

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Monday, 22 April, 2013 at 6.00 pm in a Conference Room at the Council House**

**Panel Members Present:** Councillor V. Woodruff (Chair)  
Councillor R. Burley  
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul  
Councillor K. Hussain  
Councillor G. Illmann-Walker  
Councillor L. Rattigan

**Portfolio Holders present:** Councillor T. Ansell - Transport and Environment  
Councillor I. Shires - Community Engagement and  
Voluntary Sector

**Officers in Attendance:** Jamie Morris - Executive Director (Neighbourhoods)  
Keith Stone - Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods)  
Chris Holliday - Head of Leisure and Community Health  
John Leach - Head of Communities and Partnerships  
Ben Percival - Sports and Leisure Service Manager  
Lynne Hughes - Area Manager, Community Safety  
Craig Goodall - Committee Business and Governance  
Manager

### **71/13 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I. Azam and Councillor C. Creaney.

### **72/13 Substitutions**

Councillor R. Burley substituted for Councillor C. Creaney.

### **73/13 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

### **74/13 Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2013, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

## 75/13 Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel met with Councillor Mohammad Nazir, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, with responsibility for Walsall and Wolverhampton. An updated report was tabled at the meeting (annexed).

The Assistant PCC gave apologies for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who had been required to attend a Home Office meeting in London. He explained:

- the overarching role of the PCC and the wish to maintain local partnership working and decision making with increased community involvement.
- how different areas across the region were represented by the Deputy PCC and further Assistant PCCs.
- how the community could play a strong role in preventing and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) explained that the Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP) was being re-configured to become more community led to reflect the PCC's priorities. In response to a question, he explained that the SWP worked very well and made decisions on a consensual basis. The Panel were advised that the Council was the accountable body for spending by the SWP.

### **Resolved**

**That the report be noted.**

## 76/13 Active Living (Sports Centres) Update

The Panel considered progress with the development of Active Living.

The Head of Leisure and Community Health updated Members on progress to date with the scheme as highlighted in the report (annexed). He explained that whilst there were proposals to construct two new leisure centres, it was important to understand that physical activity could also take place in more informal locations such as green spaces. He explained that the cost of inactivity on the local health economy was significant. Recent research had shown that Walsall had the highest health costs through inactivity in the West Midlands of approximately £5.6 million (annexed).

Estimates on increased usage for the two proposed new leisure centres were based on benchmarking information with other Local Authorities that had upgraded facilities. For gym usage, a national formula had been used that calculated equipment provision with potential revenue. In terms of the data on potential new users, this information had been extrapolated from a series of interviews with hard to reach users. Bicycle to and from the new centres would be encouraged by providing on-site bicycle paths and safe storage.

Members felt that it was important to tackle health inequalities. Often those needing to be more active lived in deprived areas with limited incomes. It was important that free and cheap activity opportunities were maximised in these areas. The Sports and Leisure Service Manager gave examples of green gyms and park

runs that had been established to meet this purpose. Members felt that more could be done to promote activities taking place in the Borough's green spaces. The Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) suggested that this could take place through Area Partnerships. Members were further advised that a discount loyalty card had been introduced which provided reduced entry to Council leisure facilities for those with an identified need. This had seen substantial increases in the number of activity sessions undertaken by card users. Walsall's Sport & Leisure service had over 1 million attendances for the first time during 2012/13.

In response to a number of questions regarding the lack of suitable leisure centres in the more deprived areas to the West of the borough, it was explained that opportunities for active living provision within a 1½ mile radius of each major leisure provision (irrespective of who owned it) had been mapped. This now provided a strategic borough-wide map of leisure opportunities for residents. This included schools, green space, out of Borough and privately operated facilities. Council leisure facilities at Bloxwich, Darlaston and the Town Centre were nearby to these areas. There were also additional leisure facilities nearby managed by Wolverhampton City Council.

The importance of green space for activity, leisure and recreation was supported by the Panel. Members noted that part of the consultation for the new Site Allocation Document included proposals to develop some areas of green space. Members felt that green spaces should be protected, particularly in areas where there was already limited provision. Members felt that more could be done to create new green spaces in the Borough. The definition of green space deficit was requested by the Panel.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- (1) a report be presented to each Area Partnership meeting detailing the physical activity that takes place in the Borough's green spaces;**
  - (2) the Panel be advised of how deficiency in green spaces is calculated;**
  - (3) the Head of Leisure and Community Health contact Councillor K. Hussain regarding leisure provision in deprived areas;**
- and;**
- (4) the report be noted.**

### **77/13 Devolution through Area Partnerships**

Members considered the proposals of devolution through Area Partnerships.

The Head of Communities and Partnerships reported that, following the suggestion of the Panel at the meeting on 14 February 2013, the proposals had been considered by each political group for comment.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and the Voluntary Sector highlighted all the feedback that had been received from a variety of sources. He explained his desire to create a bottom up approach where local communities were involved in the decision making process.

In response to a question, it was reported that an equality impact assessment had been completed for the proposals. This sought to ensure that the proposals were of benefit to all people in the Borough.

The Panel were keen to monitor the proposals, if implemented, moving forward. In particular, Members were keen to ensure that equality was upheld and that vulnerable and deprived areas benefited.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- (1) the Panel review progress of devolution through Area Partnerships in six months and/or if there are significant developments to the proposals;**
  - (2) the equality impact assessment of devolution through Area Partnerships report be shared with the Panel;**
- and**
- (3) the report be noted.**

### **78/13 Work Programme 2012/13 and Forward Plan**

#### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- (1) the Forward Plan be noted;**
- and**
- (2) the work programme 2012/13 be noted.**

### **79/13 Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 6.00 p.m. on Monday, 13 May, 2013.

*The meeting closed at 7.54 p.m.*

Signed: .....

Date: .....