

**WILLENHALL NORTH/WILLENHALL SOUTH/SHORT HEATH AREA
PANEL MEETING**

**New Invention Community Forum, The Square, Lichfield Road, WV12
5EA**

10 November, 2016 at 6.00 p.m.

Members in attendance

Councillor C. Creaney (Chairman)
Councillor D. Barker
Councillor S. Cooper
Councillor D. Coughlan
Councillor A. Hicken
Councillor D. Hazel
Councillor E. Hazel
Councillor I. Shires

Others in attendance

Michael Greenfield	Area Manager
Jo Lowndes	Partnership Manager
Sgt Harj Cheema	West Midlands Police
Isabel Vanderheeren	Group Manager – Early Help
Tahra Hussein	Service Manager
Kerry Hinks	Senior Family Support Worker
Craig Goodall	Democratic Services Officer

129/16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Coughlan.

130/16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

131/16 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

Resolved:

That item number xxx/16 be taken in private session due to the discussion of exempt information relating to any individual as permitted under Section 100A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

132/16 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the minutes the meeting which took place on the 27 September 2016, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

133/16 **Area Managers Report**

The Area Manager presented his report to Members.

The Area Manager reported on anti-social behaviour (ASB) that was ongoing in the area. The Youth Service were seeking to engage young people's causing ASB in an effort to reduce current issues. Sergeant Cheema highlighted a successful operation that discovered and closed down a cannabis factory. The Police were aware of shop lifting issues in the town centre. Members noted that these shop lifters were using drugs in the town centre too. A Member commented that a male Police Officer or Community Support Officer was required as the individuals concerned did not necessarily listen to female officers.

A discussion took place on the new arrangements for Neighbourhood Policing. Members were informed that each neighbourhood area was expected to have 1 sergeant, 7 Police Constables (PCs) and 7 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). However, in practice only be 3 PCs and 5 PCSOs would be available. These staffing numbers would be similar across Walsall. It was noted that neighbourhood teams would not normally be involved with emergency responses. Members were concerned about this issue and decided to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to a future meeting to discuss the situation.

A Member recorded her thanks to Sergeant Kelvin Rowlands for his hard work during his three year post to the area.

Due to the darker winter nights Members requested that promotional information be sent out across the area concerning safe cycling and burglary prevention.

Following a question the Area Manger confirmed that a Junior Fire-fighters group was active in the area.

A Member expressed concern about reports of reducing capacity for sexual health services.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to a future meeting to discuss neighbourhood policing in Willenhall and Short Heath;**
- 2. Promotional information be sent out across the area concerning safe cycling and burglary prevention.**

134/16 **Children's Services**

The Panel considered Children's Services in the Willenhall and Short Heath area. A data report detailing statistical information for the Willenhall and Short Heath area was tabled at the meeting (annexed).

The Group Manager (Early Help) provided an overview of the Early Help service including:

- Statistical overview of families and children engaged;
- The top five demands for early support;
- How referrals were made;
- Target groups;
- How support is provided;
- Barriers in providing support.

At this point of the meeting the Chair had to leave. Councillor Ian Shires chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Following this Members were informed about the Locality Panel, how it operated and the types of work in commissioned such as the Truancy Patrol. A discussion took place on the Truancy Patrol. It was reported that the vast majority of children caught by the Truancy Patrol did not truant again. Those that did were often in need of further support due to problems at home.

Members welcomed the services available as early support but queried what happened if a child or family did not want to engage and refused support. It was explained that whilst it was not possible to compel residents to engage the service was persistent in offering support. If significant risk was identified then issue would be referred to social workers and Police.

A Member reported that families in need of support often lived in poor housing in the private rented sector. She felt that assistance should be provided to support families to understand their rights as tenants. The Group Manager commented that colleagues in the Money, Home, Job Service worked closely with the Early Support Team and provided assistance on the matters the Member was concerned about.

Following a question the Group Manager explained the reasoning behind the selection of the venues for the budget consultation.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

136/16 Funding Applications

The Area Manager reported that no funding applications had been received.

The following part of the meeting took place in private session due to the discussion of exempt information relating to any individual as permitted under Section 100A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Whilst the item was considered in private session the below minute is a complete description of the discussion that took place.

137/16 Void Properties

The Panel considered issues relating to void properties (VPs) in the area.

The Partnership Manager provided an overview of VP issues locally. She explained the role, remit and membership of the VP Working Group. Members were informed that there was a significant amount of legislation that regulated VPs.

The Partnership Manager highlighted a number of VPs to the Panel which were then discussed. It was requested that town centre buildings and the Rushbrooke Farthing be added to the VP list.

Members discussed the issues and were frustrated by the slow process of bringing the properties back into use. They felt attention was required at Cabinet level as well as increased monitoring of the situation locally.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The approach to tackling void properties in the borough be considered by Cabinet;**
- 2. The Area Panel consider issues with void properties locally at each meeting.**

Date of next meeting

It was noted the date of the next meeting was 12 January 2017.

Being no other business the meeting terminated at 7.59 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: