

DARLASTON LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Monday, 21 March, 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

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

Present

Councillor Bill Madeley (Chairman)
Cath Boneham
Ms. Sandra Borland
Councillor Rose Burley
Mr. Peter Burton
Councillor Keith Chambers
Mr. Andy Clarke
Mr. Ken Hopkins
Councillor Ayshea Johnson
Ms. Sue Machin
Mr. Keith Middleton
Mrs. Sally Milne
Ismail Patel
Councillor Tony Rowley
Mr. Tony Steadman
Mr. Rashid Varachhia

34/05 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Denise Birkett and David Owen (Locally Appointed Partners).

35/05 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2005, a copy having been circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

36/05 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Burley declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to the Darlaston Housing Trust.

Ken Hopkins declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to the Darlaston Housing Trust.

Councillor Johnson declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to the Darlaston Community Association.

Tony Steadman declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to the Darlaston Community Association.

Councillor Rowley declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to Darlaston Community Science College, Salisbury Infant School and Moxley/Dorothy Purcell Schools.

37/05 **Petitions**

A petition containing over 1,000 signatures from traders and residents of the Pinfold Street area of Darlaston regarding the loss of parking bays on Pinfold Street was handed to the Partnership by Mr. J.H. Cownley of 81 Pinfold Street, Darlaston.

The Partnership received the petition and agreed to forward it to the appropriate officer for consideration. It was requested that a report upon this matter be forwarded to a future meeting of the Partnership.

Public Forum

38/05 **Road Safety – Western Avenue, Bentley**

Councillor Chambers addressed the Partnership on behalf of Mr. Alan Thwaite of 104 Western Avenue, Bentley, who was concerned that Western Avenue was plagued with boy racers. He indicated that there had been a nasty accident in Western Avenue towards the end of 2004. A petition was being prepared asking for road safety measures in Western Avenue. He added that Western Avenue formed the boundary between Bentley and Darlaston North and Willenhall South Wards and the Willenhall South Councillors were happy with the proposals.

Resolved

That a report on road safety in Western Avenue, Bentley, be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership.

39/05 Rough Hay Road – Dispersal Orders

Peter Burton referred to the Dispersal Orders in operation on Rough Hay Road and Peacock Road and asked why they were not being enforced. He indicated that youths were hanging around from 11.00 p.m. until 2.00 a.m. without being moved on. Residents had experienced difficulties with the 0845 number and it took 30 minutes to log crimes.

At a recent Health Action Zone meeting, Bentley beat officers had reported on problems in the area, but now it appeared that they had been moved from the Bentley area and relocated to Aldridge. He asked if any more beat officers would be deployed in the Bentley area.

Resolved

That the West Midlands Police be advised of these problems and ask for their comments.

40/05 Broadwaters Road, Wednesbury

Councillor Rowley referred to trees which had been removed in Broadwaters Road to enable wheelchair users and mothers with pushchairs and prams to negotiate the footpaths more easily. He added that there could be problems if replacement trees were required.

Resolved

That consideration be given to the provision of smaller, slower growing trees as replacements in Broadwaters Road.

41/05 Closure of HSBC Darlaston Branch

Councillor Madeley referred to the closure of the proposed HSBC branch in Darlaston Town Centre and stated that the nearest branch would now be Wednesbury Town Centre several miles away. He was concerned that, with the closure of this branch, there would be only one bank left in Darlaston. He requested the Partnership to support the campaign to keep the HSBC bank in Darlaston.

Mr. Middleton (Locally Appointed Partner) stated that he would canvass business people in Darlaston in an attempt to make the bank reconsider its closure plans.

Councillor Burley reported that the MP for Walsall South was involved in the campaign to retain the HSBC bank in Darlaston.

The Leisure Services representative stressed the importance of finding an alternative use for the building if the closure of the branch went ahead. He was concerned that, if the site remained vacant for any length of time, it could harm the regeneration of Darlaston.

It was suggested that the Urban Regeneration Company should be asked to add its support to the campaign to retain the HSBC branch in Darlaston.

Resolved

That the Partnership lend its support to the campaign to retain the HSBC bank in Darlaston.

42/05 **Community Forums**

Ian Willetts of the Community Empowerment Network made a presentation on Community Forums. He reported that the Community Empowerment Network had £5,000 to spend in each of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership areas and this money could be used to arrange meetings with community groups to discuss issues which would feed into the Partnership Plan. He indicated that local committees and community groups were already well represented in the Darlaston area so the Community Empowerment Network had been liaising with the Darlaston Forum to bring forward the debate on Darlaston's Local Plan. He hoped that local groups would lead on the setting up of meetings so that existing expertise could be used to ensure that the whole of the community had an opportunity to feed their views back to the Partnership and the Community Empowerment Network.

Peter Burton (Locally Appointed Partner) referred to the need to get tenants groups and young people involved in the process. Ian Willetts stated that, if the Partnership could provide him with appropriate contacts, then his group would encourage a further dialogue.

Sandra Borland (Locally Appointed Partner) referred to the fact that youth forums had already been set up in Darlaston. She felt that the Community Empowerment Network should use them to contact young people in the first instance.

Narinder Singh Chumber reported that the Neighbourhood Partnership Team was looking at the promotion of youth involvement on a Borough-wide basis. He agreed to report back to a future meeting on progress made with relation to youth involvement.

Resolved

That the presentation by the Community Empowerment Network representative on Community Forums be noted.

43/05 **Site of nos. 1a-16 Pinfold Street, Darlaston**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Paul Nicholson reported that the success of the first phase of the redevelopment of Pinfold Street by Mercian Housing Association had raised expectations in the area. However, the second phase of the redevelopment had stalled because of the complicated land ownerships on the site. A number of developers had tried without success to assemble the land for redevelopment. As the boundary of the Urban Regeneration Company did not extend into the Darlaston Town Centre area, the company could not assist in the remediation of the site. He added that the Council was in discussion with prospective developers to create a viable and sustainable scheme for the site.

Councillor Madeley referred to the fact that an excellent scheme had been lost when Derngate went into liquidation. Advantage West Midlands had been asked to assist with the remediation of the site, but had been unable to help. He hoped that the Partnership would be consulted on the future development of the site.

Paul Nicholson indicated that Darlaston District Centre had similar difficulties to other local centres throughout the Borough in terms of empty shops, but the Local Authority was working with Walsall Housing Group to improve the situation whenever possible.

After further discussion it was:-

Resolved

That the report be noted.

44/05 **Site of former King's Hill JMI School, Old Park Road**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Paul Nicholson reported that the key constraint to the redevelopment of this site was the cost of reclamation. In the 1990's, 2 Housing Associations had considered the site for redevelopment, but had been unable to afford the costs of remediation. However, now that the housing market had moved on it was possible that the site could be viable for development again and the Local Authority would, therefore, be looking to market it in the coming months.

Councillor Burley referred to the fact that the site was an eyesore and caused concern to the people of the area. She asked when funding would be identified for its improvement.

Councillor Madeley felt that the site should be cleared and advertised for housing as a matter of urgency. The site should be fenced to prevent fly tipping and put on the market as quickly as possible.

Rashid Varachhia (Locally Appointed Partner) reported that the Local Committee had tried to get the site cleared on a number of occasions. He referred to the lack of car parking in the area and asked if it could be used as a temporary car park until such time as it was used for housing purposes.

Paul Nicholson advised the meeting that officers were as frustrated as members over the failure to redevelop the site. He indicated that, during the recent budget making process, funds had been made available to assist with regeneration for the first time in a number of years. He added that it was hoped to market the site again in the next few months.

Resolved

That the report be noted and the site be marketed for housing as soon as possible.

45/05 Transforming Your Space Programme: George Rose Park Project

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Kauser Agha reported that, during the consultation period on this project, a number of concerns had been raised which were outside the scope of the transforming your space initiative. She added that money provided under the scheme could only be spent on the George Rose Park Project.

Councillor Rowley referred to the fact that the playing fields at the park were used by a local school for games. He was concerned that the riding of horses and motorcycles on the land could pose a danger to school children using the site.

Councillor Madeley referred to the problems of dog fouling in the park and asked if it would be possible to provide dog litter bins there.

Councillor Chambers referred to the Friends of George Rose Park Group and asked whether they could apply for lottery funding to help improve the park further.

Councillor Burley felt that the Partnership should take action to solve some of the problems listed by including them in the Neighbourhood Plan. Environmental Health should be asked to provide dog waste and litter bins in the park and the police should be requested to take action against motor cycles and horses using the park,

John Beavon reported that there was currently a programme running to provide “no dog fouling” signs across the Borough.

The Partnership requested that “no dog fouling” signs be provided in the following locations:-

- Bentley West Playing fields
- The pool on the Old Hall Estate
- The linear walkway
- Dangerfield Lane
- Broadwaters Road open space
- Margaret Road/Rowley View

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That “no dog fouling” signs be provided at the following locations:-
 - Bentley West Playing fields
 - The pool on the Old Hall Estate
 - The linear walkway
 - Dangerfield Lane
 - Broadwaters Road open space
 - Margaret Road/Rowley View
- (3) That the police be requested to control the riding of horses and motor cycles in George Rose Park.

