

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Monday 8 June 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

Panel Members present Councillor L. Harrison (Chair)
Councillor C. Creaney (Vice-Chair)

Officers present Jamie Morris Executive Director –
Neighbourhood Services
Clive Wright Director, Walsall Partnership
Chris Holliday Head of Leisure and Culture
Craig Goodall Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

01/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors D. Pitt, M. Pitt and I. Shires.

The Chair noted that the Panel did not have a quorum. Craig Goodall advised Members present that the meeting could continue in an advisory capacity if desired or adjourn until such time that a quorum was present.

The meeting adjourned at 6.01 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6.00pm on Wednesday 17 June 2009

Panel Members present Councillor L. Harrison (Chair)
Councillor C. Creaney (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Z. Ali
Councillor P. Bott
Councillor D. Pitt
Councillor M. Pitt
Councillor I. Robertson
Councillor I. Shires

Officers present Sue Grainger – Head of Libraries and Heritage
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

02/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

03/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest and party whip in respect of items on the agenda.

04/09 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Craig Goodall highlighted the available training opportunities for Members.

Resolved:

Craig Goodall to establish if a recording of the West Midlands Local Government Association 'Scrutiny Skills' session can be made available.

05/09 WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

Members considered and agreed their work programme for the year ahead and learnt about the Panels new responsibilities for scrutinising crime and disorder.

Craig Goodall explained the Panel now had the power to consider crime and disorder related issues that were the responsibility of the local crime and disorder reduction partnership – Safer Walsall Partnership. He explained that the Panel had a range of powers over and above their regular scrutiny rights concerning the 'responsible authorities', namely:

- Walsall Council
- West Midlands Police
- West Midlands Police Authority
- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
- NHS Walsall

The powers related specifically to these bodies and can be summarised as:

- requiring reports
- requiring officer attendance at meetings
- requiring a response to recommendations within 28 days
- power to co-opt representatives the 'responsible authorities'

He reported that the Home Office guidance strongly suggested that crime and disorder scrutiny panels should co-opt a member of the local police authority. Members agreed with this suggestion and requested that at least one of Walsall's two Operation Command Unit Police Commanders was co-opted as well to provide an operational perspective in addition to the strategic perspective provided by the police authority member. The Panel noted that the appointment of co-opted members would need to be agreed by Council. In addition to this the Panel requested that Chris Sims, Chief Constable, West Midlands Police be invited to a future meeting to talk about changes to West Midlands Police and the impact that this will have locally.

The Panel were also happy with the suggestion in the report to develop a protocol between themselves and Safer Walsall Partnership on how the new scrutiny relationship will operate in practice.

A Member requested more information regarding the responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Justice Co-ordinator and of the Community Crime Finder Scheme.

The Panel considered the proposed items included in the agenda papers. The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

- Libraries

Members agreed to consider the impact of the libraries modernisation programme.

- Alcohol related anti-social behaviour

The Panel agreed to establish a working group to consider this large area. The Panel noted the desire to investigate binge drinking and how a change of attitude to alcohol use could be encouraged.

Councillors: C. Creaney, M. Pitt, I. Robertson and I. Shires were appointed to the working group. A Lead Member would be identified at the first meeting of the working group.

- Bryntisilio

Members were keen to consider the full costs of the facility, including potential renovation costs. The Panel also expressed the wish to visit the site before considering it at a Panel meeting.

- Community association leases

The Panel noted that it was desirable to consider this item as progress with the implementation of the new leases had stalled. As part of the report it was requested that details of the Councils policy on what action would be taken if a local community association was set to fail be included.

It was also agreed that community action tasking and councillor call for action reviews be included on the work programme. The suggested item on leisure centre strategy was not agreed to be included.

The Panel considered the Forward Plan and requested the Community Safety Plan be considered before any decisions were made by Cabinet.

The Panel agreed to appoint the Chair to the Welfare Advice Provision Working Group being operated by the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

The Panel agreed for Councillors Creaney, Bott and D. Pitt to oversee any work resulting from the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group that had been operated by the former Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel. Members also agreed that Councillor Creaney would present the report of the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group to Council on 6 July 2009.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. the West Midlands Police be invited to nominate co-opted representatives to the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel;**
- 2. West Midlands Police's Operations Command Unit Commanders for Walsall be invited to become co-opted representatives on the Community Services**

Scrutiny and Performance Panel, subject to at least one Commander becoming a co-opted representative;

- 3. a protocol defining the relationship between the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel and the Safer Walsall Partnership be developed;**
- 4. Chris Sims, Chief Constable, West Midlands Police, be invited to the next meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel to discuss proposed changes to West Midlands Police and their impact on Walsall;**
- 5. further information be provided to the Panel on the role and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Justice Co-ordinator;**
- 6. further information be provided to the Panel on the Community Crime Finder scheme;**
- 7. minutes of Safer Walsall Partnership Board meetings be circulated to Members of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel following each meeting;**
- 8. Councillors P. Bott, C. Creaney and D. Pitt be appointed to oversee any work resulting from the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group;**
- 9. Councillor C. Creaney to present the findings of the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group to Council on 6 July 2009;**
- 10. Councillor L. Harrison be recommended to the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel for appointment to the Welfare Advice Working Group;**
- 11. the following items be added to the work programme for the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel:**
 - i. Effects of the libraries modernisation scheme;**
 - ii. Bryntisilio;**
 - iii. Community Action Tasking;**
 - iv. Councillor Call for Action**
 - v. Community Association Leases;**
 - vi. Community Safety Plan;**
 - vii. Domestic Violence Unit;**
 - viii. Walsall Partnership Business Plan;**
 - ix. Alcohol related anti-social behaviour working group;**
- 12. Councillors C. Creaney, M. Pitt, I. Robertson and I. Shires be appointed to the alcohol related anti-social behaviour working group;**
- 13. Panel Members be provided on the possibility of financial incentives being introduced to encourage the return of cans and glass for recycling.**

The meeting terminated at 7.12 p.m.