

Walsall for All Partnership Board Meeting

Date: 2nd December 2020

Time: 16:30 - 18:30

Venue: Zoom Video Call

Welcome & Introduction

David Primrose welcomed board members to the online meeting. He gave an overview of the meeting ahead.

Vikki Tolley and John Elsegood were welcomed to the meeting as guests to discuss the Public Health agenda item.

Manjit Dehal, as the new One Walsall CEO, was also welcomed to the meeting. She is looking forward to working with a diverse range of stakeholders, partners and community groups that make up our vibrant Walsall.

Dee will continue to attend the meetings and Manjit will attend when needed.

Matters Arising

Progress on the Walsall for All Pledge

Charlotte provided a brief overview of the Pledge, which aims to encourage individuals and organisations to commit to cohesion and integration and have the Pledge as a foundation to working with communities.

As of 2nd December 2020, there have been 156 sign-ups (67 organisations, 89 individuals). *Since the last meeting, the total number of sign-ups is now at 183.*

Charlotte mentioned that she has not been able to act on all the suggestions due to pressing commitments, but a number of key activities have taken place:

- The Pledge Conversation – an online discussion with organisations to share best practice, partnership working and explore how we communicate with each other and about positive stories. The recording is available on request.
- Two case studies have been submitted by Transforming Communities Together and a resident living in the Streetly area.
- Making contact with internal council services to take up the Pledge – Youth Justice and Black Country Impact. Staff and wider networks within the service areas will also be encouraged to sign up to the Pledge.
- The New Art Gallery have adopted their pledge in their “Critical Friends” group, set up to give community members the opportunity to share their feedback on the gallery’s current offer and exhibitions.
- The Pledge will continue to be offered to residents and organisations to sign up to. The project aspect with *brap* will soon conclude.
- Board members are encouraged to have conversations with their networks to increase take up of the Pledge.

Partnership Creation

Declaration of interest

David declared an interest in regards to the future of Walsall for All agenda. He highlighted that all the board members have an interest in this matter.

There were no other conflicts of interest.

Presentation from Publicus

Matthew gave an update on the Walsall for All Review. The presentation covered the emerging recommendations and the next steps.

The board have been recently been involved in the review by contributing to an 'interactive report' – <https://bit.ly/WfAReviewReportCanvas>

Four key lessons were drawn from the review:

1. Different ideas of how Walsall for All was perceived, the impact it had on the programme's achievement and its future.
2. Asset-led intervention.
3. The quality of the Walsall for All team and their engagement with operational stakeholders in the council and other organisations.
4. Strategic deficits.

The focus of the presentation at the meeting was on the **future of Walsall for All** and Publicus have come up with the following recommendations:

A new, independent vehicle:

- Walsall for All set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Trustees to own and lead the strategy
- 'Members' (or partners) to provide collective oversight and confidence

Engaging at all levels – strategic, operational and grassroots:

- An independent voice (and head) to add value to strategic conversations
- A trusted advisor to support operational improvement and realise gains from PSED
- A champion for relationship-building and asset-led action at the grassroots

Walsall for All, at present, have done a lot of grassroots work and there is a capability of working operationally. It was identified that strategic work was underpowered.

Smart funding:

- Pragmatic: Any option that represents a real-terms increase in costs for partners is DOA
- Partners (as Members) underwrite core costs in return for core services; a stable platform

- Grant funding supplements income to sustain a generative portfolio of activities

The emerging recommendations will form into ‘the finished article’.

Next steps:

- Agreement in principle on the direction – this could be an agreement in principle that this is something we can continue discussing.
- Specification of the model – what roles are involved, what people will be doing, what will the key relationships be and understanding the key elements, strategic and policy landscapes.
- Agreement on implementation – if everything goes well, the third and final step will be to consider implementation and funding.

Response to the presentation:

- Any agreement needs to be in writing and have a five year sign up. We should understand the financial impact on statutory bodies.
- The work commissioned by Publicus has been extraordinary in its depth.
- Cohesion and integration should be more than a tick box exercise. It should be embedded across all services.
- The Walsall for All programme is considered innovative and different. It has not been an easy journey. It was suggested to take off the word ‘members’, as a potential reference to elected members of the Council. Partners may be more of a suitable word.
- Partners like Walsall College and whg have resources around this agenda.
- The work done by Belong Network needs to be prioritised and the [Social Cohesion Investment](#) report was referenced.
- DWP want to carry on the work they are doing in the community beyond March.

