

PELSALL AND RUSHALL LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Wednesday 13 October 2004 at 6.00 pm

at Pelsall Methodist Church Hall, Chapel Street, Pelsall

Present

Inspector Jack Ashley
Councillor Ault
Mr. Ron Carpenter
Councillor Griffiths
Mrs Margaret Hayes
Mr. Robert Hughes
Mr. Neil Jones
Councillor Longhi
Mrs Isabel Mason
Councillor Mrs Micklewright
Mr. Colin Payton
Councillor Perry
Mr. Brett Quinton
Mrs Ann Rice
Mr. James Thomas
Councillor Walker

13/04. **Introductions**

Each member of the Partnership introduced themselves to the meeting.

14/04. **Apologies**

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Mrs. Attfield and the Support Team Officers, Mr. T. Blyde and Mr. K. Dawson.

15/04. **Appointment of Locally Appointed Partners**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the persons listed below be appointed as Locally Appointed Partners (LAPS) on the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership for the remainder of the municipal year 2004/05:-

Ann May Rice
Margaret Hayes
Brett Quinton
Neil Jones
Colin Payton
Ron Carpenter
Isabel Mason
James Thomas
Robert Hughes

16/04. **Appointment of Chairman**

Councillor Ault queried whether it would be possible to hold a secret ballot for the election of the Chairman.

In reply, Mr. Williams said that there was no specific provision for a secret ballot and it was particularly important for the Panel to be seen as open and democratic in its proceedings set in the context of a public meeting. He then asked for nominations for Chairman.

It was **MOVED** by Mrs Hayes and duly **SECONDED** that Councillor Garry Perry be nominated as Chairman of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership for the remainder of the municipal year 2004/05.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Walker and duly **SECONDED** that Councillor Al Griffiths be nominated as Chairman of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership for the remainder of the municipal year 2004/05.

Members of the Partnership then voted on the nominations, Councillor Griffiths receiving 9 votes and Councillor Perry 7 votes.

It was therefore:-

Resolved

That Councillor Al Griffiths be appointed as Chairman of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership for the remainder of the municipal year 2004/05.

17/04. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 12 August 2004, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17/04. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

18/04. **Presentation – Local Neighbourhood Partnership**

Councillor Griffiths gave a brief presentation to the Partnership and the members of the public present on Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

Councillor Griffiths explained that Walsall Council had launched 9 LNPs in the Borough to work with local residents and to discuss progress on key community issues. It was intended that the meetings with the Council and its Partners would help local people become more involved in matters that affected them in the area where they lived. He said that a map showing the extent of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership was displayed in the meeting room.

Councillor Griffiths said that all LNP meetings would be open to the public and each LNP would meet once every three months. The Council would actively make all Partnership meetings as accessible as possible to the public and, if advanced notice was given, would provide interpreting and translation facilities. Details of dates, times and venues of meeting would be available on the Council's WEB site or by contacting Ward Councillors or the relevant Council officer for each Partnership area. He said that Council officers would attend meetings of the Partnership to give advice, answer questions and take a record of the decisions made.

Councillor Griffiths said that all LNPs would produce a local plan for their area which would highlight local priorities and key issues. Background information, statistics and maps would be made available so that LNP members could make informed decisions on their local vision for the future. Each LNP would manage and monitor its local plan which would be consistent with the vision of the Council and Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership. He said that short term task groups and theme groups would be set up to take forward key issues in respect of each LNP plan.

As part of the development of the Local Plan, Councillor Griffiths said that extensive consultations with local residents, businesses, service providers and voluntary and community groups would be held to ensure that they had an input into the preparation of the plan.

In conclusion, Councillor Griffiths said that it was important for members of the public to become actively involved in the work of the LNP by participating in the preparation of the Local Plan and by attending LNP meetings.

19/04. **Petitions**

Councillor Mrs Micklewright handed in the following three petitions:-

- (1) Installation of lighting in gully leading from Stanley Place to Daw End Lane, Rushall (44 signatures);
- (2) Residents of Chatsworth Crescent, Rushall (with gardens backing on to recreation field) erection of barrier/style (as recommended by the Police) to prevent motor cyclists gaining access to the field via the canal tow path; also blocking off of foot access from tow path through the gap in the hedge to enable the hawthorn hedge to grow back over it (12 signatures);
- (3) Installation of pathway from Windsor Grove, across the park to Spring Lane, High Heath, Pelsall (177 signatures).

Resolved

That the issues referred to in the petitions submitted by Councillor Mrs Micklewright on behalf of the residents be investigated by the relevant Council service area and that the result of these investigations be reported back to the Local Neighbourhood Partnership.

20/04. **Public Forum**

Mr. Brian Sheersby of Commonsides, Pelsall

Mr. Sheersby queried the arrangements for the Pelsall and Rushall LNP meetings. He said that the first indication he and his wife had that a meeting was to be held on 13 October had been the previous week. He said that they were very interested in what happened in Pelsall and they were concerned about the lack of publicity that there had been for the meetings. He also requested that the newly appointed Locally Appointed Partners introduce themselves to the meeting.

Mr. Williams said that advertisements for the meetings of the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships had appeared in the local free press and the Express and Star. He said that advertisements had also been placed in the local press during the summer for people to apply to become Locally Appointed Partners.

The Chairman said that publicity for the meeting was something that he wished to refer to later in the meeting. He agreed that it was very important for meetings of the LNP to be properly publicised to ensure that as many members of the local community as possible were able to attend.

In response to Mr. Sheersby's request, he then asked the newly appointed Locally Appointed Partners to introduce themselves to the meeting.

Mr. Hughes said that he was employed by the Aldridge, Brownhills Housing Trust and had considerable experience working with other agencies and organisations.

Mrs Rice said that she was secretary of Rushall Local Committee and a member of Rushall Community Centre. She said that she had been involved in community affairs for many years.

Mrs Mason said that she was Chair of Rushall Residents Association, a member of the Committee at Rushall Community School and a representative of the Police Consultative Committee.

Mr. Quinton said that he had lived in Pelsall for 10 years and was a local business man who had supported community and charitable events and had an active role in several local committees. He said that he had worked with the Pelsall Pride Partnership and local Police initiatives.

Mr. Thomas said that he had lived in Pelsall for nearly 20 years and was involved in many local initiatives including the Local Neighbourhood Watch.

Mr. Jones said that he had lived in the Pelsall, Rushall and Shelfield area for the past five years and was involved with several committees and local organisations in the area including Pelsall Carnival Committee, Pelsall Fun Run and Pelsall Open Garden scheme.

Mr. Payton said that he was an active member of the Friends of Pelsall Common and Pelsall Rose Village Committee and had lived for 39 years in the area, 36 years in Pelsall and 3 years in Rushall.

Mrs Hayes said that she had lived in Rushall all her life, had served on Rushall Local Committee and the Autumn Drive Residents Association and was involved in various other activities such as helping to run a pensioners lunch club.

Mr. Carpenter said that he was Vice-Chairman of Pelsall Carnival Committee, Secretary of Pelsall Fun Run, a committee member of Friends of Pelsall Common and Chairman of Rushall, Shelfield and High Heath Association. He said that he had lived in Pelsall all of his life and had been involved in many activities in the village area.

Mr. Webb, Avon Crescent, Pelsall

Mr. Webb said that residents in the area were experiencing problems with heavy vehicles going to and from the estate building site at the rear of their properties. He said that lorries were travelling at speed down Goscote Road and the residents were concerned that an accident could occur and someone could be knocked down.

As a point of information, Councillor Longhi said that as part of the conditions of any major planning application it was usual for the developer to be required to maintain the roads used to a satisfactory condition. If damage was caused, the developers would be expected to put things right at the conclusion of their work on the site. He said that he would be astonished if this sort of provision was not included in this particular planning application. He said that it was almost certain that the developers would also be obliged to carry out improvements in the local area in accordance with section 106 legislation under which funding was made available by the developers for improvements in the area. With regard to the problem with heavy lorries, Councillor Longhi said that there were weight limits on these vehicles and Inspector Ashley might wish to comment on enforcement laws in this respect. He commented that there had also been complaints from local residents about speeding heavy lorries in Mill Road and Fordbrook Lane in Pelsall.

Inspector Ashley said that he would ask Officers to carry out a road survey in respect of speeding lorries in the area. He said that he would speak further to Mr. Webb about this at the end of the meeting.

Mrs Catherine Harrison, Avon Crescent, Pelsall

Mrs Harrison referred to anti-social behaviour and asked for information about a public meeting which had been arranged to address residents' concerns.

Councillor Perry confirmed that a meeting had been arranged at 6.00 pm on 14 October 2004, at Pelsall Neighbourhood Office with local residents and that representatives from the Walsall Housing Group and the Police would be attending the meeting.

21/04.

Transforming Your Space

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The report was introduced by the Chairman. Kauser Agha the Transforming your Space co-ordinator, was in attendance to answer members' questions. She said that the Transforming your Space programme had a budget of approximately £2.7 million and that £1.7 million of the funding had been secured through a Big Lottery fund grant of £1.7 million. The Transforming your Space programme would have a borough wide impact and young people, in particular, would directly benefit through access to improved play and recreation facilities.

Kauser Agha referred to details of the Transforming your Space programme in the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area which were set out in the report. The schemes had been identified as a result of feedback from parents and young people, Friends of Park Groups and a working group of officers. The schemes identified were:-

High Heath Park, Play area improvements and youth provision;
Highfield Road North (Pelsall Common);
Ryders Hayes play area;
Sheffield Park

Kauser Agha said that the schemes were anticipated to be on site in June 2005 and completed in approximately September 2005. Preceding this there would be a detailed consultation/engagement stage to ensure that the final designs met with the requirements of the community. She said that the Panel was asked to note the details of the Transforming your Space programme in Walsall and to endorse proposals for the Pelsall and Rushall LNP to include these in the final Local Neighbourhood Plan.

Mrs Isabel Mason asked why Rushall had been omitted from the list of schemes. She said that play areas in Rushall badly needed transforming.

In reply, Kauser Agha said that proposals to improve play areas in Rushall had been approved by Brownhills and Aldridge North District Committee in April 2003. She apologised for omitting any reference to this in the report.

As a point of information, Councillor Perry said that he was the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure. He said that the Transforming your Space scheme was a very welcome initiative that would improve the play areas across the borough. He said that the previous Leisure Services Committee looked at the issue of play areas but because of the lack of funding had had to make a decision to restrict the updating of play areas in the borough to two a year. Transforming your Space funding

would provide an excellent boost for play and youth schemes but officers in Leisure Services would also be working closely with officers in Regeneration with regard to schemes in the borough not covered under the Transforming your Space programme.

Referring to Mrs Mason's comments, Councillor Perry said that similar comments had been made to him in the past and he had met with officers about two years ago to discuss play areas in Rushall. He was aware that the two play areas in Rushall needed to be investigated in order to complete areas that had been missed under the Transforming your Space programme. Progress on this would be reported back to the Panel. He stressed that the Transforming your Space funding was in addition to existing schemes and monies raised by individual groups and through other funding programmes.

In respect of Ryders Hayes, Councillor Perry said that there were many problems there with anti-social behaviour. Progress had been made to rectify this by the erection of a fence and the imposition of an alcohol ban. Following consultation with local residents it had been agreed to move some of the shrubbery to make the area more visible and to close access from St. Paul's Crescent, which was where the majority of complaints were from.

With regard to Highfield Road North, he said that he and the Friends of Pelsall Common were concerned about the problems on the north side of the common where there had been incidents of vandalism. He said that residents in the Wood Lane area had requested play area provision. This would not affect the Transforming your Space funding already agreed for a skate facility and multi-sport goal ends in Highfield Road North. He said that £40,000 of section 106 funding would be available when it was released by Persimmon in respect of the Leylands Farm development.

Mrs Hayes referred to the maps attached to the report, High Heath Park and Shelfield Park. She said that they were not two parks but two separate areas and for both to be listed under Shelfield was a misconception. She queried whether the drainage problem at High Heath Park had been taken into consideration. Over £5000 land fill funding had already been spent there but there were still problems. With regard to the play area for High Heath Park, Mrs Hayes said that this had come about as a result of consultations with Spring Close residents many years ago and this was still ongoing. She referred to the planned youth shelter and said that it would be wrong to be negative about this. The beauty of the Transforming your Space scheme was that it focused not just on the needs of children but on the youth element as well.

Mr. Thomas said that it was important for the shelter to be made visible. He said that in a lot of areas in the community, for example, Leylands Farm, youths had found places to congregate out of the way and thus out of view. This meant that they could spot Police coming from a long way

off. He said that the community must be able to see what was going on and it was important to take this aspect into account when it was discussed where to site the shelter as otherwise there would be problems with anti-social behaviour.

Mr. Thomas was supported in this view by Councillor Perry who said that it was important in all areas where money was spent for local residents, including young people who lived near the parks to take ownership of the play areas and open spaces. He believed that vandalism and graffiti would be a big issue for the Partnership.

Councillor Ault asked if the Transforming your Space plans could be shown on the WEB site and in local libraries so that the local community could see the proposals for themselves.

In response Kauser Agha said that when the Transforming your Space schemes were taken out for public consultation there would be displays in local libraries.

In summing up the discussions, the Chairman said that it was also important to involve the Police and the elderly people in the community in the consultations. He said that the LNP members might wish to consider putting their suggestions forward for inclusion in the Local Neighbourhood Plan.

Resolved

That the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

- (1) Note the details of the Transforming your Space in Walsall;
- (2) Endorse the proposals detailed for the Pelsall and Rushall LNP and include these in the final Local Neighbourhood Plan

22/04.

Local Neighbourhood Plan

The report was introduced by the Chairman.

Councillor Longhi apologised and said that unfortunately he would be unable to attend the work shop which followed the meeting. He referred once again to his concerns that the timescale was tight and that the dates for producing the plan were unrealistic. He said that for the plan to be meaningful there must be more flexibility. He said that if the plan was not to fail then more time was needed to produce something that was worthwhile and that would allow representatives of the local community to make their own contributions.

The Head of Neighbourhood Partners (Julie Ball) said that when the first guidance for the Local Neighbourhood Plan came out it was recognised that it was a very ambitious timescale. In the revised guidance this had been addressed and she believed the plan would evolve as it was developed. She said that it was important to highlight the key issues and her team was working with local communities in the Pelsall and Rushall area to achieve this. She said that it was important for a way of working to be agreed. She hoped that quick wins and actions would emerge and there was support from her team to help this happen. She said that more details of this would be given in the workshop following the meeting and consultants would be on hand to facilitate the discussions.

Councillor Perry said that the Local Neighbourhood Plans were important as they would dictate where and how local services were delivered in the areas of Walsall. It was important to stress that members of the Partnership should not “over pledge” themselves about what they could deliver to the public in Pelsall and Rushall. What the Partnership set out to achieve must link in with the main vision of the Council, for example, to achieve a clean and green borough and improve educational attainment in schools. He said that the aims of the Partnership must be meaningful to local residents of Pelsall and Rushall.

In summing up the discussions, the Chairman said that it was up to the Partnership to put as much effort as it could into achieving improvements in the Pelsall and Rushall area and making positive changes that would benefit the whole community.

Julie Ball said that at all previous LNP meetings, the Partnerships had offered to let the public stay if they wished to take part in the workshop following the meeting.

The Chairman said that any members of the public who wished to stay for the workshop would be very welcome.

Resolved

That the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

- (1) Note the revised guidance on producing the first Local Plan;
- (2) Note the outlined details of the planned work shop following the conclusion of this meeting.

23/04.

Publicity for Pelsall and Rushall LNP

The Chairman said that in conversation with Julie Ball he had been told that there were funds available that the Partnership could use. He referred to the comments made by members of the general public earlier in the meeting about the lack of publicity for the times of meetings of the

LNP. He said that he was great believer in communicating with as many residents as possible and in leaflet drops. He considered it might be useful, if funds were made available, for leaflets to be printed and distributed to residents in Pelsall and Rushall informing them of the dates and times of LNP meetings. In this respect, he suggested that the Partnership appoint a publicity officer to be responsible for producing the leaflets. His view was that this should be one of the locally appointed partners rather than an elected member.

Councillor Perry said that the Council did have a press office that was responsible for publicity for the LNPs.

The press officer for the Pelsall and Rushall LNP (Hannah Sutcliffe) was present at the meeting. She said that she would be helping to find new ways of publicising the LNP meetings and what was happening in the area and she would be happy for someone from the LNP to be her contact and to provide feedback information to her. She said that she would welcome working closely with whoever was appointed and looking at the whole question of publicity for advertising meetings.

The Chairman asked whether any of the Locally Appointed Partners wished to take on this role.

Mr. Ron Carpenter said that he would be happy to do this. It was therefore:-

Resolved

That Mr. Ron Carpenter be appointed as publicity officer to work with Hannah Sutcliffe of Walsall Council Press Office in publicising meetings of Pelsall and Rushall LNP and other activities in the LNP area.

24/04.

Vacancy on Local Neighbourhood Partnership

Inspector Ashley said that there was only nine Locally Appointed Partners appointed. He understood that the vacant place had been left open for a young person to fill. He questioned how it was intended that this would be done.

Mr. Thomas said that he welcomed the proposal to appoint a young person to the vacancy on the Partnership as it was important to get the views of young people and to have someone who spoke with them and listened to their concerns.

Julie Ball said that one of the priorities of her team was to engage with young people in all LNP areas. She said that they would be asking them what they wished to see happen in their area. There was a Youth Opinion Unity Steering Group in Walsall which covered all areas of the borough

and her team was looking at ways as to how they could be linked into forums such as Pelsall and Rushall LNP.

Inspector Ashley said that he was working with the Air Cadets on a survey as part of a consultation process involving a wide range of people in the community. He said that everyone in the community was affected by the issues involving young people. He said that when the survey was completed the feedback would be reported to the Partnership. He suggested that perhaps the Partnership could invite one of the young people to the meeting to present their views to members.

Julie Ball said that the Partnership might wish to consider forming a youth sub-group or forum for the area so that their views could be brought to the wider group of the LNP.

Councillor Perry said that the local beat bobbies were setting up crime panels linked to schools in the area. It might be possible to broaden this to youth crime panels who could bring suggestions back to the LNP. He was concerned that a young person might find it daunting to sit in an environment such as a meeting of the LNP.

Mr. Thomas said that some members of the LNP might be willing to act as mentors for young people who wished to become involved with the LNP.

Termination of meeting

There being no other business, the meeting terminated at 7.20 pm.