



MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 14 June 2012 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), and Councillors Colwill (substituting for HB Patel) Harrison, Hopkins and Krupa Sheth

Also present: Councillors Butt, Hirani and Jones

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Clues and HB Patel.

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 March 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2012 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

3. Matters arising

It was noted that complex families were now referred to as troubled families.

4. Ward working 2011/12

The Ward Working Manager Christine Collins updated the committee on the work of the Ward Working Team in the year 2011/12 including; consultation exercises, expenditure, 23 ward walks, 35 outreach events with partners, numerous festivals and fares and 46 meetings of community groups and Tenants' and Residents' Associations to hear their concerns and ideas regarding their areas.

The Ward Working Manager detailed the consultation undertaken throughout the year comprising; a dragons den style priority setting event, 42 neighbourhood bulletins with 394 tear off response slips being received and utilisation of the Brent Council website. Additionally, web mapping had been produced as a way of displaying information visually and detailing the projects funded in each ward.

It was noted that an underspend of £619 was achieved last year with 105 projects benefitting from just under £420,000 with voluntary sector group funding of £250,000 and a total spend of over £800,000 on community projects.

A variety of challenges and achievements had taken place throughout the year with a timetable designed to ensure spending was carried out in a timely manner and engagement of alternative services and funding for projects that the ward working team were unable to support. Additionally, the team continued to achieve

partnership working and work streams regarding housing associations had been greatly assisted by participation in Local Joint Action Groups (LJAGs).

It was noted that litter was a key concern for residents and although previously an area the team felt they could not help, the team had now involved several initiatives and communications to tackle the issue and change the culture towards littering. During discussions, members queried the use of friends of the park schemes and dedicated litter picker teams to help keep parks clean. It was noted that some of these groups and initiatives already exist and the ward working team were happy to support them.

Councillor Jones highlighted that a variety of local projects had been developed with lessons learnt being shared across projects and wards and a greater variety of community groups accessing the funding available.

It was clarified that although community groups could access funding more than once, it had to be used for different projects. It was queried whether communication with youth could be improved and the Ward Manager explained that social media was being used in an attempt to be more active as well as looking at other communication methods. The Chair challenged the ward working team to address youth participation in consultation for the next year.

It was queried whether there was a strategy in relation to partnership working. It was explained that partnership working varied across wards and that with the removal of the alley-gating team, there were a variety of queries regarding the matter. It was clarified that a set of criteria was currently being formalised and would be circulated to members following consultation with the Environmental Health team.

Members thanked the ward working team for their efforts and achievements over the past year.

5. Partners for Brent Executive progress report - quarter 4

The Partnerships Co-ordinator, Policy and Regeneration Officer Jo McCormick reported on progress made within quarter four for voluntary, public and private sector partners. An update was provided on the progress made within each project including asset management, the intelligence hub, Brent Sustainability Forum projects and violence against women and girls. It was highlighted that the overarching voluntary sector strategy had been put on hold due to implementation of key changes needing to be integrated, with the overall intention of linking several funding stream.

During the discussion, members queried how progress would be reported back to members. It was noted that Jenny Reynolds regularly received reports on progress from each ward which was fed into a centralised borough wide document.

It was further clarified that work was continuing with schools to reduce energy consumption with two sets of work being carried out with home owners and businesses to address climate change and energy usage with funding provided by the GLA.

It was queried who the lead on the Brent Employer Forum was and whether there was any member involvement. It was clarified that there was member involvement which varied depending upon the issue, with the forum being chaired by VJABI associates, and linkages with the strategic forum.

The Chair enquired what work was being undertaken around priorities such as employment and housing in relation to the welfare cuts. Phil Newby Director of Strategy, Partnership and Improvements explained that an exercise looking at an employment package was being undertaken with an expert being utilised to help build propositions around employment. He highlighted that housing was key, particularly with social mobility and people within social housing having the opportunity to progress within their career. It was noted that a report would be brought back to the Committee in the autumn.

Members queried how many had benefitted from the supply chain project. It was noted that specific information was not available to hand however small catering companies had benefitted and the information would be made available to members. It was noted that Park Royal attended the employment forum when necessary.

Members requested feedback regarding the suite of troubled family's projects. It was highlighted that there was a variety of initiatives taking place across the Council and whether any work was being undertaken to address possible linkages. It was reported that linkages were picked up through the One Council Project, with key members being within the same department. Phil Newby explained that several interlocking themes were emerging and although independent but similar to each other, they were hoping to bring these issues together.

6. Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme

The Chair explained that the meetings were currently themed and the next meeting would focus on crime. Councillor Hirani queried whether a task and finish group was to be set up regarding Police Timings and it was noted that requests for members would take place.

It was queried whether private sector landlords, letting through RSL, were recorded within the indicator. It was clarified that all leased property through RSL whether privately owned or not would be included.

Members highlighted that parking was an area of interest to residents however, it was explained that this issue had been picked up within the One Council Overview and Scrutiny work programme although could additionally be reported to the partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Senior Policy Officer Strategy Partnership and Improvements advising future Committee dates.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be taking place on Wednesday 25 July 2012, at 7.30pm.

8. Any other urgent business

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Z Van Kalwala
Chair