

# **ST. MATTHEWS AND BIRCHILLS/LEAMORE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

**Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 at 6.00 p.m.**

**At the Central Methodist Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall**

## **Present**

Councillor Tim Oliver (Chairman)  
Mr. Terry Edis  
Mrs. Jane Evans  
Inspector Andy Gilbert  
Mr. Christopher Jones  
Councillor Haqnawaz Khan  
Councillor Barbara McCracken  
Mr. Andrew Mout  
Mr. Aftab Nawaz  
Councillor Carol Rose  
Rev. David Sims

## **In Attendance**

Kirsty Mohan and Juned Ahmed, from Youth Opinions Unite, were in attendance as critical observers

75/05

## **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Arif and Barton, Mr. M. Barton, Mr. M. Cain and Mrs. E. Perrins.

76/05

## **Minutes**

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Partnership, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**Feedback on issues raised by way of Public Forum/Petitions****(a) Saw Mill Union of Tenants**

Dave Haq and Angela Carr, from the Youth Service, and Paul Leighton, from Traffic Management, were in attendance at the meeting to address the Partnership on youth provision in the Butts area and the possible dual use of Council car parks to provide additional play areas for residents of the Butts/Saw Mill area. A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Dave Haq indicated that the Youth Service was trying to raise the quality of delivery and quality of accommodation for young people in the Butts area but this was dependent on working with others to meet and increase the needs. There had been several developments, including the refurbishment of the People's Place and the appointment of a full time Youth Worker for the area. Angela Carr re-iterated Dave's comments regarding the re-opening of the People's Centre and indicated that the Service would be employing a detached worker team operating from the Centre. She added that the team would work with volunteers from the community and take on-board their ideas. She indicated that the Youth Service were also in the process of marking up Rue Meadow but everything was at the development stage at the present time.

Dave Haq referred to the People's Place and advised Members that the Service was investing heavily in bringing the premises up to standard. The Service was doing group work with young people and work was also being undertaken with local people in developing those premises. There was a strong sense of community who were committed to develop this as a significant resource for the area.

Andrew Moulton raised his concern regarding the location of the People's Place. He added that there was a drug problem in the area and there was a need for a Police presence so that the drug issue could be dealt with first. Andrew's comments were endorsed by Terry Edis who expressed the view that there was a need to address wider issues. He made the point that the youth in the Birchills area would not make the short trip to the North Walsall area and that there was also a need for youth provision in the Birchills area. Councillor Barbara McCracken endorsed Terry Edis's comments regarding the youth not being prepared to travel from Birchills to the Butts area. She was aware that the Department was looking at specialist provision within the Butts area but the reality of that was very remote. There was no youth provision in the Butts area and there was a need to be local and to understand the mentality of the area. At present, the Service was not meeting the needs of the community and not taking note of their needs. She added that the premises identified would be a border facility but would only accommodate that area. In reply, Dave Haq advised Members that

work was continuing outside the People's Place. The Youth Service were committed to employing detached youth workers to engage with those in other areas covered by the Ward. He indicated that the Service would be happy to explore other options regarding facilities in other areas. With regard to the People's Place and its location, this was an issue outside the Youth Service and it was assumed that the drugs issue was within Police hands.

Andrew Moulton suggested that there was a need to consult with the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership to sort out problems in the area. Dave Haq confirmed that the Youth Service had a duty to safeguard its employees and confirmed that there were links with the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership. Angela Carr confirmed that the Service was talking to youths on the street and Dave Haq indicated that the Youth Service had a commitment to keep the LNP up-to-date with what was happening in the field.

The point was made that both Caldmore Housing and WATMOS produced a monthly newsletter which could be used to keep the LNP, and residents of the area covered by the LNP, informed of progress on this issue.

Paul Leighton then referred to the possible use of the Hatherton Road car park by the community as a play area outside car park opening hours. He referred to the report, particularly the practical issues which needed to be overcome, and expressed his view that the proposed use of the Hatherton secure car park was not satisfactory. He advised Members that he would continue to work with the Youth Service on these issues and to try to address the Youth Service concerns. He felt that the Service should be looking at alternative provision.

On the question of the possible use of the Post Office owned secure car park in Hatherton Street, Members were advised that, from the security point of view, the Post Office had declined the LNP's request.

