

WALSALL SOUTH AREA PANEL

9th February 2017, 2016 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room 2, Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor K. Hussain (Chair)
Councillor E. Russell (Vice-Chair)
Councillor A. Ditta
Councillor S. Ditta
Councillor N. Gultasib
Councillor A. Nazir
Councillor M. Nazir
Councillor A. Nawaz
Councillor H. Sarohi
Councillor G. Sohal
Councillor P. Washbrook

Officers in attendance

John Morris – Area Manager
Julie Alderson – Interim Executive Director (Change and Governance)
Nikki Gough – Democratic Services Officer
Paul Gordon – Head of Business Change

22/16 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor R, Martin,

23/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

24/16 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

25/16 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

None.

26/16 Street Cleaning Schedules in Walsall South

A briefing note on street cleaning schedules in Walsall South was circulated (annexed). The Area Manager ran through the report.

Members stated that there was a fly tipping problem in Chuckery. Members suggested that social landlords should take more responsibility for such issues. The Area Manager

stated that he was indeed working with local social landlords who were clearing rubbish at their own expense. Other actions included moving waste disposal sites to different areas to deter fly tipping.

Elected Members also stated that there was a huge problem in Palfrey and with private landlords. The Area Manager clarified that Clean and Green were responsible for the removal of waste but had no powers of enforcement. A Member raised concerns around the collection of refuse and general litter picking in the area. The Area Manager stated that he would raise these concerns with Clean and Green and clarify issues raised. Frustration was expressed by Members about the levels of fly tipping and questioned if the use of CCTV cameras could be used to identify culprits. Potential solutions to this were discussed. It was noted that camera equipment was old and the picture quality was not good enough to identify individuals or care registrations. Although the cameras used by Walsall Housing Group were of a higher standard.

A Member stated that if the environment was kept clean it may encourage residents to have more pride in the area. Officers responded to state that Clean and Green did carry out 'deep cleans'.

A Member detailed educational events that have taken place in a local school and suggested that this should be encouraged across the Borough.

Resolved That

Clean and Green are invited to the next meeting of the Area Panel to address concerns and provide more detail on cleansing schedules in the area.

27/16 Funding Report

The Area Manager introduced the report which set out project applications received by the Area Partnership Team. The amount of funding available for 2016/17 financial year is £513.25. The Area Panel were asked to consider the summarised project applications as set out in Appendix 1.

The following project applications were considered;

Sutton Road Allotment Association - Strimmer for maintenance of allotment site

Elected Members considered the application. The application was moved and seconded.

Resolved that

The Sutton Road Allotment Association were awarded £513.25.

27/16 Safeguarding training

The Head of Safeguarding presented to the Committee (annexed). It was stressed that safeguarding was a shared responsibility and that if there was a concern that an individual was at risk then this should be shared. A common criticism in serious case reviews was that information was not shared. Common types of abuse were stated as;

- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Self neglect
- Organisational abuse
- Discriminatory abuse

The Committee were given information on the response that may be given to safeguarding concerns. Members were also informed that there were around 360 children with a 'child protection plan' in Walsall at 3rd December 2017. This was roughly the number of children that the Department of Health predicted should be protected in a Borough of its shape and size. It was stressed that if the Local Authority believed that there was a risk then the response should be appropriate and proportionate. Support was offered to families to ensure children stayed safe.

An Elected Members questioned if demographics of families were collected. Officers explained that information was collected through the annual return and causes of abuse were worked through the plan. It was also stated that abuse happens in across cultures, and types of families.

Elected Members discussed their role as corporate parents to 'looked after children' and care leavers. The Head of Safeguarding stated that from April 2017 care leavers would not pay council tax until the age of 25. Members welcomed this information.

28/17 Area Managers Report

The Interim Executive Director (Change & Governance) introduced herself to the Panel and stated that one of her specific priorities was to consider the future of the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector. The Council had received a considerable response to consultation on budget proposals. Funding arrangements to the voluntary sector were historical and varied. In response to that a partnership review had been undertaken with the Walsall Voluntary Action. The Panel were informed that a number of Local Authority owned and maintained properties were used by the voluntary sector and that a cohesive picture of support provided to the community sector was needed.

Elected Members agreed that it was important to have a robust voluntary sector. It was noted that the Council's corporate plan was informed alongside the joint partnership plan in Walsall. Members were informed that 'One Walsall' had received funding to rebrand and build capacity and it was hoped that this would attract more members. The vision was to achieve a vibrant sustainable community sector which was not reliant on Council grant funding.

It was explained that part of the strategy would be to look at the number of buildings used and to consider if these could be operated in a more efficient way. The Local Authority spent a substantial amount of money on properties and it would be better to consolidate this to focus resource. It was noted that libraries had been debated

extensively but stressed that Officers would work with the local voluntary and community sector to ensure the transition of some of these services was smooth whilst working at pace.

The Panel thanked the Interim Executive Director (Change & Governance) for the update and asked for an update at a future meeting.

The Area Manager introduced the report and stated that it sought to inform Elected Members for the Walsall South Area Partnership of some of the work carried out within the local area. Elected Members were informed that Keep Britain Tidy have announced that they will support a month of clean up action in March, 2017, with a particular focus on the weekend of the 3rd – 5th March. A meeting to discuss the arrangements is taking place between Area Managers and Clean & Green on the 9th February.

The Area Manager volunteered to assist Elected Members to organise and Chair meeting within their communities.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

27/16 Area Managers Report

Resolved

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: