

## **WILLENHALL AREA PANEL**

**Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Conference Room, Council House, Walsall**

### **Present**

Councillor I Shires  
Councillor Barker  
Councillor Cook  
Councillor Creaney  
Councillor Illmann-Walker  
Councillor Mrs D. Shires

1/13

### **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Coughlan, D. Coughlan and V. Woodruff.

2/13

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/13

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

The Panel noted that there were no items on the agenda which required the exclusion of the Public.

4/13

### **Funding Procedures**

The Partnership Manager introduced the report (annexed) explaining that, in line with the report approved by Council, decisions regarding any funding applications would be made by Area Panels. This differed to previous arrangements whereby Area Managers had authority to approve spend.

The Panel were advised that they could approve delegated authority to the relevant area manager for any urgent projects, up to the value of £500, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and relevant ward members. Discussion ensued as to whether the Panel were able to delegate all funding decisions to the area manager. The Clerk reminded the Panel of the decision by Council which clearly stated that decisions regarding any funding applications would be made by Area Panels. He advised that applications should be managed properly ensuring that dates of meetings and timescales for submitting applications were made clear to applicants in order that they in turn could plan their application in a timely manner.

It was asked whether funding application forms were available online. Officers agreed to investigate whether this was feasible and report to the next meeting.

Discussion followed, Members enquired as to whether funding would be awarded if a group were based in Willenhall but running an event outside of the area. Officers advised that the area manager would vet the initial application to check whether it met the funding criteria. Each application would be considered on its merits and would need to demonstrate that the project had an impact or outcome for the people of Willenhall.

**Resolved**

1. That the Panel notes that it has authority to make decisions on Area Partnership funding where allocated to an Area partnership by the Council;
2. That authority be delegated to the area manager to approve urgent projects, up to the value of £500.00, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair and relevant ward members;
3. That future meeting dates and deadlines for submission of funding applications be publicised.

5/13

**Funding Report**

The Area Manager referred to appendix one of the report [annexed] and requested that members consider the funding application submitted in respect of area communications.

Prior to considering the application members sought clarity on the cost of the Willenhall library planter. The Area Manager explained that there was more work involved rather than just replacing a planter. Members requested that further detail be included within future funding reports.

In relation to the application for consideration, it was explained that the funding would enable leaflets, newsletters and other forms of communication to be produced to raise awareness of the work of the area panel and partners.

**Resolved**

That £2,000.00 be granted to enable publications to be produced for the promotion of Willenhall North/Willenhall South/Short Heath Area Partnership.

6/13

**Area Manager Update**

The Panel received a report [annexed] setting out progress with various work streams within Willenhall and Short Heath.

The Area Manager drew members attention to the junior PCSO youth project in local primary schools which had been initiated by West Midlands Police. Children were undertaking litter picking, traffic enforcement and property marking. It was also mentioned that the anti social behaviour road show would be visiting Pool Hayes and Willenhall E-Act Academy prior to the summer holidays. This would include the Police, Fire Service, Anti Social Behaviour Unit and Integrated Young Peoples Support Services (IYPSS) who would talk to all young people about the consequences of Anti Social Behaviour. The summer programme of activities available in the area would also be promoted.

In relation to increasing positive activities for young people it was highlighted that good links were being established with local faith organisations to better utilise youth workers in local churches and create better links with young people. The Chair noted that New Invention Methodist Church had partnered with IYPSS which was positive however the church was due to close in December, 2013. The Chair stressed the importance of retaining as much provision for local groups as possible and requested that the Area Manager provide a further update on this matter at the next meeting.

Discussion followed on the supporting older people and vulnerable adults work stream. It was asked how security items funded by the area panel were mapped and distributed. Officers advised that the police distributed the security items such as personal alarms and window and shed alarms. Local reassurance visits ensured that items were distributed to those in need. The Area Manager asked members if they knew of a person that may be vulnerable to advise her so that they can be offered the security items.

### **Resolved**

That the area update be noted.

7/13

### **Area Plan**

The communications manager presented the area plan and advised that further work was required to tailor the document. The summarized Area Plan sought to inform the public of area partnership activity.

The Chair suggested that the Area Plan would change over time and requested that the Area Plan be considered at each meeting.

### **Resolved**

1. That the summarized area plan be approved;
2. That the Area Plan be considered at each meeting of the Area Panel.

## **Devolution through Area Partnerships**

The Partnership Manager presented a report setting out seven proposals for devolution through area budgets.

It was explained that the seven proposals included:-

- Devolution of Budgets / Resources and Participatory Budgeting;
- Greater Alignment of Teams
- Strengthening Local Accountability and Support to Scrutiny Through Area Partnerships
- Community Hubs
- Local Area Co-Ordinators (LAC)
- Pilot Work to Enhance the Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Support for Attracting Funding for Key Local Initiatives

An update in respect of each of the proposals was provided.

The Chair gave further background to the devolution of budgets advising that it would empower local people to influence where resources were directed at a local level. Two service-specific pilots had been proposed – Clean and Green, focussing on street cleansing and grounds maintenance and Highways Maintenance, focussing on road safety, parking and maintenance.

In relation to Community Hubs – Members were advised that two pilot projects were under way - one in Moxley and the other in Ryecroft. The objectives of the Hubs were to:-

- i) Build capacity within communities to improve services for residents
- ii) Strengthen the sustainability of local community organisations and their ability to support Council objectives
- iii) Reduce dependency on public services, by supporting self-sufficiency and independent living

In relation to Local Area Coordinators it was advised that pilot areas had not been agreed however the matter was being progressed by the Head of Communities & Partnerships, John Leach.

### **Resolved**

That the progress against each of the seven proposals for devolution through Area Partnerships be noted.

## **Election to Local Police and Crime Board**

Members were advised that a representative was sought to be appointed to the Local Police and Crime Board.

**Resolved**

That Councillor Daniel Barker be appointed as the representative from Willenhall North/Willenhall South and Short Heath Area Panel on the Local Police and Crime Board.

10/13

**Areas of Deprivation**

Members received a presentation on areas of deprivation with particular focus on Willenhall.

The Chair stated that parts of all three Wards within the Willenhall area were stuck in the bottom 25% of the most deprived areas in England. He stated that this was despite money being invested such as 'New Deal'. It was suggested that a sub - committee be established to look in depth at the figures before engaging with partners to lift areas of Willenhall from the bottom 25%.

**Resolved**

1. That a Willenhall North/ Willenhall South/New Invention Sub-Committee be established to look in – depth at deprivation statistics within areas of Willenhall with levels of deprivation with a view to shaping services to reduce the gap between these areas and the rest of Willenhall, the Borough of Walsall and Nationally.
2. That Councillor D. Shires, I. Shires, Barker and Illmann-Walker form the membership of the Sub- committee

**Termination of meeting**

The meeting terminated at 7.40 p.m.

Chair:.....

Date:.....