46/05 Training and Development for LNP and Task Group Members

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Narinder Singh Chumber handed a copy of the Annual Corporate Skills and Knowledge Training Programme to those present at the meeting:-

(see annexed)

He referred to the Placecheck briefing session which had taken place on 28 February 2005. He also drew attention to the Partnership's Skills Audit contained at the back of the report.

Councillor Burley expressed concern that the Partnership had a wealth of knowledge, but no funding to make things happen. She felt the Partnerships were under funded and under-resourced.

Councillor Johnson felt it was important that the goodwill of volunteers should not be lost because of inaction.

Resolved

That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

- (1) notes the actions for implementation in the Placecheck report;
- (2) agrees that the Task Group should move forward recommended actions from the Placecheck report.

47/05 Partnership Plan

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

An updated Local Neighbourhood Partnership Plan was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Referring to the recommendations contained to in the report, members agreed not to combine the Crime and Environment Task Groups.

Cath Boneham (Teaching Primary Care Trust) reported that two health workshops would be held shortly in each LNP area.

After further discussion it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Local Neighbourhood Plan 2005-06 (March 2005) be endorsed;
- (2) That the Crime and Environment Task Groups be not combined;
- (3) That the following champions be nominated from each Task Group to feed back information to the Partnership:-

Young People:	Peter Burton
Crime:	Councillor Rose Burley
Environment:	Councillor Ayshea Johnson
Health:	Cath Boneham
Education:	Councillor Tony Rowley

- (4) That at each Task Group meeting a Chairman be nominated from within the group; and
- (5) That individual LNP members encourage wider participation from community members within the Task Groups.

48/05 LNP Communication Officer

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the Chairman be nominated to undertake the role of the communications officer for Darlaston Local Neighbourhood Partnership.

49/05 Mapping Exercise

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

50/05 Alley Gating/Closures

Councillor Madeley reminded the meeting that a petition had been submitted to the Darlaston District Committee requesting alley gating in Faversham Close, Bentley. Councillor Rowley suggested that alley gating should be combined with improved lighting to ensure that alleyways were safe for pedestrians to use.

Councillor Burley expressed concern that officers had identified alleyways to be lit without consulting the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

Mr. Small of 33 Banfield Road, Darlaston, asked if the alleyway adjacent to his home could be gated and lit properly. He had requested this in the past, but there was a question whether the alleyway was owned by the Council or the Housing Trust.

Councillor Rowley referred to alleyways in Broadwaters Road and Hollyhedge Road/Faversham Avenue which needed to be included in the programme. Councillor Burley referred to the alleyway leading from Park Street to Wiley Avenue South which created horrendous problems for residents.

Reference was also made to the alleyway from Hill Street to Alexandra Road which needed to be made safe by stopping gardens encroaching onto the alleyway and narrowing its width.

After further discussion it was:-

Resolved

That consideration be given to the provision of alley gating and improved lighting in the following alleyways:-

- Faversham Close, Bentley
- Adjoining 33 Banfield Road, Darlaston
- Broadwaters Road
- Hollyhedge Road/Festival Avenue
- Park Street to Wiley Avenue South
- Hill Street to Alexandra Road, Darlaston

51/05 Road Signs at the Gateways to the Borough

Bruno Edwards (Community Arts Team) made a presentation using PowerPoint to show the existing 'Welcome to Walsall' gateway road signs which appeared throughout the Borough. He reported that it was proposed to replace some of the older, dated signage with signs that referred to the regional variations of the various districts and centres which made up the Borough of Walsall. Following discussion, it was suggested that St. Lawrence's church and Bentley Cairn should be incorporated into the road signs for the Darlaston area. Bruno agreed to mock up an example of the road sign then bring it back to a future meeting of the Partnership for further consultation and feedback.

52/05 Alcohol Bans in Public Places

The Partnership discussed possible sites for alcohol bans.

Councillor Rowley asked whether events such as Jazz Festivals held in parks which included alcohol bans could still have a traditional beer tent. It was then,

Resolved

That consideration be given to the introduction of alcohol bans in the following places in Darlaston:-

- Victoria Road Park
- George Rose Park
- Kings Hill
- Bentley West Playing fields
- Broadwaters Road Open Space
- Bush Park/Queen Street, Moxley
- Cook Street

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 8.35 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: