

## **NORTH WALSALL AREA PANEL MEETING**

**Wednesday, 9 April, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale Estate, WS2 7DY**

### **Present**

Councillor L. Jeavons  
Councillor J. Fitzpatrick  
Councillor L. Harrison  
Councillor P. Lane  
Councillor A. Young  
Councillor B. Thomas

### **Officers**

Michael Greenfield- Area Manager  
Vanessa Croft- Area Support Officer  
Matt Underhill - Committee Business & Governance Manager

43/13

#### **Election of Chair for duration of meeting**

Councillor Jeavons was nominated and approved by the Panel Members to act as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

44/13

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for the duration of the meeting were received from Councillors Oliver, Westley, Young, Jukes and S. Fitzpatrick.

45/13

#### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

46/13

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

There were no items to be considered in private session.

47/13

#### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The meeting considered the minutes of the meeting that took place on 29 January 2014. Apologies for Councillor Harrison for the meeting on 29 January 2014 were noted.

## **Resolved**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2014, as amended, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

48/13

### **Area Manager Update**

In relation to the Safer Walsall strategic priority the Partnership Manager explained that the Beechdale Anti-Social Behaviour Sub-Group has arranged a meeting for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 in response to concerns from the local community regarding an increase in anti-social behaviour, including a number of recent altercations. Other action includes a funding application for CCTV cameras which could then be deployed in the area. The Chair expressed concern regarding the rise in asb in Beechdale, particularly after the earlier success of initiatives such as the six month Dispersal Order. It was explained that there was a hardcore of 11 – 15 young people whom the other young people tend to follow. That hardcore group were now 18 – 19 but continued to cause problems. It was now intended to seek to repeat the success of earlier action in addressing asb in Beechdale.

Other Safer Walsall activity highlighted includes the successful motorbike project at Frank F Harrison CA. However, Glastonbury Crescent partners were introducing further measures to tackle off-road bikes being used on the fields. It was explained that off-road bikes continue to circumvent the counter-measures to gain access to the fields. For example, one of the deterrents used, a number of large logs inserted across access points to the field, had been removed by persons unknown. It was also explained that the Street Champions were keen for the local collective efforts to continue in order to address asb. Members expressed frustration at the continuing problems of asb.

The Chair expressed thanks for work undertaken including by Clean & Green Services, together with Community Payback in clearing the open “garden space” between the houses of Mary Street, Lewis Street and Croft Street. This was in addition to the clearing of street alleyways and rubbish

having been cleared from local social housing sites by whg and Walsall council. The Chair explained that for a period of two years there have been ongoing problems, including dumping and overgrown hedges which had concealed drug dealing activity. Officers explained that all local partners had contributed to the clean-up work, including skip days. The Chair noted that the success of this work was evident as his resident surgeries had been much quieter without complaints about these problems. A further Panel Member explained that the cleaned up areas continued to remain in a good state.

In relation to Mossley Big Local Plan it was explained that Community Action & Training Services (CAATS) had taken over responsibility for supporting the local community in developing the Plan for the area. This will involve use of the £20k which has been made available for the development of the Plan from the overall £1m award. It was also explained that a Big Local Steering Group meeting had been held in March where it was agreed that a newsletter would be produced and distributed around the estate. A Panel Member involved in this work explained that it had proved to be a very successful initiative with many local residents participating in it. It was explained that part of the process is that grants for up to £500 will be made available for local groups, with grant appraisal training scheduled for the Steering Group later in April. It is hoped that the Local Plan for the area will be operating by August/ September 2014. In response to a Panel query it was explained that as part of the process of developing the Local Plan CAATS will be engaging with residents from across the local community.

It was explained that cameras are deployed in different locations across North Walsall to tackle fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and to assist with the detection of criminal activities. It was explained that there had been a reduction in the number of WMBC employees monitoring these cameras. However, there had subsequently been a local reorganisation of staff and appropriate numbers of staff were now in place to undertake monitoring activities.

In relation to the Improving safeguarding, learning and life chance for children and young people strategic priority, the Area Manager explained that IYPSS had delivered activity programmes for young people in North Walsall, supported by whg and the Area Partnership. It was explained that work was now underway to produce the summer holiday activity programme. Panel Members were invited to contact the Area Manager with suggestions for activities. Other IYPSS led activities currently underway locally include the “Me, Myself and I” programme at Profitt Street Youth Centre and a football tournament at Lister Close. It was also explained that the “Validate” project which offers young people the opportunity to apply for a free identity card to prove their age to local retailers is to be rolled out across North Walsall. It was explained that the feedback received from the young people was very positive. It was also explained that the card scheme was being used by Trading Standards to assist in the identification of retailers who sell cigarettes and alcohol to under age young people.