Andrew Moulton expressed the view that people and parents of the area would be willing to engage on the youth issue but expressed the view that it would alleviate the lack of youth provision if the Council-owned car park could be used, otherwise, ASBOs would increase.

In view of obvious concerns regarding youth provision in the area, it was **agreed**:-

- (i) That officers would meet informally with LNP Members representing the Butts area to discuss the issues raised;
- (ii) That the Youth Service be asked to provide information to the next meeting on its approach to youth provision generally in the area covered by the LNP.

**(b) Stephenson Avenue, Beechdale/Beechdale Regeneration Partnership**

A briefing report was circulated:-

(see annexed)

**Resolved**

That the briefing report be noted.

**(c) Civic Quarter - Disabled Parking Bays**

A briefing report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

**Resolved**

That the briefing report be noted.

**(d) Outstanding Issues**

The report of the Head of Democratic Services was submitted:-

(see annexed)

**Resolved**

That the report be noted and that with regard to traffic problems in Caldmore, it be noted that a further report on this issue would be submitted to the January, 2006 meeting, that report to include clarification of the double yellow lines issue and also traffic problems in West Bromwich Street as well as Caldmore High Street.

78/05

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

79/05

**Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted.

80/05

## **External funding**

Mike Gaffney, Non-statutory Funding Source Manager, was in attendance at the meeting to give Members a presentation on external funding options. Mike explained that he was part of an external funding team employed by Walsall Council, the other members being Andrew Rainsford and Suresh Pala who, between them, have in excess of 40 years experience of funding, Trusteeship, project management and delivering training.

Mike explained why there was a need for the external funding team and emphasised the need to stretch budgets, to resource the delivery of Walsall's vision, to maximise EU funding streams and to enable access to other funding streams by community/voluntary groups. He went on to say that this would be done through UK Government discretionary streams, EU funding streams - post 2006, UK non-statutory funding streams and, by working as a team, enabling connection of funding opportunities. This would be carried out across the Borough, through LNPs, through partners (where needed) and wherever else it was identified. He added that this would be done through a funding newsletter, through surgeries, through site visits and by telephone/e-mail or letter. On the question of surgeries, he advised Members that surgeries had been arranged for each of the individual LNP areas and that for the St. Matthews and Birchills/Leamore LNP area, a full day surgery (from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) would be held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2005 at the Central Library.

Mike indicated that he was the contact officer for the St. Matthews and Birchills/Leamore LNP as he would attend each LNP meeting and any funding group meetings. He advised Members that a document entitled "Funding Toolkit for Local Neighbourhood Partnerships" was available on request from the External Funding Unit which was based at the Lily Hall, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall.

There followed a period of questioning, during which, Mike indicated that the External Funding Team were working closely with the CEN. He also advised Members that with regard to non-charitable organisations, the External Funding Team could help on the skills situation. In answer to a question from a member of the public regarding funding for schools, Mike indicated that the External Funding Team could not help in relation to funding for buildings but could assist with other elements.

In conclusion, Members welcomed the implementation of the External Funding Team and the work that they were doing.

81/05

## **Children's Centre - Presentation**

It was noted that the presentation on this issue was deferred to the January, 2006 meeting.

**Funding priorities for action**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

**Resolved**

- (1) That with regard to individual projects:-
  - (a) Social Cohesion Programme - studying project between Beechdale Primary School and Croft Community Primary School - recommend allocation of £2,000;
  - (b) Rat on a Rat Campaign - development costs for leaflet campaign in relation to this project, noting that the campaign relates to anti-social behaviour and is not linked to the Police campaign of the same name which relates to drugs issues - recommend allocation of £1,500, project to be co-ordinated by Terry Edis and Robert Blower;
  - (c) Lichfield Street Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme - it is noted that this project is being funded by other means;
  - (d) Overflowing bin by bus stop near Sainsbury's - it is noted that this project has already been dealt with;
  - (e) Promote Caldmore's new balti restaurant belt - consideration of this project deferred;
  - (f) Advertising board, corner of Green Lane, Birchills Street - it is noted that the board has now been removed and that arrangements have been made for the removal of the concrete stanchions;
  - (g) Alley gating Schemes
    - With regard to Mary Street, Gladstone Street, Northcote Street, Hospital Street, Croft Street and Lewis Street, it is noted that a report will be going to Cabinet in November and it is anticipated that these will, eventually, be funded through the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership - defer until outcome of Cabinet report known;
    - Bigger alleyways (behind Mary Street, Croft Street and Lewis Street) - officers to be advised that this LNP would want these to be actioned as a matter of urgency;

