

**DARLASTON NORTH/BENTLEY/DARLASTON SOUTH  
AREA PANEL**

**Wednesday 21 September at 6.00pm**

**At Darlaston Methodist Church, Slater Street, Darlaston**

**Present:**

Councillor Burley (Chairman)  
Councillor Underhill

**In attendance:**

Nicola Holmes	- Area Manager
Paul Gordon	- Head of Business Change
Inspector Starynski	- West Midlands Police
Sgt Mohammed Shaid	- West Midlands Police
Mike Sailsman	- Talent Match

**Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Chambers and James.

168/16

**Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2016, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Panel, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

169/16

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Burley declared an interest in the following funding items:-

Darlaston Town F.C.- Equipment  
Darlaston Town F.C - Christmas Pantomime  
She indicated that she said she had obtained a dispensation so that she could speak and vote on these items.

170/16

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

## Funding Report

The joint report of the Area Manager and the Area Partnership Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Area Manager (Nicola Holmes) referred to the funding agreed at the previous meeting and reported that the house on the corner had obtained alternative funding for their project and had returned the approved £250 for the area panel to reinvest in other projects. She stated that four applications had been put forward for approval; three met the necessary criteria and the fourth the Hotel Petite re-launch/ had been withdrawn following safeguarding issues at the premises. If these three projects were supported in full then £2588 would be allocated. This would leave £10,062 for allocation during the remainder of the year.

Members considered the funding applications within the report and it was:-

### Resolved

That:-

<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Match Funding</b>	<b>Approved/not Approved</b>
Hotel Petite relaunch	£920.00	£0.00	Withdrawn
Darlaston Town F.C. – Purchase of a commercial dishwasher	£1228.00	£321.00	£1228.00 approved
Darlaston Town F.C. Christmas Pantomime – To provide a family event for the local community at Christmas.	£750.00	£443.00	£350.00 approved
The Darlaston All Active Christmas Event: Providing a Christmas event aimed at encouraging Christmas spirit around the Darlaston, Moxley	£610.00	£2345.00	£610.00 approved

and Bentley areas.			
--------------------	--	--	--

172/16

### **Area Manager's Report**

The report of the Area Manager was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Area Manager (Nicola Holmes) enlarged upon the report for the benefit of the panel and drew attention to paragraphs 3.2, 3.7 and 6.3. Discussion took place around fly-tipping and litter collection. The police representative (Sgt Shaid) indicated that shared intelligence would be useful. Reference was made to the part played by Grace Academy and other partner organisations in a number of litter picks which took place from June through to September.

Councillor Underhill felt the Council should be more pro-active in prosecuting fly-tippers.

Reference was made to the success of a week long programme of activities held in George Rose and Kingshill Parks. Councillor Burley suggested that Victoria Park might be considered as a future venue for such events.

Nicola Holmes drew the panel's attention to paragraph 6.3 of the report and to a meeting to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at the Chart Centre, Gomer Street, Willenhall/where discussions would take place on the use of funding available to voluntary and community organisations from Walsall Council's Public Health Commissioner for Older People's Services to help prevent isolation and build resilience in communities.

After further discussion it was

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

173/16

### **Darlaston Community Asset Mapping 2016**

A report was submitted:-

(See annexed)

The Area Manager reported that breakfast meetings had gone well. She intended to produce a directory of organisations/agencies operating in the area. The next Breakfast Club meeting would be held at Old Church Primary School at 8.00 a.m. on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

### **Resolved**

That the report and comments be noted.

**Future Programme**

Mike Sailsman of Talent Match addressed the panel. He reported that Talent Match had been set up with funding from the National Lottery. It had been running for two years and the Black Country area was one of the largest funding recipients (£10.3million). It covered the central area of Bilston, Willenhall and Darlaston. The Gazebo Theatre was the contract holder and Wolverhampton City Council was the accountable body. Talent Match was a mentor based voluntary programme for 18-24 year olds at present but it was hoped that it would be extended to 29 year olds.

An Impact Programme had been match funded in the sum of £8 million. Assistance was offered through thematic groups to single parents, young parents, substance misusers, travelling families, the homeless and children in care. It also targeted the hidden youth, young people who for whatever reason did not sign on.

