

ALDRIDGE AND BEACON AREA PANEL

Tuesday, 3rd December, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

**at St. John's Parish Church, High Street, Walsall Wood, Walsall,
WS9 9LP**

Present

Councillor Towe (Chairman)
Councillor Rochelle (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor A. Andrew (arrived at 6.05pm)
Councillor Bird (arrived at 6.05pm)
Councillor Flower
Councillor Harris
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Sears
Councillor Wilson

29/13

Welcome and Apologies

Each Member of the Area Panel and the officers present introduced themselves.

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Douglas-Maul and Murray.

30/13

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 1st October and 25th October, 2013, copies having previously been circulated to each Member, be agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

31/13

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

32/13

Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items on the agenda which required the exclusion of the public under this Act.

33/13

Participatory Budgeting

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Partnerships Officer presented the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein.

The Partnerships Officer gave a live update on the result of the public vote which had been running up until the commencement of the meeting. She informed the Panel that the winning scheme was Broadmeadow (1) with 31 members of the public voting in favour and 1 against.

The Group Manager (Road Traffic Network) advised that the Council's Design Team would now commence the process of designing a scheme with a view to maximising the amount of spaces for car parking. In addition, he advised that the local residents would be consulted before the design was finalised and subsequently submitted to the Planning Department for consideration / approval.

A resident, who was in attendance in connection with this scheme, requested that consideration be given to providing access to the properties as part of the design. The Group Manager (Road Traffic Network) stated that he would request the Design Team to consider this proposal when planning the design.

Resolved

That the Broadmeadow (1) scheme be approved for implementation, subject to the necessary checks and permissions required.

34/13

Funding Report

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Area Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein.

Members considered and discussed the project application funding requests, as set out in Appendix 1.

Members were minded to approve the applications set out with the exception of the 'Train the Trainer' project as Members had reservations in light of the fact that Housing 21 were currently out to consultation on proposals to cease operation.

Additionally, Councillor Bird requested that, in relation to the 'Promoting Community Activities in Pheasey' project, the Area Manager also looks at extending this provision to the Pioneer as well and negotiate a better overall price for this addition. The Panel also felt that, in view of the fact that there appeared to be a lack of understanding in relation to the Area Panel and what it did, the Area Manager could also endeavour to negotiate, as part of this package, free publications in the identified medias promoting the dates/times/venues of the Area Panel meetings for the next 12 months as well as Councillor details and the purpose of the Area Panel.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Area Manager advised that the remaining money left in the Area Panel's budget needed to be spent by the end of March, 2014.

Resolved that:-

1. funding for all of the project applications, as set out in appendix 1 to the report, be approved with the exception that the 'Train the Trainer' project be refused for the reason identified above;
2. in relation to the 'Promoting Community Activities in Pheasey' project, the Area Manager, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to negotiate a deal extending the advert to include the Pioneer as well, including any additional associated costs.
3. The Area Manager also negotiate free publications in the identified medias promoting the dates/times/venues of the Area Panel meetings for the next 12 months as well as Councillor details and the purpose of the Area Panel.

35/13

Ongoing Updates on the Actions for Aldridge & Beacon Area

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Area Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein.

Referring to 4.5 of the report, Councillor Flower requested an update on the proposed installation of a new Youth Shelter in Walsall Wood. The Area Manager advised that he believed that it had been delayed due to issues around the siting of the new Oak Park Leisure Centre. Following further deliberations on the matter, Councillor Harris agreed to pursue the matter outside the meeting and report back to the next Panel meeting.

In relation to Minute No. 20/13, a general discussion arose in relation to 3.11 of the report regarding Hay Head Wood. Councillor Towe, Bird and Rochelle expressed their discontent in relation to the longevity and continuance regarding the incidents of unacceptable inappropriate behaviour still occurring at the site. It was reported that the closure of

the gate had had an effect on the level of inappropriate activity at the site. However, it had not resolved the problem and had only dispersed it to other nearby areas.

Members expressed their disappointment and exasperation towards the police as they felt that they had abdicated their responsibilities and had not addressed the underlying problems at this site and surrounding areas. The matter of contention was that of a criminal matter and the Panel's powers, at best, could only ever seek to alleviate the problem. The power to properly and fully resolve the matter lay with the Police. In view of this, the Chair and the Area Manager agreed to speak with the relevant Chief Superintendent outside the meeting with a view to resolving the problem permanently by way of police presence and arrests / convictions. The Chair advised that he would report back to the next Panel meeting on any progress.

Referring to 4.23 of the report, Councillor Flower expressed his disappointment at the Walsall Police Amateur Boxing Club being relocated to a site within Blakenall, although he understood the reasons for doing so.

Further discussions ensued on this matter during which the Panel reached agreement that the money awarded in relation to vouchers for young people to use at the Boxing Club, now be re-designated / rebranded for use with other youth provisions in the area.

Resolved that:-

1. the report be noted;
2. Councillor Harris undertake to resolve the issue in relation to the Youth Shelter in Walsall Wood and report back to the next Panel meeting;
3. the Chair and Area Manager undertake to contact the relevant Chief Superintendent in relation to the problems being experienced at Hay Head Wood with a view to resolving the problem permanently and report back to the next Panel meeting;
4. the Area Manager be authorised to re-designate / rebrand the £3 vouchers previously purchased for use with the Walsall Police Amateur Boxing Club for use on other youth provisions within the area.

36/13

Vote of Thanks

The Area Panel wished to have its thanks recorded in the minutes in relation to the venue, St John's Church, and to the Reverend, Nigel Carter, for providing the facilities and hospitality for the Panel meeting, for which it had been free of charge.

37/13

Dates and venues for future meetings

The dates and venues for future meetings was noted.

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 6.55 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: