

**Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall & Sheffield Area Panel**

**Monday 23 November 2015 at 6.00 pm**

**At Pelsall Village Centre, High Street, Pelsall, WS4 1EU**

**Present:**

Councillor G. Perry (Chair)  
Councillor S.R. Craddock (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor C.E Clews  
Councillor K. Ferguson  
Councillor M.A. Longhi  
Councillor L.J. Rattigan  
Councillor S. Wade  
Council R.V. Worrall

**Officers in attendance:**

Laura Terry – Area Manager  
Beverley Mycock – Committee Business & Governance Manager

**Others in attendance:**

Gary Fulford- Group Chief Executive, WHG  
Karen Marshall- Director of Governance and Compliance, WHG

134/15      **Apologies:**

There were no apologies submitted.

135/15      **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015 were submitted.

(see annexed)

**Resolved**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member, be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

136/15      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

137/15      **Local Government Access to Information Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be discussed in private session.

138/15      **Restructuring of WHG's Board**

The Chair welcomed the Group Chief Executive and the Director of Governance and Compliance from WHG, who gave a verbal update to the Area Panel in relation to the proposed changes to WHG's Governance Model.

Before reporting on the Governance and the restructuring of WHG's Board, the Group Chief Executive gave an overview of WHG which included:

- Owning and Managing over 20,000 properties across Walsall
- Pledged £150 million to develop new homes before the end of 2020
- More than 650 employees, making it one of Walsall's largest employers
- Since forming in 2003, WHG have:-
  - Invested over £400 million in their homes and service
  - Built 1001 new homes costing £97 million
  - Spent £3 million on energy efficiency
  - Fitted 17,818 new kitchens, 17,079 bathrooms, installed 15,225 new heating systems
  - Replaced windows in 16,636 properties
  - Invested £2 million in a CCTV control room

The Group Chief Executive advised the Area Panel that WHG's Corporate Plan 2014-2024 sets out the strategic aims of the company, one of which was to have in place a Governance Model which was fit for purpose to support its growth and needs.

He further advised the Area Panel that all Housing Associations (including WHG) were regulated by the Homes and Community Agency (HCA), and that the HCA had set Governance Standards in its own Code of Governance which had to be complied with. He stated that WHG had commissioned an independent review to examine its Governance arrangements, which had been carried out by Campbell Tickell, an established consultancy company which had resulted in a

number of recommendations to the WHG Board to ensure its Governance met current regulations.

The Group Chief Executive gave a number of examples of the Governance changes WHG needed to address in order to comply with the HCA's Code of Governance, which included:-

- Reducing the size of the Board
- Ensuring sufficient independence of the Board
- Ensuring the required skills and expertise of the Board Members
- Replace Local Committees with:
  1. Customer Services Committee
  2. Customer Scrutiny Panel- independent of Governance arrangements
  3. Customer Network- range of customers to be involved

The Chairman thanked the Group Chief Executive and the Director of Governance and Compliance from WHG for their verbal update in relation to the restructuring of the WHG Board

139/15

## **Funding Report**

The joint report of the Area Manager and Partnership Manager was submitted. (See annexed)

The Area Manager presented the report and stated that previously approved applications plus new applications for consideration had been broken down in to wards, as requested at the Area Panel Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

The Area Manager requested the Panel to consider seven applications totalling £8,747.95 put forward for approval as follows:

### **1. Elmwood School- Parental Engagement**

This application had been deferred at the previous Area Panel Meeting to invite the applicant to attend and explain the application in detail.

Miss Bailey, Family Welfare Officer and Mr Hubbard, Senior Management Team were in attendance. They gave an overview of the school and explained that the funding application was to provide additional computers to be used by pupils in accessing information for their Post 16 College places, enabling them to complete online application forms, CV's and to carry out research, as well as enabling parents and carers to become proactive and in turn boosting self-esteem.

Response to a query as to whether the computers would be available for use by anyone within the community, Mr Hubbard stated that in time it was anticipated that a separate room would be set up independently from the main school which would allow usage of the computers by members of the community.

**2. Pelsall Village Football Club- Football Development Plan- Under 7's Team**

To provide sustainable training and development programme to build upon healthy lifestyles, personal skills and awareness of community and responsibility to be agreed in the sum of £2,400.00.

**3. Walsall CA Bowling Club- Improving engagement and well-being through bowling**

To improve the facilities used for community bowling sessions- full surface and improved notice board to be agreed in the sum of £845.00.

**4. Friends of Pelsall Common- Community Involvement in Pelsall's Commons**

Maureen Paynton from Friends of Pelsall Commons advised the Area Panel the funding would purchase a commercial quality gazebo and to provide a publicity campaign to encourage people's involvement and to educate in the protection of Pelsall Commons. The application to be agreed in the sum of £580.00.

*Councillor Ferguson left at this juncture of the meeting*

**5. Brownhills 2nd Explorer Scouts Development**

Mr Curry from the Brownhills 2nd Explorer Scouts attended the Area Meeting to present the above funding application in detail. He explained that Scout Groups were open to both boys and girls up until the age of 14 years and therefore to enable young people to continue to participate in scouting activities after the age of 14, the Brownhills 2nd Scout Group was looking to establish an Explorer Scout Unit. He reported the funding would provide equipment specific to various schemes, for example Duke of Edinburgh awards and Young Leader Projects to be agreed in the sum of £1,575.

6. **1444 Brownhills Air Training Corp: Duke of Edinburgh Project**

Funding application to purchase equipment to establish a routine maintenance schedule to improve grounds within Brownhills Community and St James' Church as part of the cadet's Duke of Edinburgh award to be agreed in the sum of £547.95.

*Councillor Wade left at this juncture of the meeting*

7. **Area Partnership One Libraries: Board/Table Top Games at your Library**

Funding to provide a variety of board games to all libraries across the partnership to increase the appeal of the libraries to be agreed in the sum of £300.00.

Members considered the project applications within the report and it was resolved (unanimously).

That:-

1. Elmwood School- Parental Engagement Project would be approved in the sum of £2,500.
2. Pelsall Village Football Club Project agreed in the sum of £2,400.
3. Pelsall CA Bowling Club- Improving Engagement and Well-being through bowling project be agreed in the sum of £845.
4. Friends of Pelsall Common- Community involvement in Pelsall's Commons Project be agreed in the sum of £580.
5. Brownhills 2nd Explorer Scouts Development Project be agreed in the sum of £1,575.
6. 1444 Brownhills Air Training Corp- Duke of Edinburgh Project be agreed in the sum of £547.95.
7. Area Partnership One Libraries: Board/Table Top Games at your Library be agreed in the sum of £300.

140/15

**Area Manager Report**

The Report of the Area Manager was submitted. (See annexed)

The Area Manager introduced the report and a couple of queries were raised in relation to paragraph 5.2 of the report (active steps, Brownhills and Rushall) and the Area Manager stated she would make enquiries in relation to where the funding had been cut.

After further discussion it was:-

**Resolved**

That the Area Manager Report be noted.

141/15

**Dates and Venues for future meetings**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 at 6.00pm at Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy, Boadway, High Heath, Pelsall, WS4 1BW

**Termination of meeting**

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 6.55pm.

Chair:.....

Date:.....