- Leamore precinct - it is noted that closure was not a suitable option due to the close proximity of a vehicle gate and the fact that it is a well used cut-through to the flats;
  - That any other alley gating schemes not approved for funding by other means be referred back to this Local Neighbourhood Partnership for consideration;
- (h) White goods and bulky items removal - it is noted that this issue has now been dealt with and that Street Pride have agreed to proposals. Terry Edis undertook to provide a letter he had received from Street Pride to the LNP Team;
- (i) More local management of housing and greater control of how resources are deployed in the area - it was noted that a Task Group to discuss the housing strategy took place on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2005;
- (j) Commission a report into homelessness problem - it was indicated that this should be part of the Boroughwide strategy - recommend no allocation;
- (k) Birchills playing field - Members felt that as the land was still part of the school playing field, it should be looked at strategically - recommend no allocation and the LNPs disgust at the continued state of the land be registered with the appropriate Service Manager;
- (l) The Beechdale Bayou Project - Councillor Carol Rose reported that the information given in the report was not correct due to the fact that a feasibility study had already been undertaken - defer consideration of this project pending an updated briefing note to include a breakdown of costs.
- (2) That the progress to date on the projects be noted;
- (3) That the LNP review progress at the next meeting in January, 2006;
- (4) That it be noted that each project will be formally assessed by the LNP Project Team to ensure that they meet all of the agreed criteria;
- (5) That it be noted that each project will be passed to the relevant Council officer who will liaise with the Project Champion when required.

83/05

## **Partnership Plan and feedback from Task Groups**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Andrew Moulton referred to an issue raised at a previous meeting regarding the survey of dropped kerbs provided and the need for dropped kerbs within the area covered by the LNP. He made the point that there were insufficient people available to undertake the survey. It was suggested that Building Regulations (including the DDA) be examined to assess the minimum standard for dropped kerbs and that LNP facilities/resources could be utilised to assist with this project.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That with regard to the issue of dropped kerbs, a more detailed briefing note be provided for the next meeting in January, 2006;
- (2) That LNP Members continue to attend the workshop meetings;
- (3) That individual LNP Members continue to encourage wider participation from community members within the Task Groups;
- (4) That the progress of the Transforming Your Space Scheme be noted;
- (5) That the dates of future Task Group meetings be noted;
- (6) That, in consequence of the above, the LNP undergo a Partnership Plan review.

84/05

## **Training and Development Issues**

There were no training and development issues raised.

85/05

## **Public Forum**

With the approval of the Partnership, the following persons addressed the meeting:-

### **Maureen Woodcock**

Mrs. Woodcock reminded Members that she had previously addressed the Partnership on the issue of the road between the two sides of the Blue Coat School, of which she was Chairman of the Governors. She had asked whether there were any proposals to close the road. She had received a letter back from the Council saying that there was no



proposal to close but subsequent to this letter, the Highways Section had commented and had gone away to try to find out how they can have temporary barriers erected on the road to prevent problems. A response was awaited.

Rev. Sims suggested that a relatively simple solution could be to extend the pedestrian crossing to the area where the problems occurred.

It was **agreed** that the issue raised by Mrs. Woodcock be supported and that a response from the Highways Section on the issue be awaited.

**Terry Edis**

Mr. Edis asked why Green Lane could not be opened now from the Police Station to Birchills Street in view of the fact that the roadworks appeared to have been completed in that particular area. It was **agreed** that officers be requested to obtain the necessary information.

**Councillor McCracken**

Councillor McCracken asked that for future meetings, Public Forum be held at the start of the meeting and not at the end.

**Resolved**

That with effect from the January, 2006 meeting, Public Forum be held at the start of each meeting.

86/05

**Date and venue for next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the LNP would be held on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2006 at Butts School, Butts Road at 6.00 p.m.

**Termination of Meeting**

The meeting terminated at 7.36 p.m.

Chairman .....

Date .....