Committee Business & Governance Manager

### **10/15 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors M. Nazir, E. Russell, K. Hussain.

### **11/15 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### **12/15 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest for the duration of the meeting.

### **13/15 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985**

None.

### **14/15 WHG Governance Review**

The Chief Executive from Walsall Housing Group (Whg) talked to the presentation (annexed). Members were informed that an independent governance review had made recommendations to the board on its committee structure. The Corporate Plan 2014-2024 set out Whg's strategic aims, one of which is to have in place a governance model that was fit for purpose. To achieve this change to the current arrangements were needed.

The reasons for the proposed changes are:

- The increasingly challenging environment in which Whg worked which meant that a strong board was needed, with the skills and experience relevant to achieving its corporate goals.

- Whg has become an increasingly complex business and included in its remit was providing support for local businesses, improving the health and well-being of customers and communities and contributing to and establishing and supporting local enterprises.
- Another driver for change was the need to meet governance standards set by the Regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency, which all Housing Associations (including Whg) must comply with. The standards include requirements about independence, board size and the appointment of all board and committee members based on a skills and experience assessment.
- The Regulator also required Whg to adopt and comply with a Code of Governance. The adopted Code required that the Board had a maximum of 12 members; the current structure provides for 13 members – three elected members, five customers and five independent members.

**Resolved that; -**

The presentation was noted

**15/15 Public Participation**

The Clerk to the Panel introduced the report and explained that this report was intended to assist members in encouraging greater public involvement in the work of the panels. Members discussed the proposals and agreed that it was better to postpone any decision until the future of area panels was decided.

**Resolved that; -**

The South Walsall Area Panel considers the recommendations contained within the report on 'Area Panels -Public Participation' at a future meeting, once the budget position relating to Area Panels has been decided.

**16/15 Area Managers report**

The report informed members for the Walsall South Area Partnership of work carried out within the local area. Members discussions included;-

- The use of CCTV – Officers confirmed that CCTV infrastructure needed upgrading. The Chair confirmed that there was money in the capital budget programme for an upgrade of CCTV.
- Members expressed a preference for jobs to be advertised locally.
- The organisations listed at appendix 1 needed updating. It was agreed that Members would provide the Area Manager with any updates.

**17/15 Funding applications**

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

**Bengali Dawn - Pleck**

Walsall Bangladeshi Progressive Society have 2 new projects, setting up a self-help Bengali Women's Group and secondly an enterprising programme for local people to develop confidence and skills to set up small/micro enterprises. Running alongside the self-help group would be an advice and healthy living service giving advice on many issues and helping the women to have better life chances. The plan is for the Bengali Women's Group to have twice weekly sessions helping them in building their confidence, plus capacity building workshops to help increase skills and gaining knowledge to either gain employment or set up their own business

**Over 60s Health Club - Pleck**

Keep members of the community healthy and reduce social isolation. Any resident of Walsall over the age of 60 is welcome to attend. Buy new equipment to replace worn out equipment and also to include a trip to reduce social isolation.

**Land Reclamation / Sensory Garden - Pleck**

To reclaim land and treat Japanese knotweed. To build raised beds area which will be part of a sensory garden. This will also include a community's area and children's' nature watch section.

Members agreed that these projects were good projects. The Area Manager stated that Whg's community committee had approved co-finance of £2,324 to the land reclamation project. It was agreed that all three projects would be funded with £750.00 used from Palfrey and Paddock wards. This was moved by Councillor Whyte and seconded by Councillor Sohal.

**Resolved that;**

- £750.00 funding be used from Palfrey and Paddock wards for Pleck ward projects
- Bengali Dawn was awarded £2020.00
- Over 60's Health Club was awarded £2,300
- Land Reclamation was awarded £1,935.68

**17/15 Date and venue for next meeting**

The Panel's next meeting would be 9 February at the Council House. Members agreed to receive a briefing on the 'future of area panels' at its next meeting.

**Termination of meeting**

The meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....