Mike Sailsman indicated that he would be operating in Bilston now that the scheme was established. He reported that young people were encouraged to develop their own learning programme with the aid of a mentor. He felt that it was the best funded programme for over thirty years. He stated that help was needed to set up projects in Willenhall and Darlaston. Staff were currently being recruited to work in those areas.

Councillor Burley asked if Talent Match had contacted the Council directly. Mr Sailsman confirmed that they had. The area manager agreed to include updates regarding the work of Talent Match in future area manager updates.

**Resolved**

That the verbal report had been noted.

**Void Properties**

The Head of Business Change (Paul Gordon) reported that if a void property was in a dangerous condition then the area managers were being encouraged to be more proactive in getting repairs carried out. Owners were contacted and given the chance to make repairs but if no action was taken within a reasonable timescale then the area managers should act quickly to secure the property. This proactive approach was already being used to secure derelict property in the Brownhills area and it was hoped to extend it Borough wide.

Action could be taken through Building Control or Environmental Health if there was an access issue and the Void Properties Group was looking at unsightly buildings across the Borough.

Councillor Burley expressed concern over the length of time it took to secure derelict property and the impact that this could have on

residents and the appearance of the local area. Paul Gordon indicated that enforcement powers used by Environmental Health were useful in speeding up the process considerably but they only related to dangerous buildings not unsightly ones.

Councillor Underhill referred to the growing problem of houses in multiple occupation in Darlaston and asked if anything could be done to reduce this problem.

### **Resolved**

That the verbal report be noted and the problem of void properties be kept under review.

176/16

### **Active Citizens Programme**

The Head of Business Change (Paul Gordon) reported funding could be provided to help train individuals on the Active Citizens Programme. Training would be provided by Walsall College. Walsall was using the funding in a more innovative way.

Haroon Ravat would provide an updated report at a future meeting of the panel.

177/16

### **Police and Crime Matters**

Inspector Starynski (West Midlands Police) reported that local policing teams had been changed. Concern had been expressed that momentum would be lost but he had responded that technology would be used more effectively to maintain continuity as the teams changed. He added that strategic change was moving away from solving crime and into preventing it. This venture was seen as a major aim.

Inspector Starynski indicated that he would like to see the local police teams respond positively to the concerns of the local community and despite the changes local policing would continue.

Councillor Burley referred to the loss of local officers in Darlaston. She asked if Darlaston Police Station would remain closed to the public. Inspector Starynski confirmed that it would remain closed to the public.

Councillor Burley referred to the problem of local teams and their shift patterns. Inspector Starynski reported that shift work did create problems but the Willenhall team should cover Darlaston when Darlaston officers were not available.

In response to a question about PCSO's, Inspector Starynski stated that there would be little change in PCSO numbers. Two new Inspectors, Sophie Worthington and Leigh Nicholls, were being introduced into Darlaston.

Councillor Burley asked about Police visibility on the streets of Darlaston. Inspector Starynski replied that it should not change much as there was likely to be only one officer lost in the re-organisation.

Sgt Shaid (West Midlands Police) reported that he had found working in Darlaston particularly rewarding over the last twelve months. He was leaving the area with crime firmly under control and messages had always got through. A different way of policing should free up officers and make them more visible in the community. Inspector Starynski indicated that officers had identified hidden crimes and were tackling them. Expectation was also being managed.

Councillor Burley asked if Councillors could be provided with contact details once the new system had bedded in so that information could be passed on at surgeries. She added that it was hoped to resurrect the Darlaston North Neighbourhood Watch to improve the issue of accountability. Paul Gordon stated that interaction with partner agencies had to be more effective.

Inspector Starynski reported that crime in Darlaston had fallen by 10.8% in 2016 compared to a 9% rise across the West Midland region.

Councillor Underhill asked about drug use in Darlaston. Inspector Starynski replied that in the last 6 months there had been fewer drug issues in the west of the borough. He added that the police were getting better at helping people with drug problems.

**Resolved**

That the verbal report be noted.

**178/16**

**Dates and Venues for future meetings**

**Resolved**

That the dates and times for future meetings of the Area Panel be noted:

- Wednesday 16 november 2016 – Darlaston Methodist Church
- Tuesday 17 January 2017 – Darlaston Methodist Church
- Monday 20 March 2017 – Darlaston Methodist Church

**Termination of meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.35pm.

Chair.....

Date.....