In relation to asb in Goscote it was explained that the Police have undertaken an “asb incident search between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and 28 February 2014” in Chaucer Road, Goscote Lane, Shakespeare Crescent and Well Lane. The analysis identified year on year reductions in asb. However, there remained some local misconceptions regarding the level of asb. The Area Manager explained that work was underway to encourage local residents to use the 101 Police non-emergency service number, rather than other methods when reporting incidents of asb. A Panel Member noted that local residents did not have any confidence that incidents reported to the 101 service would be acted upon by the Police. In response to Panel concerns regarding the visible presence of Police in the community, the Area Manager explained that the new Inspector for the area was possibly looking at single Police Officer patrols to make the most of available resources.

In relation to the Supporting businesses to thrive and supporting local people in to work strategic priority, the Area Manager explained that the former Young Peoples' Information Centre (YPIC) in Blakenall has been developed into a local "Enterprise Hub". The Hub provides incubation/ start up office space for a number of local businesses. It was explained that this included a number of award winning businesses. The venue has a range of meeting spaces and it is anticipated that the council's Regeneration team will help promote the facilities.

It was explained that positive feedback had been received following the Real Apprenticeship show held in March at Banks's Stadium. It was also explained that following discussions with local partners it had been determined that it would be more effective for North Walsall to be part of the wider Walsall Works programme, rather than seek a more specific local approach.

In relation to the Improving health, including well-being and independence for older people, strategic priority the Area Manager explained that the North Walsall Area Partnership are working with the Walsall Active Youth (WAY) and Physical Activity Referral Coordinator (Sport & Leisure Services) to enable young people to access the free swim sessions at Bloxwich Leisure Centre. A meeting is planned for later in April with the Leisure Centre Manager to discuss how to promote the activities available at the Centre more widely to young people. It was explained that the Lifestyles team are also involved as this work links to reducing childhood obesity in Year 6 children.

It was explained that the Area Partnerships met with Sarah Barker, the new Children and Young People's Partnership lead for North Walsall, to discuss how changes to the children centres management structure will effect the delivery of services within the local area.

It was explained that the Area Partnerships and Public Health continued to lead on the "asset-based" approach. This involves targeting individual needs and the identification of health needs, with services and support

then sourced. For example, it was explained that as Mattersley Court was no longer operating a day care centre they were able to provide a room for an over 50s club. These sessions include health checks, as well as advice and information on staying safe in your own home. Other events included chair aerobics at the Stan Ball Centre.

It was explained that both Blakenall and Forest Arts community centres have hosted successful static health displays. The display at Blakenall is part of efforts to promote the refurbished Dance Studio and Fitness gym which has been allocated funding through the Area Partnership.

It was explained that the Black Country food bank scheme has identified need in the Blakenall area. While consideration has been given to establishing a foodbank for the area, it has been agreed that whg, operating out of Blakenall Village Centre, will continue to be the distribution venue for the food bank in the area. It was explained that only up to three visits per year to a food bank and work is now underway to seek a method of tracking use of food banks across the Black Country. Panel Members expressed concern regarding this work as the priority should be ensuring that the needs of those in very difficult circumstances are met.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

49/13

### **Update on grass verge parking**

It was explained that a number of parking bays had been created at Lancaster Place. It was also explained that local residents were happy with the bays, with some even providing refreshments to the workers. It was also explained that it had not proved necessary to move any services to complete the works. It was further explained that the bays had reduced the issue of some drivers parking in the road rather than on their drives to prevent their cars being blocked in. A number of Members expressed concern regarding the cost of the scheme and it was pointed out that the

funding could instead have been spent on introducing a significant number of dropped kerbs. The Area Manager explained that this was a pilot scheme for this municipal year as part of the participatory budgeting process and it was not certain what approach would be taken going forward.

**Resolved**

That the update be noted.

50/13

**Police and Crime Commissioner Update**

Officers explained that there was no update at this time.

**Resolved**

That the update be noted.

51/13

**Funding Report**

Officers explained that the Area Partnership was making a funding application for the redeployment and repair of domehawk cameras across North Walsall. The funding of £2,500 was to enable the deployment of the cameras to continue without the need to frequently return to the Panel to make piecemeal funding requests for individual cameras.

**The Panel approved the application**

Officers explained that the second application was made on behalf of Blakenall Community Partnership's "Keep out of the cold and footy skills project". It was explained that other partners participating in this successful scheme were IYPSS and Public Health. In response to Panel queries it was explained that the age range of those participating in the scheme was 12 – 15 and it operated three mornings per week. Members were also pleased to hear that the scheme is supported by Kellogs, who will be including the scheme in a study they are undertaking. Officers agreed to provide Members with a copy of the study when it is completed.

**The Panel approved the application**

It was explained that following a previous application made on behalf of Ridaz Paradise the Panel had requested that a Business Plan be provided. This has not been produced by Ridaz Paradise and officers have removed the application for funding. The Panel also noted the completion of the installation of a community dropped kerb to the south side of Stoney Lane. Members welcomed this and noted its importance to elderly residents.

**Resolved**

That the funding report be noted.

The meeting terminated at 7.05 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....