

Report to Aldridge and Beacon Area Panel

Area Community Plan Refresh 2014-15

Tuesday, 1 July 2014

1. Context

1.1 On 8 April 2013, Walsall Council approved 'The Walsall Plan 2013 - 16' – the Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough. This sets out a three year vision for Walsall as a “great place to live, learn and invest”. The Walsall Plan identifies four strategic priorities;

- Supporting businesses to thrive and supporting local people into work
- Improving health including well-being and independence for older people
- Creating safe and sustainable communities
- Improving safeguarding and the learning and life chances for children and young people

1.2 In order to inform the public of Area Partnership activity, a summarised Area Plan document for each Area Partnership has been drafted. The draft summarised Area Plan for Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership is attached at appendix 1.

1.3 The Area Community Plan summary document contains details of activity undertaken across the Area Partnership together with planned activity for the future.

1.4 The Area Community Plan summary document for the Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership is submitted to the Area Panel for their consideration, noting it highlights for Elected Members and the community, the range of activity undertaken in their locality, in accordance with the multi-agency arrangements put in place for Area Partnerships.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Area Community Plan summary document be approved, with amendments to the final version to be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair

3. Next Steps

3.1 It is anticipated that the Area Community Plan summary document will be updated on an annual basis, to ensure Elected Members and the community are kept informed.

3.2 The Area Community Plan summary document will be made available by the end of July 2014, in print and on-line, to inform of the work of Area Partnerships.

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Aldridge

- Working closely with partners, such as NHS Walsall, West Midlands Fire Station and local groups, such as Aldridge Volunteer Gardeners, we have acquired a plot of land at Aldridge Fire Station which will become the base for our Aldridge Community Garden & Wildlife Project.
- Funded local groups for various activities and equipment, such as Anchorage 55+ Club, Aldridge Friendly Club, Aldridge Youth Theatre and Aldridge Library.
- Worked closely with partners, such as the police, Aldridge Community Centre, the council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and local residents to tackle an issue with anti-social behaviour on the community centre car park.

Pheasey

- Following complaints from local residents, working with partners, such as the local Ward Councillors, local schools and the council's environmental health and enforcement teams, we carried out a pilot dog fouling scheme. Funding posters and leaflets, we engaged with the local primary schools to produce the designs for the posters/leaflets, which were then widely distributed throughout the area. We also funded dog poo bags, which are given out on the parks by our Park Rangers, as well as through promotion and awareness events in the area. In addition a dog fouling hotline was set up, allowing local residents the chance to call the council to get dog mess removed from the paths and pavements, as well as being able to report irresponsible dog owners by offering times and descriptions of offenders and this intelligence helps our enforcement officers.

Streetly

- Working closely with partners, such as the council's Clean & Green Services, Friends of Blackwood Park and the Blackwood Pavilion User Group we are helping fund and improve Blackwood Park in order to gain the Green Flag status.
- Working closely with all of the community groups in Streetly, we held the first "Christmas Tree Festival" in December 2013, bringing the whole community together, with over 45 businesses, community groups, schools and churches coming together to promote themselves within the community. The event was held over 3 days and over 1,500 attending during that time, with over £1,000 being raised for various charities. The event was deemed as such a success for promoting community cohesion that this year we are working with 4 churches to hold a festival in Aldridge, Pheasey, Streetly and Walsall Wood on the same weekend!

Walsall Wood

- Working closely with partners, such as the police, Oak Park Leisure Centre, KFC, Fitness First, Midcounties Co-op, Walsall Wood Football Club, the council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS) we have tackled the issue of anti-social behaviour around the Oak Park site. Through on-site meetings we have facilitated change by funding CCTV, installing new litter bins, repairing lighting at the rear of the building and help re-instate the youth shelter that was previously removed due to health and safety.

Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work

- Working with partners, such as Walsall Housing Group, Aldridge Library and The Thomas Project, we are helping to fund job clubs in the Aldridge & Beacon area.

Improving health including well being and independence for older people

- Set up Community Garden & Wildlife Project, allowing anyone in the Aldridge & Beacon area the chance to get involved with gardening, plus volunteering opportunities for many related activities, such as working with wildlife, rescue animals, making bird boxes and working alongside young people.
- Working closely with our community and voluntary groups, we now have 4 Networking Groups set up within the Aldridge & Beacon area, with over 100 local groups engaging with us and Walsall Voluntary Action, we are offering funding advice, networking opportunities, promoting the diversity of activities and raising awareness of the excellent community assets who volunteer their time and services.
- Working closely with the Collingwood Centre and Streetly Community Association we have help fund the luncheon clubs that run from these centres, including helping with the transportation, and in the case of Streetly, we have helped set up afternoon talks with agencies coming in and giving talks on all aspects of life for the over 50s.

Creating Safe, Sustainable and inclusive Communities – Reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in

- Set up dog fouling hotline, initially as a pilot in Pheasey, now working across the Aldridge & Beacon area.
- Working closely with partner agencies, such as the police, Walsall Housing Group and the council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and, where appropriate, fund and deploy CCTV cameras to monitor hotspot areas.

Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young People

- Organised and funded a number of "Family Fit 'n' Fun Day events across the Aldridge & Beacon area with free activities for children to try and information stalls with advice.
- Working closely with partner agencies, such as the council's Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS) to help organise and fund activities, such as summer holiday activities, BBQ in the Park and drama workshops.
- Working closely with our libraries to fund initiatives to get children and young people interested in going to the library and reading more. Activities include Animal Antics, Summer Reading Challenge, Chatterbooks and Hippy Beads Bracelet Workshop.
- Working closely with partner agencies, such as West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service, Walsall Council, NHS Walsall, Neighbourhood Watch and Victim Support, we run Community & Citizenship Days in primary schools within the Aldridge & Beacon area, giving the pupils a chance to learn about life outside of school; safety, responsibility, democracy and new life skills