

ALDRIDGE AND BEACON AREA PANEL

Monday 9th February, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

**at Pheasey Park Farm Community Centre, Hillingford Avenue,
Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7HL**

Present

Councillor Towe (Chairman)
Councillor Rochelle (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Andrew
Councillor Clarke
Councillor Douglas-Maul
Councillor Flower
Councillor Harris
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Murray
Councillor Sears

In attendance

Neighbourhood Manager
Interim Head of Communities and Public Protection
Sergeant Amos
Inspector Payne

84/15

Welcome and Apologies

Each Member of the Area Panel and the officers present introduced themselves.

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Wilson.

85/15

Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December, 2014, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member, be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Further to Minute No. 77/14 (Minutes) Members: -

Resolved that the Area Panel objects in the strongest terms in relation to the decision taken by the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Culture, to change the Area Manager for Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership without any prior consultation with Ward Members.

In view of this, the Chairman agreed to raise the Area Panel's concerns directly with the Leader of the Conservative Group and the Chief Executive.

In addition, The Area Manager, at the request of the Chairman, provided an update in relation to the 'Cold Calling Initiative' which had been trialled in the Bentley Ward. Should any Member feel that there was a particular problem in their area which warranted a similar scheme, they were encouraged to contact the Area Manager and ensure that data and evidence logs were collected / obtained.

Further to Minute No. 80/14 (Verbal Update in relation to the Local Police and Crime Board), the Chairman sought an update on the briefing note from the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Interim Head of Communities and Public Protection apologised for the delay and agreed to get the briefing note circulated to Members promptly.

8615 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

87/15 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items on the agenda which required the exclusion of the public under this Act.

88/15 **Verbal Update from the Police**

The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Amos and Inspector Payne to the meeting and invited them to address the Panel.

Sergeant Amos explained that she had been in the area for over 2 years now and managed a team of 7, comprising 3 Police Officers and 4 PCSO's. Whilst the number of staff available at her disposal had been reduced due to budget savings over the last few years, she was happy to report that her team was still maintaining a good level of service in the area. She held regular meetings with various key partners, including the Area Manager and ASB Team, to ensure a good network of communication and information sharing was maintained.

In particular, Sergeant Amos reported on the current priorities and issues affecting the area.

Car cruising on the Maybrook Estate / Brick Yard Road was a particular issue. However, new powers had been granted as a result of a recent High Court Injunction, which had taken over two years to come to fruition and for which it covered the whole of the Black Country. The new powers included the authorisation to seize vehicles.

Another priority was around youth ASB, particularly in the Streetly area around Halloween time. Sergeant Amos urged that all incidents be reported to the Police as issues could only be dealt with if matters were reported.

Another priority was in relation to nuisance and ASB caused by off-road motorbikes in the parks around the Pheasey ward.

Sergeant Amos explained that there was a website where all priorities were uploaded and it was updated regularly. A wealth of information could be obtained from the website and there had been a spate of vehicles stolen in recent months in the area. In view of this, a lot of information had been posted on the website in relation to keeping your car safe to help reduce vehicle theft.

Inspector Payne reiterated many of the points raised by Sergeant Amos and explained some of the difficulties faced by the Police.

The Chairman advised that Ward Members encouraged the public to report crimes to enable the Police to take appropriate action.

The Area Manager advised that the service level agreement to provide maintenance for the CCTV cameras purchased by the Panel had expired and the company which had previously provided it had now gone out of business.

The Chairman and Councillor Hughes agreed to liaise with a view to seeking an alternative company to take on the maintenance of the cameras.

Councillor Flower queried what plans the Police had in relation to the new Leisure Centre at Oak Park whilst it was being built over the next 18 months or so.

Inspector Amos acknowledged that the site was already an area which experienced problems associated with youth ASB. However, she advised that the Police were attempting to 'nip in the bud' current issues being experienced there by dealing with the main and persistent offenders. The site would continue to remain on the list of areas for patrols to monitor the situation. Inspector Payne advised that the Police had had a lot of success in this area, but the biggest problem facing the Police was identifying perpetrators.

The Chairman asked what new powers the Police held in relation to the recent introduction of new ASB Legislation.

Sergeant Amos explained that the powers had been condensed to 6 from 19. The powers were broader, easier to apply and quicker to undertake; e.g. dispersal orders.

The Chairman indicated that he had received numerous complaints, particularly in connection with the Park Farm Estate, about inconsiderate parking on street corners near to the junction where members of the public had to walk onto the road to get past.

Inspector Amos requested that any details be passed to her so the matter could be investigated.

The Chairman then invited Mr A.C. to provide Members with a brief update on the latest issues arising from the Local Police and Crime Board.

Mr A.C. provided the Panel with the latest Crime Figures for the area.

The Chairman thanked both Sergeant Amos and Inspector Payne for their attendance and support.

Both officers thanked Ward Members for their continued support and also that of the Area Manager and ASB Team.

89/15

Area Manager Report

A report was submitted.

(see annexed)

The Area Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein. At the request of the Chairman, the Area Manager provided some clarity as to the wording contained within 4.3 of the report around who was invited to the confidential tasking group meetings.

In relation to 7.12, the Area Manager requested Members to inform him if they knew of any individual(s) who would be willing to volunteer and help out with this initiative. In addition, if any Member(s) had any ideas which related to local issues that could be utilised to create an advert prior to the films being shown, they were encouraged to notify the Area Manager.

In relation to 4.4, the Chairman stated that he was pleased that a number of arrests had been made which would send out a clear message to perpetrators.

In relation to 5.1, the Chairman stated that he was pleased with this, but he held some concerns in relation to what would happen this coming summer as a result of the budget savings.

In relation to 5.12, Councillor Flower stated that it was a shame that so many libraries in the area would be closing in the future as a result of the budget savings being implemented by the current administration. He continued, advising that he felt it was short sighted of the Council

not to incorporate a library within the new Oak Park Leisure Centre as it could possibly end up being amongst one of the most well-used libraries in the Borough. He felt that there was a real business case to do so. Councillor Flower advised that a petition had been raised in the local area on this matter and it would be submitted to and considered by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel at its meeting on 12th February, 2015. He sought the support of the Area Panel to endorse the petition.

The Area Panel were in support of petition. The Chairman and Councillor Murray advised that they were Members of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel and would fully support the petition on behalf of the Panel at the meeting on 12th February, 2015.

Councillor Rochelle highlighted that 3 out of the 4 libraries in the area would be closed under the current administration. Councillor Andrew stated that the decision was a disgrace and the proposals would be detrimental to the local people covered by the Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership.

Resolved that the report be noted.

90/15

Funding report

A report was submitted.

(see annexed)

The Area Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein.

The Area Manager referred to the funding for a litter bin in Aldridge and advised that Clean and Green now required evidence and data to install a bin where it was deemed to be warranted. They had assessed the site over a period of time and had deemed it not to require a litter bin.

The Panel were not happy with this decision and the Chairman instructed the Area Manager to get the Service to install the bin as the Panel had taken a decision and had committed the money.

Members agreed to fund the only project identified in Appendix 1 (Brownhills and Oak Park Bowls Club) for the sum of £599.10.

The Area Manager sought authority from the Panel to temporarily relocate one of the Partnership's CCTV cameras, currently at Beechy Close, to Boundary and Blackwood for a period of 2 months, before deciding where it should be located next.

The Chairman advised that there was just over £2000 left in the Panel's budget and requested Members to advise the Area Manager if they were aware of any potential groups / projects which could benefit from bidding for some money.

The Area Manager stated that it could be possible to use some of the money on 'tidy up' days in specific problem areas if Councillors felt there was a specific need. The Interim Head of Communities and Public Protection advised that the Head of Street Pride had agreed to commit some resources to any such projects should the Area Panel decide to take up the option.

Any funding for additional projects between now and the end of the current financial year would need approval by the Panel.

The Chairman encouraged Members to engage with the Area Manager should they have any suggestions.

Resolved that: -

1. the funding application be approved for the amount as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
2. the Area Manager advises the Head of Clean and Green Services to install the litter bin in Aldridge as per the Panel's original decision.

90/15

Dates and venues for future meetings

The Panel noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 7 April, 2015, at All Saints Church.

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: