



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Oswestry Local Joint Committee
3 December 2009
6.30pm

<u>Item/Paper</u>
7
Public

OSWESTRY LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE

**NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 7.00 PM
IN THE CAMBRIAN ROOM, MEMORIAL HALL, SMITHFIELD STREET, OSWESTRY**

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Mr Martin Bennett (Chairman)	Shropshire Council
Mr Bill Benyon	Shropshire Council
Mr Vince Hunt	Shropshire Council
Mrs Elaine Channon	Oswestry Town Council
Miss Betty Gull	Oswestry Town Council
Mr Gareth Jones	Oswestry Town Council

Officers:

George Candler	Assistant Director, Learning and Culture, (Lead Officer)
Arren Roberts	Corporate Performance Improvement Officer (Support Officer)
Kate Garner	Team Leader, Community Regeneration (North)
Nicki Young	Community Regeneration Officer (North)
Kevin Humphreys	Learning, Employment and Training Services
Kairen Francis	Job Centre Plus
Richard Sheehan	Chamber of Commerce
Inspector Jim Stafford	West Mercia Police
Michelle Evans	Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services (Notes)

There were approximately 45 members of the public at the meeting.

ACTION

1. Welcome, Introduction and Chairman’s Statement

1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Committee members. He explained that there were a few formal items on the agenda which were just for the Committee Members, however the rest of the meeting would be more informal and public input would be welcomed.

2 Community Strategy

2.1 The Chairman introduced the Director of the Shropshire Partnership who gave a brief presentation on the draft Community Strategy Consultation. She urged the public to write their comments on the post cards which had been circulated, which illustrated some of the key issues.

2.2 The Chairman thanked the Director of the Shropshire Partnership for her presentation and underlined the importance of responding to this and other consultations.

3. Apologies for Absence

- 3.1 Apologies were received from Mr Keith Barrow (Shropshire Council).

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 Mrs Elaine Channon declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Applications B and C (Agenda item 8) as she was the Town Council's representative on the Youth Café Management Committee, she also declared a personal interest in Application G (Agenda item 8).

- 4.2 Miss Betty Gull declared a personal interest in Application G (Agenda item 8).

5. Notes of the previous meeting

- 5.1 **AGREED:** That the notes of the meeting held on 1 July 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. Feedback from Local Joint Committee Meeting held on 1 July 2009

- 6.1 The Chairman explained that a draft work programme had been developed using the responses gathered at the previous meeting.

- 6.2 The Support Officer then gave an update from the first meeting and firstly thanked those who took part in the workshop. Overall 126 comments had been received highlighting what was good or not so good about Oswestry. These comments had been collated and gave a view of some of the issue that members of the public wished to have as future agenda items, for example, the local economy and environmental issues (cleaner, greener, safer streets etc). The public were requested to let the Committee know of any other items they wished to discuss on a future agenda.

7. Partners and Communities Together Meeting (PACT)

- 7.1 The Chairman introduced Inspector Stafford who updated the meeting on issues raised at the previous meeting, as follows:

- Drag Racing on Morrisons Car Park

Inspector Stafford reported that this had not been identified as a major problem. A recent event had been held there to respect the deaths of three people on the Oswestry to Ellesmere Road.

- Anti Social Behaviour in Cae Glas Park

Inspector Stafford explained that patrols of the park were ongoing and all CSOs in Oswestry were working in the evenings to try to make an impact.

- Community Speedwatch

Inspector Stafford explained how the Scheme worked. It was hoped to roll the scheme out again with certain conditions. Previous volunteers would be asked if they wished to undertake additional training.

- Drug dealing by the Fire Station

Inspector Stafford reported that no major drug problem had been identified in this area. However a high profile operation was upcoming in conjunction with the Crime Reduction Partnership.

- Cycling on pavements

Inspector Stafford stated that CSOs dealt with these issues as they came up however it was difficult to prevent.

- 7.2 Inspector Stafford invited members of the public to raise any issues of concern for the Police to address before the next meeting.

Issues raised included:

- Cycling / mobility scooters on Pavements

In response to a query about taking persistent offenders to court, Inspector Stafford explained that the Police had powers to issue fixed penalty notices. The law in relation to mobility scooters was not so clear however.

- Possibility of a 20mph speed limit in town

Inspector Stafford reported that the guidelines stated that sufficient engineering works had to be in place to ensure traffic speed was kept to 20mph. This was likely to be expensive and unpopular and may not be appropriate for a market town.

It was confirmed that this issue would be taken back to the Highways Section.

- Dog Fouling

In response to a query, Inspector Stafford explained that this issue was very difficult to enforce and they did not yet have the Fixed Penalty Notices to issue.

- 7.3 Inspector Stafford updated the meeting in relation to the theft of motor vehicles and shed break ins. He reported that Operation Protect was being rolled out again and CSOs and local officers would be issuing alarms etc and giving advice about security.

- 7.4 Inspector Stafford requested that if any member of the public wished to be involved in the neighbourhood watch scheme to contact the Community Regeneration Officer who would pass their details on.

- 7.5 Inspector Stafford informed the meeting of the 'Not in my neighbourhood week' which would be running from 4 November 2009. There would be a stall on Oswestry Market demonstrating crime prevention equipment and providing advice.

8. Public Question Time

- 8.1 The Chairman explained that feedback had been circulated following the previous meeting and he invited questions from members of the public.

8.2 Questions/comments raised included the following issues:

- Central Car Park

The Chairman explained that a number of planning applications had been received which were likely to be heard by the Strategic Planning Committee in December and would be determined according to planning law. He advised members of the public to contact Shropshire Council direct with any planning related queries.

- Traffic Lights at Middleton Road/Roft Street

The Chairman confirmed that these works were on hold until any planning application was decided but he would request an update from the Director of Development Services.

- Tourism

The Lead Officer explained that this issue would be discussed further at a future meetings.

- Play Area in Cae Glas Park – climbing frame cordoned off

The Clerk to Oswestry Town Council reported that new play equipment had been ordered and would arrive in the next 3 to 4 weeks. The Town Council were also looking to upgrade the play area and costings were currently being prepared.

- A-Boards

In response to a query the Chairman explained that the Highways Section were responsible for A-boards.

8.3 The Lead Officer encouraged members of the public to complete the question cards and feedback forms that had been circulated on the tables and they would be passed on to the relevant officers.

9. Oswestry Community Chest

9.1 Mrs Elaine Channon declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Applications B and C as she was the Town Council's representative on the Youth Café Management Committee, she also declared a personal interest in Application G.

9.2 Miss Betty Gull declared a personal interest in Application G.

9.3 The Committee received the report of the Lead Officer – copy attached to the signed minutes – which considered the applications received by the deadline of 17 August 2009.

9.4 The Support Officer reported a number of amendments to the report as follows:

Paragraph 4 – should read “7 applications had been received totalling £10,111.80”.

Paragraph 5 – should read “6 applications, all of which meet the key criteria, totalling £8,111.80...”.

Paragraph 8 – should read “The bids recommended for agreement total £8,111.80 which is within the available budget. Should the recommendations within this report be accepted then the total amount available for other groups to bid for and which will be considered by Members in December is £7,888.20”.

9.5 It was therefore **AGREED:**

A. That the Oswestry Local Joint Committee allocate funding to those organisations and their projects as set out in Appendix A to the report.

B. That the Oswestry Local Joint Committee defers the decision on whether or not to fund the project set out in Appendix B to the report until the next meeting of the Committee on 3 December 2009.

Mrs Channon and Miss Gull abstained from taking part in the discussion and did not vote.

9.6 It was confirmed that the closing date for the second round of bids was 30 October 2009.

10. Developing the Local Economy in Oswestry

10.1 The Community Regeneration Officer gave a presentation on the Empty Shop Project in Oswestry – copy attached to the signed minutes. She gave a brief history and explained that art projects were being run alongside other events in the town including the School Arts Project and Artists at Work who created art in public places. Landlords could assist these projects by offering temporary rent free leases on empty premises. She went on to highlight the Green Festival which was a global demonstration against the use of CO₂.

10.2 Mr Richard Sheehan from the Chamber of Commerce gave a business perspective and discussed how the Chamber of Commerce could influence change and help the economy to prosper by supporting the business community. He reported however that the take up in Oswestry was the lowest in the County. He urged anyone who was a business owner to get involved.

10.3 Kairen Francis from Jobcentre Plus gave a brief presentation – copy attached to the signed minutes. She highlighted the number of people claiming out of work benefits and the increased support that would be available from autumn 2009. Jobcentre Plus was working with local partners on approaches to apply in Oswestry, focussing on lone parents and people claiming Incapacity Benefit, in order to help them back into work. She explained that they worked with the Chamber of Commerce but needed to discuss how best to promote local businesses. In response to a comment that a lot of people were better off on benefits than working, she stated that they worked with people to ensure that they recognised there was far more to get out of work than just money. She agreed to let the Community Regeneration Officer have details of the recruitment subsidy, an incentive for businesses to participate.

- 10.4 Mr Kevin Humphreys from County Training Services gave an overview of unemployment in Oswestry and an update on the activities taking place to reduce unemployment rates in the Oswestry area. He gave examples of work being done including vocational qualifications, apprenticeship courses and Entry to Employment courses.
- 10.5 The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentations and asked the public for their views on gaps in provisions, areas for partnership working and where small scale funding could make a difference. Issues raised included the following:
- Availability of employment land
 - Future technology
 - Developing an Oswestry Chamber of Commerce
 - Encouraging businesses into town
 - More activities in town
 - Artistic holidays
 - Capitalise on gateway to Wales, iron age hill fort, norman castle etc
 - Identifying the towns' unique selling point.
 - Cultural Strategy for Shropshire being developed
 - Promote 2012 Olympics
 - Promote local events
- 10.6 The Lead Office drew attention to the Discover Shropshire website (www.discovershropshire.org.uk) and stated that these issues would be developed as a future agenda item.

11. Date of Next Meeting

- 11.1 The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and informed them that the next meeting would be held at 6.30pm on 3 December 2009 in Woodside Primary School, Oswestry.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____