

Community Association Funding

Working Group Report

**Community Organisation Leisure and
Culture Scrutiny & Performance Panel**

Autumn 2005

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

In my role of Chairman of the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel, and more so as a Ward Councillor working in the community, I fully support the work that has been carried out. The Group has not rushed its scrutiny, having to take account of the impact of the Youth Ofsted findings and the Council's budget allocation.

As set out in the Vision, local people, community organisations and voluntary groups want their Council to listen more to local views and concerns, and to act on what it hears. This issue was identified by the scrutiny panel as a case of responding to what local people want.

The matter of Community Association funding is controversial and the group have approached the issue methodically to scrutinise what is happening and to explain it simply in this report. The findings of the Group offer suggestions of the way to respond to the public concerns about maintaining and improve community provision.

Community Associations are an integral part of the community and play an important part in the social structure.

The Group has made a number of recommendations asking the Cabinet to look creatively at alternative methods to fund community provision, to try to endeavour to mend the funding shortfall for under 13year olds and for the elderly and to find a way to maintain activities for all the community in community associations in their neighbourhoods.

The scrutiny panel look forward to seeing how Community Organisations receive this report and whether it will really make a difference. How it will impact on the way Community Organisations, Local Neighbourhood partnerships and the Council communicate to develop closer links, exploring ways of ensuring a greater understanding of local needs and to continue of working together in the community into the foreseeable future.

Councillor Chris Towe



Chairman of Community Organisation Leisure and Culture scrutiny and performance panel

LEAD MEMBERS COMMENTS

I agreed to lead on this area of work and wanted to highlight the importance of continuing to support work in the community.

The work group came about because the scrutiny panel recognised the concerns of members and the general public relating to a reduction in funding to Community Associations. Members felt that less funding would result in less provision to the public and may mean closure of some services that provided a safe environment for all ages, especially the elderly, and they recognised that for many people Community Associations provided their only regular outside contact.

As you will see from the findings in this report, scrutiny members have looked at a range of information and have tried to raise awareness of the issues relating to Community Association funding.

I am pleased that Cabinet recognised the Panels concerns about resources raised by scrutiny during the budget consultation process and that it saw fit to allocate £250,0000 additional funding, however, the work group recognises that this amount does not fill the funding gap and that there is still work to be done. Members should be aware that the additional funding is in the process of being distributed and that many Community Associations have used this in a positive way to help develop business plans.

The scrutiny process has highlighted some excellent work in the Community being carried out by Community Associations and that much of the work is of a non statutory nature involving many unpaid volunteers, particularly work with under 13 and over 19 year olds. Members recognised that there is still a need for funding for much of this work.

I am hoping from our recommendations that in future Community Associations work more closely with Local Neighbourhood partnerships and the Council, and that the quality work carried out by the Community Associations continues into the foreseeable future.

It is obvious to this work group that Community Associations will play an important part in meeting the Councils Vision 2008 and in doing so will continue to provide both statutory and non statutory services to the community and the people of Walsall.



Councillor Kath Phillips

Lead Member, Community Association Work Group

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION WORKING GROUP

The members of the Community Association working group consist of selected members from the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

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3.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 The main legislative provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to scrutiny are set out in the constitution and empowers overview and scrutiny panels and their members to review and/or scrutinise decisions made by cabinet and council officers in relation to key decisions, actions carried out within the remit of the council and the performance of the council in relation to targets and policy objectives.

3.2 Walsall MBC commits to a vision which is unique and special to Walsall because it is based on the views, wishes and needs of local people. It is shared and supported by our partners, our staff and our members and is underpinned by targeted actions to provide a firm foundation for the future – for the borough and for the council. The vision:

- Focuses the efforts of all the employees of the council on the issues that matter to citizens
- Ensures we put resources firmly behind their priorities
- Strengthens our joint working with our partners to deliver the overall community strategy for the borough
- Enables local people and our partners to judge how well we are doing and whether we are achieving our objectives.

The vision priorities are:-

- Ensure a clean and green borough
- Make it easier for people to get around
- Ensure all people are safe and secure
- Make our schools great
- Make Walsall a healthy and caring place
- Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall
- Make it easier to access local services
- Strengthen the local economy
- Listen to what local people want
- Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority

3.3 The provision of a sufficient Youth Service is a statutory requirement of local authorities under Section 508 of the Education Act 1996, with additional powers in the Education Act 2000. Under the requirements of Transforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Services each local authority is expected to ‘provide the strategic leadership for the whole youth service’. It is also a government requirement that youth work, as defined by the report, is delivered by all local authorities.

3.4 This scrutiny has been carried out in accordance with the arrangements detailed in part 4 of the constitution of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (amended September 2003). This is the report of the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Changes in youth and community funding had been highlighted by the Children's lifelong learning and Culture scrutiny and performance overview and scrutiny panel in a report to panel 15th April 2004.

4.2 The report to scrutiny set out the principles under which Youth and Community services delegated budgets to Community Partner Organisations. There were concerns raised about the new arrangements and the implications for some aspects of Community Association activities. It was agreed to establish a working group between the Council and the Walsall Federation of Community Organisations to look into the situation and come up with findings and possible recommendations. This group was different to the scrutiny work group.

4.3 The Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel was established in June 2004 and at its first meeting gave consideration to the work programme for 2004-5, members recognised the concerns of the previous scrutiny panel and agreed to look more closely at Community Association funding.

4.4 A Scrutiny work group was established and at the first meeting members received information as follows:

- Copy of the Transforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Services and subsequent guidance from the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, Ofsted and the National Youth Agency
- Current funding position
- Advised of the work officers had been carrying out with the Walsall Federation of Community Associations (WFCO).

4.5 Members were told that whilst the level of allocation of resources to the Youth Service has not been changed, the more prescriptive approach to youth work contained within Transforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Services document has resulted in new challenges for Walsall and the Community Associations.

Members were advised of the following:-

4.5.1 In 2004/05, £3,196,892 was allocated to the Youth Service of which £2,261,645 was delegated to Community Associations and voluntary youth organisations. The government indicated that Walsall Youth Service receive £3,225,517 in 2005-6, which is equivalent to £132.96 per 13-19 year old. It is expected that this funding be spent on the Youth Service.

4.5.2 Funding was also available for Adult and Community Learning via the College of Continuing Education from the Learning and Skills Council. This funding supports the continuation of this aspect of the Community Association's work. New contracts were issued for 2004/05 and to date 23 out of 33 organisations have accepted the contracts.

4.5.3 As the funding allocated needed to be spent on the clearly defined area of youth work, a funding gap resulted for some Community Associations in other aspects of their work, including

the 'core costs' of building and programme management. Preliminary investigation revealed that there were significant differences in levels of those based on school sites. Further work is being undertaken in arriving at reasonable levels of resourcing for these costs.

4.5.4 The funding gap will vary from organisation to organisation but it was estimated that it will be in the region of £600,000 across the borough. Discussions we carried out between the local authority and Community Organisations and advice and support was given to obtain alternative sources of funding wherever possible but it was expected that some shortage would still exist.

4.6 Remit of the Working Group

4.6.1 Primary

To undertake a mapping exercise and gap analysis, which identifies the potential funding gaps to services currently provided by Community Associations as a consequence of the "Transforming Youth Work – resourcing excellent youth services (2002)" government specification for an excellent youth service, with a view to reducing or removing any adverse impact upon existing levels of service.

4.6.2 Secondary

To investigate current charging policies and practices of schools to Community Associations for the use of their facilities with a view to reducing the impact upon Community Associations.

4.7 Some of the fundamental lines of inquiry suggested were:

- What is it about Community Associations that make them a valuable asset to the work of the authority and the people of Walsall?
- What particular skills do they have in the delivery of activities such as youth provision (in accordance with Government guidelines) and adult and community education?
- What value do they add to these activities and the life of the communities in Walsall?
- Why should the authority continue to fund the Community Associations?
- Should we undertake a detailed cost benefit analysis?
- If the Community Associations merit continued support should the authority seek to fund the gap between the 100% delivery of statutory functions and the delivery of community services?
- If so, how can this gap be met?

Members identified areas for further scrutiny and requested further information

4.8 At the scrutiny panel 27 October 2004 further information was received relating to the Governments transforming youth work agenda for bringing services into line in accordance with Best Value performance. It detailed the work that has been undertaken by Walsall

M.B.C. and Walsall Federation of Community Organisations to meet the changing demands of the Transforming Youth Work agenda for the Youth Service and the funding implications for Community Associations. It confirms the direction that Walsall has taken in adopting the Transforming Youth Work principles and highlights some financial issues for other services that Community Associations wish to deliver.

5.0 Evidence Considered

5.1 The working group received a range of information to give members greater detail and to help members gain knowledge and understanding of the current position:-

- Rent costs
- Partner organisations in LNP areas
- Delegated youth budgets for 2004/06
- Analysis of youth and community funding gaps for 2005/06

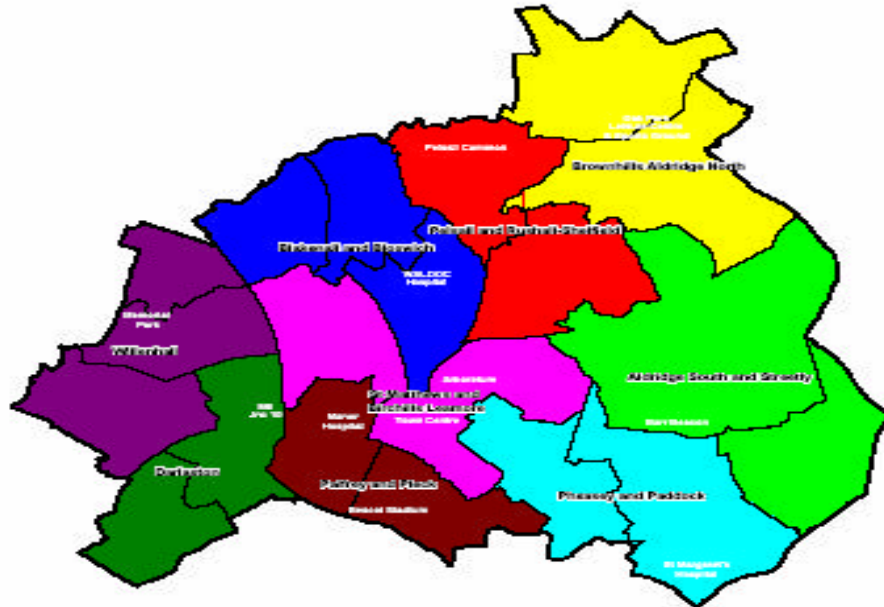
5.2 The information provided to members indicated that the rent costs to each community association situated in school buildings varied enormously, but did not show how much space the CA used and how often rooms / buildings were used. This prompted members to suggest that further research was needed to establish whether rents charged by schools could be standardised.

The table below indicates that rents paid to schools varied from £9500 for Albion CA to £120000 for Brownhills CA.

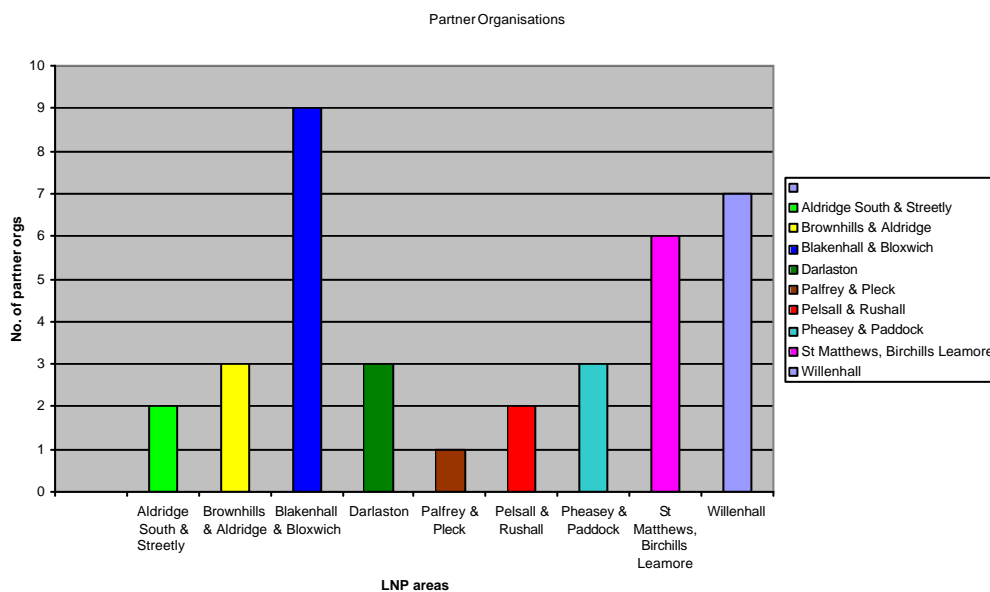
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – PREMISES COSTS PAID TO SCHOOLS	
Albion Community Association	£9500.00
Alumwell Community Association	£107129.00
Barr Beacon Community Association	£96100.00
Birchills Community Association	£28000.00
Brownhills Community Association	£120000.00
Darlaston Community Association	£40000.00
Forest Community Association	£50000.00
Frank F Harrison Community Association	£89000.00
Manor Farm Community Association	£60000.00
Palfrey Community Association	£64000.00
Park Hall Community Association	£11655.00
Pool Hayes Community Association	£49440.00
Shelfield & High Heath Community Association	£50000.00
Sneyd Community Association	£65000.00
Croft Community Association	£23000.00
Total	£862824.00

5.3 Members were advised of the location of partner organisations with in the borough

Walsall LNP Areas



The Local Neighbourhood Partnership areas (LNPs) above respond to the graph below which indicates the number of partner organisations in each of the LNP areas.



5.4 The table below details the partner organisations for each LNP area.

LNP Area	Partner Organisations
Aldridge South & Streetly	Streetly Community Association Aldridge Manor House
Brownhills & Aldridge	Brownhills Community Association Clayhanger Community Association Avenues Community Association
Blakenall & Bloxwich	Blakenall Community Association Bloxwich Community Partnership Bloxwich East Senior Citizens Green Rivers Community Association (disbanded 2004) Forest Community Association Ryecroft & Coalpool Community Association Frank F Harrison Community Association Beechdale Centre Dudley Fields
Darlaston	Darlaston Community Association Moxley Peoples centre Old Hall Peoples Partnership
Palfrey & Pleck	Palfrey Community Association/ Highgate
Pelsall & Rushall	Manor Farm Community Association Shelfield-High Heath Community Association
Pheasey & Paddock	Barr Beacon Community Association Collingwood Community Association Park Hall Community Association
St Matthews, Birchills, Leamore	Alumwell Community Association Birchills Community Association Croft Community Association African Caribbean Community Association Caldmore & Whitehall Community Association Walsall Black Sisters Collective
Willenhall	Sneyd Community Association New Invention Forum Willenhall Sports College Pool Haynes Community Association Willenhall Chart Centre Albion Community Association Rosehill Community Association

5.5 The next table details the funding gap analysis for each of the areas and organisations

ANALYSIS OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY FUNDING GAPS FOR 2005/6

AREA/ORGANISATION	BUDGET 2004/5	Under 11s %	Under 11s £	Subsidised Youth %	Subsidised Youth £	Comm. Development %	Comm. Development £	Total Funding Gap %	Total Funding Gap £
Area 1 Partnership - Brownhills/Clayhanger/Avenues	178376	11.40%	20335	7.82%	13949	2.34%	4174	21.56%	38458
Area 2 Partnership - Manor Farm/Shellfield	130585	24.74%	32307	3.52%	4596.592	6.18%	8070	34.44%	44973
Area 3 Partnership - T.P.Riley/Bloxwich East Senior Citizens Association/Green Rivers	182472	21.30%	38867	1.00%	1824.72	3.30%	6022	25.60%	46713
Area 4 Partnership - Blakenhall Forest Ryecroft & Coalpool	53734 62734 24982	22.10% 4.58% 18.46%	11875 2873 4612	0.00% 20.97% 4.61%	0 13155.32 1151.67	1.77% 23.57% 0.00%	951 14786 0	23.87% 49.12% 23.07%	12826 30815 5763
Area 5 Partnership - Frank F Harrison/Beechdale/Dudley Fields	102280	24.17%	24721	6.54%	6689.112	23.93%	24476	54.64%	55886
Area 6 Partnership - Pool Hayes/Sneyd/Furzebank Area/ Willenhall School Sports College	179776	19.70%	35416	5.99%	10768.58	0.38%	683	26.07%	46868
Area 7 Partnership - CHART Centre/Rosehill Albion	105258	17.82%	18757	0.00%	0	3.68%	3873	21.50%	22630
Area 9 Partnership - Darlaston/Moxley/Old Hall/Bentley	275578	23.60%	65036	4.85%	13365.53	4.71%	12980	33.16%	91382
Area 10 Partnership - Alumwell/African Caribbean/Birchills/Croft	260363	27.84%	72485	0.88%	2291.194	0.00%	0	28.72%	74776
Area 11 Partnership - Palfrey/CAWCA/Pleck/Walsall Black Sisters/ Joseph Leckie	179694	30.93%	55579	6.10%	10961.33	8.79%	15795	45.82%	82336
Barr Beacon/Collingwood Partnership Park Hall Community Association	127952 76436	13.37% 39.61%	17107 30276	0.00% 0.00%	0 0	3.51% 0.00%	4491 0	16.88% 39.61%	21598 30276
Aldridge Manor House	53764	23.16%	12452	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	23.16%	12452
Streety Partnership - Streety/Blackwood Road	85290	10.57%	9015	13.35%	11386.22	0.00%	0	23.92%	20401
TOTALS	2079274	333.35%	451713	75.63%	90139	82.16%	96301	491.14%	638154

5.6 Representatives of Walsall Federation of Community Associations gave a short presentation at the Scrutiny Panel meeting and discussed the issues raised with members. Officers were requested to work with the WFCO to address issues raised and particularly to work with schools on behalf of WFCO to consider rents and leases issues. Officers agreed to write to WFCO to offer support in finding a fairer charging structure.

5.7 Next working group meeting members were advised that WRCO had declined the offer of support from officers and continue to negotiate rents on an individual basis.

5.8 The work of the Community Association Work group was delayed due to the Youth Ofsted inspection and the decision to wait and see what actions were identified and how they would impact on this area of work. Members were advised that the initial findings had shown that there had been some good progress.


5.9 During consideration of the budget at full panel members advised that they had identified a funding gap and were disappointed that the group had not fully completed its work to make firm recommendations to Cabinet. Members were advised that NRF funding had been re-allocated to ensure funding for year 2005-6 and that an additional funding of £250,000 had been allocated in the draft budget to bridge the funding gap. Members made Cabinet members aware of the funding gap at the meeting and through the scrutiny of the budget.

5.10 Members were advised of the Youth Ofsted report findings and held a special meeting with the portfolio holder to discuss the draft report. Councillor Phillips invited a member of staff from Goscote Neighbourhood Resource Centre to inform the portfolio holder and members about the conditions and lack of resources for the community in Goscote. Members recognised that each area had to be looked at and assessed on its individual needs. The portfolio holder and officers agreed to go to visit Goscote Resource Centre as a matter of urgency to address to assess the current issues.

5.11 The Scrutiny panel had identified a funding gap and raised awareness of this and other issues to Cabinet and portfolio holders during the budget process. Members agreed to hold a final meeting to summarise its findings.

FINDINGS

1. The work group found that the concerns of members and public had raised several areas for scrutiny to investigate and make suggestions to improve community association provision for everyone, especially those outside the core age group 13-19 identified by the government to receive funding.
2. The working group identified that there was a short fall of funding for services that fall outside the core funding for 13-19 year olds. They recognised that this was not a decrease in funding but a change made to the way funding was allocated through the transforming youth work agenda.
3. The work group identified that excellent services were being provided by some CAs to the community
4. The working group identified that there was variation in the quality of provision by Community Associations and also that some organisations were more accountable for public funding than others. The working group has found that this year systems have been put in place for council officers to go out and monitor.
5. The working group identified that there was a huge range of fees charged to Community Associations for use of school buildings and that there was no clear charging policy as they were all based on historic and individual agreements. Consultation with Walsall Federation of Community Associations (WFCO) was declined as Community Associations wanted to negotiate individually with schools.
6. Members recognised that there is not enough funding for services such as day care for both young and elderly that provides a forum for learning life skills that need to be fully utilised and would not otherwise exist.
7. The work group considered the concerns of the Walsall Federation of Community Organisations (WFCO) that the change in funding from the council may cause the collapse of the Community Association service. There has been one closure as a direct result of the funding changes and currently nine seconded officers have been put at risk at the following Community Associations :-
 - Pool Hayes
 - Blakenall
 - Darlaston
 - Palfrey
 - Alumwell
 - Frank F Harrison

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8. The work group met with people who work within a Neighbourhood Resource Centre. They found that listening to the way things actual operate gave them an insight into the pressures for paid workers and volunteers due to a lack of support, funding and managerial skills. Members recognised that without leases there is no chance of raising funding and that the amount charged for lease can cause the collapse of Community Associations. Members felt that the rent should be or should remain a peppercorn rent. The panel recognise the amount CAs do to maintain and improve council buildings.
 9. Members identified that there seemed to be a communication problem between Community Associations and queried whether WFCO was truly representative of all organisations in the Borough.
 10. Members found that there is no single model for how Community Associations operate and that every area differs in provision of services to the community. Each CA has bespoke projects to meet the needs of the Community in which they serve.
 11. Members found that not all Community Associations want to deliver youth work as prescribed by the government and that there had been a number of Community Associations opting out of youth work with accredited outcomes, but were continuing to provide youth activities without outside receipt of youth service funding.
 12. Members found that not all Community Associations providing youth activities receive youth service funding and that some organisations were receiving funding from elsewhere for elderly and the young.
 13. Members identified that Community Associations operate as individual organisations in the community and they were concerned that they do not interact with each other and recognise that some work closely in partnership working.
 14. They noted the number of organisations in each Local Neighbourhood Partnership area (LNP) and recognised the potential for them to work in conjunction with their LNP and the Council. From an event between LNP team and seconded staff some excellent work was discussed and created, this work is at risk. It was noted that the LNP is the funding arm and the CA is the delivery arm, the partners need to work together to provide the service. Without the seconded officers the service will be severely reduced and without the partners the funding may not be available.
 15. Members identified that CAs are not run by Walsall council and that most have Registered Charity status, some have Limited Company by guarantee status but that they all compete with each other for external funding opportunity and for service users.

Members found that many CAs re-invest into their own organisation and have stronger monitoring systems in place and that the way they are run has an impact on the community. Although independent bodies they tend to be over reliant on Walsall Council support and funding.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

The issue of Community Associations and Youth provision was complicated.

Members of the work group felt that a lot of information had been gathered and considered. They agreed that a greater understanding of the issues around Community Associations and funding issues had been the result of this work.

The findings have highlighted areas of concern which the Scrutiny Panel should consider when making any recommendations.

Members felt there were still areas of concern in particular:-

- Funding
- Provision for 'other' Community Associations Services for elderly citizens
- Communication issues in particular CA links to other CAs, LNPs and the Council.

Members also felt that the by bringing the funding gap to Cabinets attention additional funding had resulted and all CAs had been given opportunity to apply for up to £13,000 of sustainable Community funding, and all but one CA did apply.

The money has been used in most cases to develop a plan which will help them to demonstrate sustainability of the organisation and where appropriate enter into negotiation about leases.

In the long term CAs have got an opportunity to look at the way they deliver their services through business plans and examples of this can be reported back to future scrutiny panels.



RECOMMENDATIONS

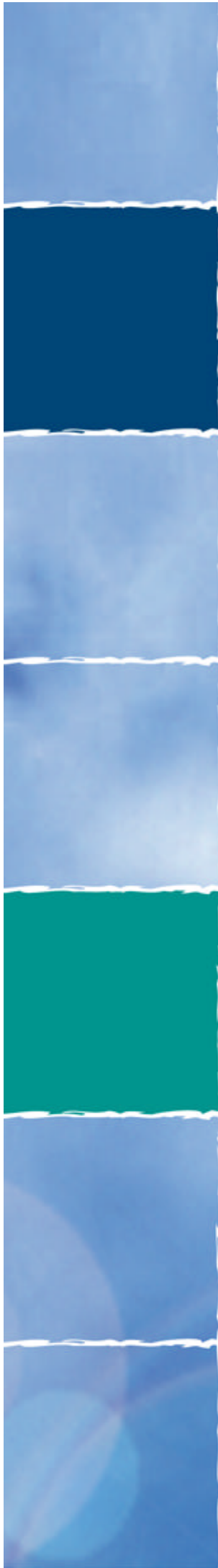
The working group recommends that Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel note the work of the work group and consider making recommendations to Council

1. That the Cabinet continue to adopt a consistent approach to negotiating with Community Associations on a one to one basis
2. That Cabinet note the criteria for accessing Community Development funding to meet the vision 2008 and request that appropriate funding be identified for service provision for activities that are not covered by statutory criteria.
3. That Cabinet promote a closer working relationship between Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Community Associations and encourage greater attendance at LNPs and participation in relevant theme groups if appropriate.
4. That appropriate quality control mechanisms are in place in all aspects of Community Association provision where Council funding is received.
5. That appropriate quality control mechanisms are in place in all aspects of Community Association provision where Council buildings are in use by CAs and that appropriate mechanism to protect the fabric of the building be put in place.
6. That funding to CAs continues at an appropriate level to service provision in activities which are not covered by statutory criteria.
7. That Cabinet recognise that if Community Association provision in the Community does not continue due to lack of funding or lack of staffing for specialist projects , the Councils vision priorities may not be achieved. Members indicated the importance of the Community based Community Cohesion agenda and the role that Community Associations play in the community.

List of Documents and Information considered by the Community Association Working Group

Documents

1. Notes of the Community Association Working Group from 11 October 2004.
2. Notes of the Community Association Working Group from 10 November 2004.
3. Notes of the Community Association Working Group from 10 December 2004.
4. Notes of the Community Association Working Group from 24 January 2005.
5. Notes of the Community Association Working Group from 15 February 2005.
6. Notes of the Community Association Working Group from 15 March 2005.
7. Minutes of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel from 27 October 2004.
8. Minutes of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel from 9 December 2004.
9. Minutes of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel from 27 January 2005.
10. Minutes of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel from 23 February 2005.
11. Minutes of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel from 5 April 2005.
12. Walsall MBC Document "Youth Service – Report to Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel", 16th October 2003 (author John Darnbrook).
13. Department for Education and Skills Document "Transforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Service".
14. Letter to Youth Services from Rt. Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Minister for Children, Young People and Families, 3rd December 2003.
15. Local Authority Youth Service Operational Planning 2004-05: Good Practice Guidance.

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16. Scrutiny Community Association Working Group Proforma, 11th October 2004
 17. Minutes of the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel, 15th April 2004
 18. Letter from Andy Driver, Principal Youth Officer to Barry Dutton, Chairperson, Walsall Federation of Community Organisations, 10th September 2004.
 19. Letter from Walsall Federation of Community Organisations to Andy Driver, 21st October 2004.
 20. Walsall MBC, Lifelong Learning and Community: Management Information System, Form Completion Guide.