

# **DARLASTON LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

**Monday, 27 March, 2006, at 6.00 p.m.**

**Darlaston Community Science College, Herberts Park Road, Darlaston**

## **Present**

Councillor Bill Madeley (Chairman)  
Denise Birkett  
Cath Boneham  
Ms. Sandra Borland  
Councillor Rose Burley  
Mr. Peter Burton  
Councillor Keith Chambers  
Mr. Andy Clarke  
Ms. Sue Machin  
Mr. Keith Middleton  
Councillor Graham Wilkes

### **99/06 Introductions**

Members, Council Appointed Partners, Locally Appointed Partners and Support Team Members introduced themselves to each other and members of the public present at the meeting.

### **100/06 Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Johnson, together with Sally Milne, Wendy Pearce and Tony Steadman.

### **101/06 Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2006, a copy having been circulated to each Member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **102/06 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 103/06 **Petitions**

No petitions were submitted to the meeting.

## 104/06 **Public Forum**

### **Mr. Hussain, Rainbow Fish Bar, Pinfold Street, Darlaston**

Mr. Hussain referred to the lack of parking in Pinfold Street and asked if there had been any developments over the re-instatement of the parking between no. 24 and Black Horse Way.

Councillor Burley commented that the Ward Councillors were in favour of additional parking and she was concerned that there had been no information provided to the Partnership on this matter.

Councillor Madeley requested Officers to write to the Traffic Engineers to request them to attend the next meeting to discuss this matter.

### **Resolved**

That Officers write to the Traffic Engineers to request them to attend the next meeting of the Partnership to discuss the provision of additional parking in Pinfold Street, Darlaston.

### **Mrs. Elizabeth Ince, 257 Wolverhampton Road West, Bentley, Walsall**

Mrs. Ince expressed concern at the closure of Bentley Library which was due to take place on 29 April 2006. She asked why the library could not stay open for a further period until work began on its replacement. She was worried that Bentley would be without its library for considerably longer than the twenty months which had been quoted.

Councillor Madeley referred to the report on the regeneration project for Bentley elsewhere on the agenda and indicated that, because of the presence of asbestos, the Council had no option but to close the library under health and safety grounds. He indicated that Ward Councillors had been concerned that the library would be closed and not replaced but, following discussions with the Chief Executive and other Officers, assurances had been given that there will be a new library in Bentley. He added that there would be temporary facilities in place between the closure of the existing library and the opening of the new one. The Mobile Library Service would visit the Bentley area on two days for a minimum of thirty minutes and on Saturdays between 11.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. Computer usage would be provided at the Old People's Centre, Wing Close, Bentley.

Councillor Madeley also referred to the fact that Bentley Shopping Precinct had all its shops occupied and the Council wished to keep it that way. It was necessary to close the existing library from 29 April 2006, to avoid possible litigation.

**Resolved**

That the comments be noted.

105/06 **Affordable Warmth**

Mandy Findlay, an Energy Efficiency Officer with Walsall Housing Services, made a presentation with the aid of PowerPoint regarding affordable warmth.

A copy of the presentation was handed to those present at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

Mandy indicated that Local Neighbourhood Partnerships would be part of the consultation process and an energy event would be taking place on 19 May 2006, and all Partners and the Youth Council would be invited to attend so that information on the most vulnerable households in the Darlaston area could be obtained.

Referring to the presentation, Mandy reported that over 1,600 homes in Darlaston were in fuel poverty, which was where more than 10% of disposable income was spent on heating the home. She added that the Affordable Warmth Strategy would be launched in Walsall in December 2006, to coincide with "Warmer Homes Week".

Councillor Chambers asked where the event to be held on 19 May 2006, would take place. Mandy replied that the likely venue was the Village Hotel at Junction 10.

Councillor Burley asked whether provision of central heating and other facilities would be means tested. Mandy replied that a mail shot would be directed to 28,000 people within the Borough who were on benefit. It was proposed to fast track the vulnerable and ill using the "Health through Warmth" Scheme.

Councillor Burley asked whether sufficient resources would be available to ensure the scheme was a success. Mandy replied that neighbourhood renewal funding had been provided to ensure the scheme would succeed.

After further discussion it was:-

**Resolved**

That the presentation be received.

## 106/06 Partnership Plan and Feedback from Task Groups

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Narinder Singh Chumber enlarged upon the report and drew attention to the pledges and solutions contained in the Appendix.

Referring to the bus tour meeting which took place on 24 March 2006, Councillor Madeley reported that discussions had taken place over what had been achieved and what still needed to be done had been prioritised. The latter would be kept under review.

Cath Boneham reported that the Primary Care Trust was providing useful information.

Councillor Burley stated that the Crime and Environment Groups had been combined to avoid overlapping and duplication of effort. They had looked at several routine matters which could be dealt with easily and quickly without reference back to the Partnership. She hoped that residents would help the process by reporting graffiti or rubbish accumulation to Ward Councillors or Street Pride without delay.

Peter Burton felt that the Youth Group should be congratulated on the elections to the Youth Parliament which had been held recently. He was keen to see young people included as representatives on Local Neighbourhood Partnerships so that they could have a say in how money was spent in their area. He added that, at a recent Community Empowerment Network meeting, youth provision in Darlaston had been highlighted and he was concerned to learn that Darlaston Community Science College would no longer house the Darlaston Community Association.

Andy Clarke confirmed that, from the end of March, the Darlaston Community Association would no longer use the school. He added that it was the Association's decision to leave the school premises.

Councillor Madeley suggested that consideration should be given to Darlaston Town Hall being used for youth provision.

Councillor Burley stated that there was a need for youth provision. She understood that it was not the school that had made Darlaston Community Association move, but rather that cut backs had meant that the Community Association had become a victim. She was aware that the school was keen to remain a community school, but it did not have the public liability insurance needed to allow community events to take place there. Andy Clarke replied that the school tried to be pro-active and help young people at this site. He added that the school was actively looking at youth cohesion, but there was a huge funding issue to be addressed.

Councillor Madeley suggested that an old factory building in Darlaston could be used for music making, skateboarding etc. to remove youths from the streets.

Andy Clarke referred to the fact that police liaison had been good. He added that Brian Churm had carried out some excellent work with young people but now he had had to find his own police vehicle. Regal Motors had kindly donated a vehicle and schools in the area had clubbed together to insure the car.

Peter Burton referred to the loss of community wardens and **moved:-**

That the Cabinet should consider retaining them where possible.

Councillor Madeley referred to the mindless vandalism of the play areas on Victoria Mews and Bentley West Playingfields and commented that, if young people could be encouraged to take ownership of such areas, then vandalism would fall.

Denise Birkett reported that Bentley Old People's Centre had agreed to fund the youth wardens in Bentley.

After further discussion it was:-

**Resolved**

- (1) That Local Neighbourhood Partnership Members continue to attend workshop meetings;
- (2) That individual Local Neighbourhood Partnership Members encourage wider participation from Community Members within the Task Groups;
- (3) That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership agrees, in principle, the details of the Partnership Plan Review outlined in the Appendix to the report now submitted;
- (4) That the Cabinet be requested to consider the retention of Community Wardens.

**107/06 Funding Priorities for Action**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

A supplementary report was handed to Members present at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

Narinder Singh Chumber enlarged upon the report and drew attention to the fact that £14,000 of the allocation was still unallocated. He went through the items contained in the Appendix to the report and a number of actions were agreed.

Councillor Burley reported that the Friends of Moorcroft Wood required assistance with a scheme. Narinder replied that, if the Friends gave him details of their proposals, then he could consider it.

### **Resolved**

That Local Neighbourhood Partnership Members:-

- (1) note the progress to date;
- (2) agree to review progress at the next meeting;
- (3) note that each project will be formally assessed by the Local Neighbouring Partnership Project Team to ensure that they meet all of the agreed criteria;
- (4) note that each project will be passed to the relevant Council Officer who will liaise with the project champion and the Chair of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership when required;
- (5) agree that the £3,000 towards benches and plaques in Victoria Park and the £5,000 for the Events Committee be allocated as necessary.

### **108/06 Darlaston Town Hall – Use of premises and charges**

Councillor Madeley referred to the scale of charges for the use of Darlaston Town Hall and stated that he was concerned that they were preventing Darlaston residents from using the venue for birthdays, weddings and other family occasions. He suggested that consideration should be given to a special rate being given for Darlaston residents who wished to use the Town Hall, subject to it being cost effective. He also suggested that, when events were taking place at Darlaston Town Hall, the Council should advertise them more widely to encourage attendance.

Councillor Burley asked whether Darlaston Town Hall was covered by public liability insurance.

After further discussion it was:-

### **Resolved**

- (1) That consideration be given to a special rate being arranged for Darlaston residents who wished to use the Town Hall for weddings, birthdays and other family events;

- (2) That when events are arranged at Darlaston Town Hall the Council advertise them as widely as possible to encourage maximum attendance.

109/06 **West Midlands LTP Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2006/08**

The resolution of Cabinet from its meeting held on 1st March 2006:-

“(6) That this report be submitted to all Local Neighbourhood Partnerships for their information and noting.”

The report to Cabinet was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Brian Pell indicated that the report set out the road work schemes to be carried out in Walsall during 2006/08. He added that the schemes in Darlaston would help with the redevelopment of the Darlaston area.

Councillor Madeley referred to the Local Safety Scheme ranking and advised that Victoria Road/Slater Street was in Darlaston and not Willenhall as stated in the report.

Councillor Chambers requested that periodically a report be submitted to the Partnership to advise how Darlaston's schemes were progressing. Brian Pell undertook to investigate this suggestion.

**Resolved**

That the resolution of Cabinet from its meeting held on 1 March 2006, and the report to Cabinet be noted.

110/06 **Regeneration of Bentley Centre**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Steve Lewis enlarged upon the report and stated that the regeneration of the Bentley Centre was a key priority. He referred to the recommendations contained in the report and requested that five Members be nominated for the Project Reference Group and five local organisations from which representatives could be drawn.

Councillor Madeley referred to the Ward Walk carried out with the Chief Executive and to the problem areas which had been highlighted. These would be dealt with as Bentley was redeveloped. He referred to the closure of Bentley Library and indicated that he was pleased that a new library was to be provided. He referred to the interim arrangements that had been put in place to provide a library service during the closure and added that the centre at Wing Close, Bentley, would provide computer facilities.

Councillor Madeley then suggested that the Ward Councillors for Bentley and Darlaston North Ward, together with Sue Machin and Denise Birkett, should form the five Members of the Project Reference Group and the following organisations should be invited to provide additional representatives:-

- The Over Sixties Club
- The Childrens' Centre (Andrea Holmes)
- The County Bridge Community Association (Pauline Gibson)
- The Emmanuel Church
- The Library Users' Group

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the following five persons be nominated to join the Project Reference Group:-
  - (a) The Ward Councillors for the Bentley and Darlaston North Ward, together with Sue Machin and Denise Birkett;
  - (b) Representatives from the following organisations:-
    - The Over Sixties Club
    - The Childrens' Centre (Andrea Holmes)
    - The County Bridge Community Association (Pauline Gibson)
    - The Emmanuel Church
    - The Library Users' Group

### **111/06 Contact with Officers after receipt of problems with youths from constituents**

Councillor Madeley reported that he had been contacted by a disabled couple who had a problem with young people congregating near their home. He had tried to contact the Youth Outreach Worker who had advised him that he could not speak to Councillors. Councillor Madeley felt that this was an absurd situation. He reminded the meeting that Ward Councillors had worked hard to get a youth worker in Darlaston, but now it appeared that they could not speak to him. He added that the youth worker had been based in Bentley because there was no room for him in Darlaston.



Jan Madeley stated that the detached outreach worker covered the whole of Darlaston. He was only based in Bentley because Ofsted had requested it.

Councillor Madeley felt that it might improve matters if he was based in Darlaston.

**Resolved**

That the comments be noted.

Councillor Madeley then thanked the Support Team for their assistance during the last year and advised the Partnership that Steve Lewis would be the Senior Support Officer in 2006/07.

**Termination of Meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....