

NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday 16 October 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

Panel Members present	Councillor C Towe (Chair) Councillor C Creaney (Vice-Chair) Councillor C. Ault Councillor P Bott Councillor B. Tweddle Councillor M. Yasin
Other Members present	Councillor R. Walker
Officers present	Jamie Morris Executive Director – Neighbourhood Services Keith Stone Assistant Director - Built Environment Tim Challans Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning Clive Wright Director, Walsall Partnership Craig Goodall Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

30/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors: L. Beeley, P. Bott, R. Martin, Mushtaq Ahmed, D. Pitt and V. Woodruff.

31/08 SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitutions were made for the duration of the meeting:

Councillor M. Yasin substituted for Councillor R. Martin
Councillor C. Ault substituted for Councillor Mushtaq Ahmed
Councillor B. Tweddle substituted for Councillor D. Pitt

32/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

33/08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 2008

(annexed)

In response to a question Keith Stone explained that decriminalised parking was set to be introduced in mid-November 2008 subject to the receipt of the statutory approval from the Department of Transport. Following further questions he promised to advise Members of the number of traffic wardens that would be employed and the cost of penalty notices outside the meeting.

In response to a question Tim Challans reported that funding for free swimming for under 16's was just slightly under £138,000 for two years. In addition to this £57,000 would be received over two years for capital projects.

Resolved

That:

- a) the minutes, of the meeting held on 4 September 2008, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record;**
- b) Members be informed of the number of traffic wardens that will be employed by Walsall Council;**
- and;**
- c) Members be informed of the cost of fixed penalty notices for motoring offences.**

34/08 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Members noted the available development opportunities.

35/08 FORWARD PLAN

88/08 Highways Repair and Maintenance Service

Keith Stone explained that the decision to award the contract to Tarmac would be taken by Cabinet on 19 November 2008 subject to the satisfactory conclusion of ongoing discussions with the company.. The programme for commencement of the contract is currently being amended but, subject to the conclusion of this exercise, it is currently anticipated that it would commence at some point in January 2009.

15/08 Sustainable Travel to School Policy

It was noted that the Panel would consider this before it went to Cabinet in December.

74/08 Gating Orders Policy

Members noted that this item was timetabled in their work programme.

36/08 SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT AT WALSALL ADULT & COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Panel considered the scheme of management at Walsall Adult and Community College as referred to the Panel by Council on 8 September 2008.

The Chair explained that this matter had been referred to the Panel by Council following concerns from Members around the governance arrangements for the new college. He explained that the meeting would only discuss the governance arrangements. It was important that the new governance arrangements protected the interests of the local authority and the residents of Walsall. Members had a duty to ensure that the required

'checks and balances' were in place. Any other concerns about the amalgamation process between the College of Continuing Education and Walsall Community College were not within the Panels remit as set by Council. Finally he noted the excellent work of the College of Continuing Education, both past and present, and the benefits that Walsall Community College brings with its local delivery.

The Chair explained that he felt it was important that there was parity between the 'Council Governors' and those representatives appointed through the Walsall Federation of Community Organisations. This was supported by the remaining Members of the Panel.

In response to a question Tim Challans explained that the five external organisations with an interest in adult learning would include organisations like Palfrey Girls School, and Walsall Service Users Council.

The Panel felt that all nominations to the governing body should be from properly constituted bodies. These bodies could include:

- Chamber of Commerce for the local business community representatives
- Walsall Lifelong Learning Alliance for the external organisations with an interest in lifelong learning representatives
- Voluntary and Community Sector representatives, potentially from Walsall Voluntary Network, could be one of the five external organisations with an interest in lifelong learning

The Chair informed Members that the Panel would report its findings to Council on 3 November 2008.

Resolved:

That:

To protect the interest of Walsall Council and the residents of the Borough the formation of the Walsall Adult and Community College Board should be revisited with stronger representation from Walsall Council ('Council Governors') to ensure parity between the and Walsall Federation of Community Organisations; therefore:

- 2) Walsall Council should appoint four not two 'Council Governors' (not necessarily Councillors);**
- 3) Walsall Federation of Community Organisations should appoint four representatives and not six;**
- 4) All nominations on Walsall Adult and Community College Board from external organisations should come from formal constituted bodies;**
and;
- 5) the views of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel be reported to Council at its meeting on 3 November 2008.**

37/08 NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE BUDGET OVERVIEW

Members considered an overview of each service operated by the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

The Chair noted that there was a high number of apologies and substitutes for regular Members so suggested that this report and supporting presentation be deferred to a later meeting.

Resolved:

That the Neighbourhoods Directorate Budget Overview be considered at a future meeting of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

38/08 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – REVIEW AND REFRESH

Members considered progress towards the achievement of the targets contained within Walsall's Local Area Agreement (LAA).

Clive Wright explained that the new LAA had started in June and included 30 performance indicators (PI's) from the National Indicator Set (NIS) and 5 locally chosen PI's. All PI's that made up the LAA were attached at appendix 1 to the report. PI's focused on congestion and preventing violent extremism were being discussed with the Government Office for the West Midlands.

In response to a question Clive Wright explained that it was likely that free swimming for under-16's would have an impact on NI 56 'Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6'. It was also likely that this extra provision would impact on other NIS targets especially those that were health related. In order to make the assessment of NIS targets more efficient PI's with similar inputs were clustered together at the targeted action plan stage.

Members questioned the degree that partners pooled budgets and resources. Clive Wright informed the Panel that priorities for the borough were agreed at Walsall Partnership. Each partner would then agree to 'buy' services that would go towards achieving the agreed priorities. He added that at Partnership meetings the focus was on the £1bn budget for the borough rather than on individual grants. It was unlikely that partner's budgets would be pooled due to ownership issues.

39/08 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WORKING GROUP – UPDATE

The Panel were informed about progress to date with the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group (ASBWG).

The Chair explained that since the last meeting the ASBWG had met with a group of Neighbourhood Watch Chairs, hosted an ASB training event for all Members and appointed its co-opted advisors. Plans were now being made for a best practice visit to Manchester.

The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- As adults were the main recipients of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders resources should be aimed at reducing adult ASB. By targeting adult ASB a message would be sent to problem families.
- There appeared to be a lack of services for 5-13 year olds.
- It was suggested that the ASB training event should be run again for those Members that could not attend the event. A lot of positive feedback had been given on the event.
- The importance of preventative work rather than enforcement was noted.
- Social landlords were often slow to act on tenants who caused ASB.
- Representatives from Serco would be called as and when required to support the ASBWG.
- Media support was needed to report acts of ASB in the right manner to prevent encouraging others.

Keith Stone agreed to investigate a number of issues that a Member of the Panel had experienced when reporting an act of ASB to the anti-social behaviour unit.

Resolved:

That Keith Stone would investigate the issues that a Member of the Panel experienced when reporting anti-social behaviour to the anti-social behaviour unit.

The meeting terminated at 8 pm.

Chair:

Date: