



<u>Committee and Date</u> Oswestry Local Joint Committee 14 June 2012 7.00pm
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<u>Item/Paper</u> 6 Public

OSWESTRY LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2012 AT EASTERN OSWESTRY COMMUNITY CENTRE, CABIN LANE, OSWESTRY

7.00PM – 9.05PM

Responsible Officer Michelle Evans

Email: michelle.evans.lads@shropshire.gov.uk

Telephone: (01743) 252727

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Mr Martin Bennett	Shropshire Council
Mrs Elaine Channon	Oswestry Town Council
Mr Romer Hoseason	Substitute, Oswestry Town Council

Officers:

Kate Garner	Community Action Manager, Shropshire Council
Mr Gwilym Butler	Portfolio Holder for Locality Working
Laurel Roberts	The Qube
James Anthony Edwards	Market Development Manager, Shropshire Council
Inspector Stafford	West Mercia Police
Michelle Evans	Committee Officer, Shropshire Council (Notes)

There were approximately 34 members of the public at the meeting.

ACTION

- 1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**
 - 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. A Welcome Note had been circulated which gave a brief explanation and background about the purpose and powers of the meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
 - 2.1 Apologies were received from Mr Keith Barrow (Shropshire Council), Mr Bill Benyon (Shropshire Council), Mr Vince Hunt (Shropshire Council), Mr John Gareth Jones (Oswestry Town Council) and Mrs Val Schofield (Oswestry Town Council).
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
 - 3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

ACTION

4. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 **AGREED:** That the notes of the meeting held on 20 September 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4.2 United Utilities

An update on work being undertaken to clean the Vyrnwy Large Diameter Trunk Mains water supply to Liverpool was circulated (copy attached to the signed Notes).

5 FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 The Community Action Officer updated the meeting in relation to the following items:

5.2 Cars for sale parked on pavements

This issue was being looked into however no action could be taken if the cars were parked on private property. Any particular hotspots would however be looked at again.

5.3 Cars parking on the pavement in Leg Street

This issue would be looked at as part of the larger traffic management study.

6. UPDATE ON CURRENT WORK / GOOD NEWS STORIES

6.1 The Chairman drew attention to the Chatterbox Newsletter which had been circulated and which provided updates from Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council. Any comments on this newsletter should be directed to the Community Action Manager.

6.2 Verbal updates were also provided in relation to Broadband and the former Leisure Centre.

6.3 The Chairman reported that BT were on time with their superfast broadband project and was expected to be available in Oswestry from March 2012. Users could apply for connection via their individual Internet Service Providers.

6.4 The Chairman drew attention to the Oswestry Youth Music Festival taking place between 1 and 4 March 2012 in the Methodist Church and Christ Church.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PACT MEETING (PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES TOGETHER)

7.1 Inspector Stafford gave a brief update on crime in the area. Things were going very well in Oswestry. Since the previous meeting, there had been 14 burglaries which was considered very low.

ACTION

7.2 A lot of effort was being put into burglaries by a dedicated burglary officer and progress was being made, for example, there had been three separate break-ins at a restaurant however the perpetrator had been caught and convicted and was serving a twelve month prison sentence.

7.3 Inspector Stafford updated the meeting in relation to anti-social drivers on Morrisons Car Park. Extra attention had been paid to this area and no complaints had been received since 10 January 2012.

7.4 In relation to a query about the effects of budget cuts within policing, Inspector Stafford confirmed that West Mercia had been in a better financial position and as such had more time to plan for cuts. There had been no cuts in front line staff including CSOs. The opening hours at the Station had however been cut but it was still a 24 hour station and Officer's would be available to see visitors.

7.5 Inspector Stafford reported that the introduction of the new 101 number had been very successful so far.

7.6 Other issues of concern raised included the following:

- Budget Cuts

Concern was raised about how the efficiency of the force could be maintained following a 5% cut in police strength. In response, Inspector Stafford reported that there had been posts cut but these had been non-operational posts. He reiterated that Oswestry had not lost any operational staff. The number of police officers was based on the amount of crime in an area and not on population.

- Crime Levels

A query was raised by a taxi driver based in Oswestry about whether policing could be increased at critical times, for example, from 11pm on Fridays until 5am on Sundays when a lot of anti-social behaviour and violent crimes took place. He also queried borderless policing. In response, Inspector Stafford explained that police officers were moved to peak times and indeed worked double shifts from 10pm until 4 or 5am on Friday and Saturday nights. He went on to explain about borderless policing.

- Taxi Marshalling

In response to a query it was confirmed that Shropshire Council were looking at other sources of funding in order to reinstate this very helpful scheme which had recently been trialled in the town centre.

ACTION

- Replacement CSO

Inspector Stafford confirmed that a CSO had been lined up to transfer from Shrewsbury to Oswestry to replace the CSO who was becoming a Constable.

7.7 The work of CSOs with children and young people in the town was praised.

7.8 The Chairman drew attention to the Police Commissioner elections to be held in November.

8. **LOCALISM ACT**

8.1 The Chairman introduced this item which he hoped would explain the changes that the Localism Act would bring to the role and status of voluntary and community groups and how those groups based in Oswestry could get involved in helping to shape the changes that would happen.

8.2 The Chairman highlighted the Eastern Oswestry Community Centre and the Cabin Lane Whole Life Centre as solid examples of what volunteers could achieve by doing more for themselves and not expecting the 'Council' to do it for them.

8.3 A short dvd was shown followed by a Question and Answer session. Queries raised included the following:

- Would the role of Councillors Change?

Councillor Butler explained that vulnerable people had grown up with and relied upon the welfare state however the Localism Act required a complete cultural change. Communities would need to provide for themselves and would have more control over what happened individually and within communities.

He confirmed that the role of Councillors would change and would be more about consulting the community to find out its needs and enabling them to decide on their own solutions. Indeed how the Town Council worked would also need to change. It would however take a generation for these changes to come through.

- Many volunteer groups were more than ready for the challenges ahead but attitudes had to change. Problems were encountered with the availability and cost of premises to hold groups. For example, groups were no longer able to hold evening meetings in the Library.

ACTION

The Market Development Manager agreed that more buildings needed to be made available and that this issue had been raised within Shropshire Council. Better use of buildings needed to be considered. He felt that the whole approach would have to change especially within the Council but these changes would take time and would not happen overnight.

8.4 In response to a query the Chairman explained that this was the second time the issue had been discussed at meetings of the Oswestry LJC and that he had referred to it on numerous occasions in his newsletters.

8.5 The Market Development Officer felt that the general population did not need to know the detail of the Act, a lot of the regulations for which were, as yet, still outstanding. There would however be fundamental changes to partnerships and priorities for spending by public bodies (eg the Council, BT, Severn Trent etc). The Market Development Manager reported that Shropshire Council were ahead of other Local Authorities and indeed were only the second Local Authority to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy.

8.6 Councillor Butler explained more about the Community Infrastructure Levy whereby the Town Council could deliver projects requested by the local community. This would take a couple of years to come into effect but it would then be down to the electorate to influence local councillors.

8.7 Laurel Roberts from The Qube informed the meeting that the Voluntary Sector Assembly had been working for the last ten months trying to prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead together with any future issues that may arise. She drew attention to the new Commissioning Strategy which was out to consultation until April 2012 and the need to get the message out more on the ground. She explained that the Voluntary Sector forums around the country were a good place to hear more about what was going on.

8.8 Members of the public broke into groups and were asked to consider the following questions:

1. The impact for your organisation of the Localism Act
2. The opportunities for your organisation
3. The barriers to taking those opportunities.

Feedback from the groups would be taken away for further consideration and would be reported to the Town Council.

KG / MB

ACTION

9. 2011/12 BUDGET REPORT AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1 The Committee received the report of the Community Action Manager (copy attached to the signed Notes) which considered the devolved funding allocated to the Oswestry Local Joint Committee for the period 1 April 2011 up to 31 March 2012. Nine applications had been received by the deadline.

9.2 **A. It was AGREED that the LJC fund those organisations and their projects as set out in Appendix A to the report, as follows:**

- i. **£785 to Monkmoor Court Community Group for resources and equipment for the tenants' room to enable a variety of new activities to take place.**
- ii. **£1430 to Oswestry Community Action for workshops within schools to design and create Olympic torches, which can be used by the children at the torch relay procession and the Community Games.**
- iii. **£2000 to Oswestry Library Homework Club for running the club for one year.**
- iv. **£300 to Helping Hands Association to cover the cost of travel for members to get to the Christmas meal. Advice to be offered on seeking additional funding.**
- v. **£1148 to the Oswestry Senior Citizens Club for a replacement CCTV system. Shropshire Council to oversee the installation of the new system.**
- vi. **£3000 to Oswestry Season Brochure Working Group for the design and print of a brochure publicising cultural activity in Oswestry during 2012 and the creation of a complementary website.**

It was AGREED to defer the following applications:

- vii. **Oswestry University of the Third Age. The Community Action Manager to work with the U3A to explore alternative ways of achieving delivery of its courses that does not involve the purchase of hardware or accommodation costs.**
- viii **Oswestry Multi-Cultural Ladies Group. The Community Action manager to work with representatives of the Group and the Health Trust to develop the long term outcomes of the project.**

ACTION

As the majority of Members of the LJC were also members of Oswestry Town Council and therefore had a prejudicial interest, it was **AGREED** to refer the application from the Town Council for funding to support a small grants scheme for community activity to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 to Shropshire Council's Cabinet for a decision.

B. It was agreed that the LJC allocates any underspend from its 2011/12 budget towards the priority of a Phase 2 Town Centre signage project.

C. It was agreed to delegate any art-specific funding received as part of its 2012/13 budget to Oswestry and District Arts Association, to enable it to continue to run its arts grants programme in the Oswestry area.

D. It was agreed to delegate 5% of its 2012/13 budget to Oswestry and District Sports Council to enable it to continue to run its sports grants programme in the Oswestry area.

E. It was agreed to adopt a mechanism for approving applications between LJC meetings by using the Community Action Manager's delegated authority and where all members of the Committee are in approval. This is not designed to replace decision making at meetings, but to be used when it is in the interest of an applicant to receive a decision between meetings.

9.3 The Chairman confirmed that Oswestry LJC would have a similar budget next year (2012/13) but may not in future years as the age of grants was coming to a close.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting would be held at 7pm on Thursday 14 June 2012, venue to be confirmed.

ME

Chairman: _____

Date: _____