Response from Matthew:

- Publicus have been able to do this review with existing resources.
- Throughout the review process, they spoke to the other integration areas to understand what they were doing locally.
- Dee was thanked for being a critical friend in the process.

Reflections on Black History Month

Maureen reflected on the Black History Month celebrations by Walsall for All, which included community spotlight profiles and a webinar in partnership with The Faith and Belief Forum. The feedback has been very positive.

Maureen thanked all the staff involved in organising the activity.

One Walsall was acknowledged for their communications during the month.

Black History should be celebrated all year round and carried forward within other activities.

Feedback:

- Dee shared about the experiences of One Walsall throughout Black History Month and reflected on one of her staff members who is of ethnic minority, sharing her contributions.
- Black History Month, historically, has often looked backwards. The difference this year was that it was real. It focused on barriers, challenges and successes. This should be the model moving forward and acknowledged in everyday life.
- It would be good to bring history to life and into today's context.
- Monthly feature related to Black History or racism could be featured in future newsletters.
- Walsall for All initiating visits in community venues would enable more dialogue and engagement across communities.

Public Health Discussion – COVID-19

John Elsegood is the Interim Director of Communications at Walsall Council.

Vikki Tolley is a practitioner in the Public Health Team.

John gave an overview of the communication channels across the council that have been utilised during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included resident newsletters and communications to schools and businesses with targeted messaging.

John would welcome the board's advice on working with more networks.

Vikki informed that the Director of Public Health had sent his apologies for the meeting, but would like to attend a future meeting. She thanked the Walsall for All Board for being supportive and to Charlotte Gough and Gary Pluck for supporting public health messaging.

Vikki said there are many things we do, but there are still gaps and learning curves. For example, she mentioned the monthly faith newsletter and whether this may be the right method for communication, as well as the need for wider messaging as Christmas approaches.

We have started to see a reduction in cases, but this was in the last seven days. Walsall is ranked higher than most of the West Midlands counterparts. We should not lose sight of the key messages. We have to make sure these key messages are still relevant in communities. It is about what we can learn from previous experiences and improving them.

Recently, Public Health had a meeting with Imams. They will help push out key messages during Friday prayers.

Looking forward, they are keen to engage with communities around testing and vaccine uptake. There are going to be many challenges over the next few months, but it is important to strengthen the partnerships and continue the conversations.

Feedback:

- Walsall for All has been key in the Public Health communications. MHCLG know that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are affected disproportionately due to Covid-19.
- Nigel mentioned that the Council is preparing to bid for some funding to do some community engagement work with ethnic minority groups, which will involve high level strategic partnerships. Walsall for All and community groups will be key to this work.
- Manjit mentioned that One Walsall is happy to provide support.
- We need to look at providing consistent messaging and positives around the vaccine.
- Vikki and Charlotte, and the wider Walsall for All team were thanked again for their work.
- The work of Walsall for All and the wider partnership has helped MHCLG in their approach to future projects.

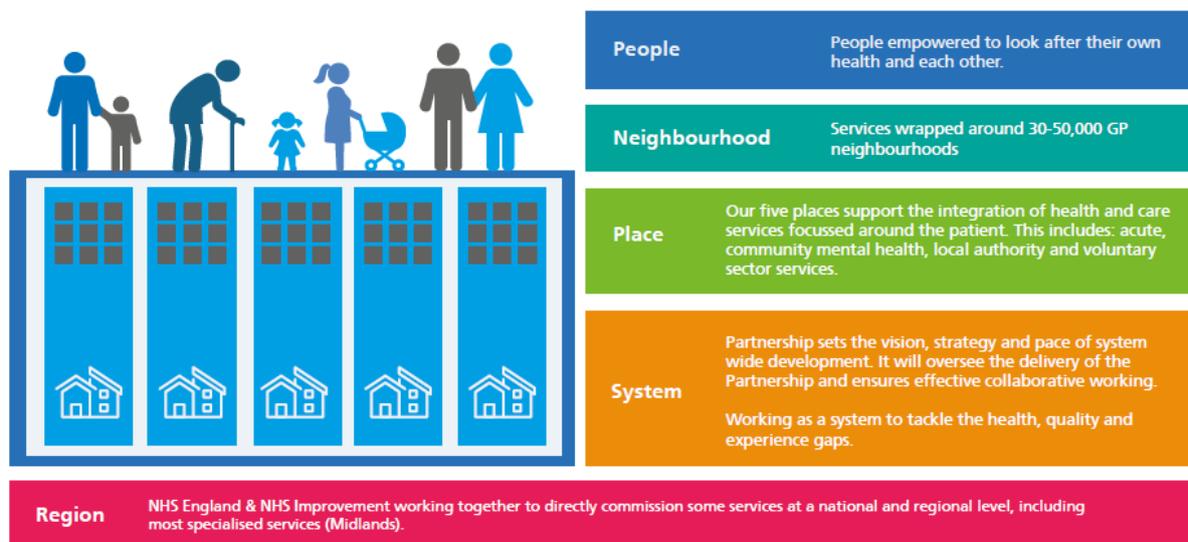
There has been some 'hesitancy' around vaccine uptake, and more communications are needed to address this.

Health and Community Cohesion

Geraint Griffiths-Dale introduced himself as the Managing Director for the NHS Walsall CCG. He gave a presentation on health and community cohesion.

Currently the NHS is one of its centralist phrases, particularly as the Walsall CCG will be merging with other local CCG's at the start of April 2021. In addition, the NHS want to start working more with others.

How the NHS is changing around us. Geraint explained the different levels of engagement:



Geraint pointed out everyone has different needs and services may have to be delivered in different ways. We need to understand the needs of each individual. How the NHS deliver a service to a person is just as important as delivering to the neighbourhood.

Currently, the NHS is focusing on health care and health delivery. We should deliver the right services for the right population.

Geraint is keen to introduce to the board the clinical needs for each Primary Care Network. There are seven across the borough.

Over the next six months, each Primary Care Network has to develop a plan centred on communities and health, not just health services. It is important to engage with all partners in both planning and delivery and move towards long-term funding of contracts.

Moving forward, Geraint wants to build on the partnerships that currently exist rather than creating new groups, explore how users move between different services, have single multiagency service directorates, encourage self-management of underlying health conditions and build on care planning and population support to benefit a wider group.

Reflections

Earlier in the meeting, David encouraged Publicus and the wider board to think of any further reflections in regards to the review and direction of travel for Walsall for All.

- The conversations we have had since demonstrates that the three areas (strategic, operational and grassroots) cannot be done in isolation. Matthew gave the example of Geraint's presentation going into the strategic detail.
- The direction of travel suggested is the right direction. It is pragmatic and it reflects the reality in today's situation.
- It was clear that the role Walsall for All plays is important. The communications team are going to be at the forefront of this work.

It was proposed to approach the Lottery to seek additional funding to plan the direction of travel, transition and implementation. The board were encouraged to contribute on this:

- Could you articulate on the financial contribution of 'members'?
- What are the timescales for decision-making?

Response:

The next steps are to specify the model. This will include who will be involved in the model, what it would look like and how much it will cost. The word 'members' will be replaced with 'partners'. There will be opportunities for transitional arrangements. In addition, there are opportunities in the wider environment to do work on community cohesion and equality. This new model proposed is about securing resources.

David will have a conversation with the Lottery to seek additional funding for the next stage of the process and report back to the board at the next meeting.

Dates of the next board meeting

All meetings will be on a Wednesday from 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

- March 3rd 2021
- June 2nd 2021
- September 1st 2021

Future board meetings will take place online due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and current social distancing guidelines.

In attendance were:

A'isha Khan (Aaina Community Hub)
Charlotte Gough (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)
Claire Wills (Black Country Impact - Walsall Council)
David Primrose (Board Chair)
Deb Rajania (Walsall College)
Dee Lytton (One Walsall)
Geraint Griffiths-Dale (NHS Walsall CCG)
Gerry Lyng (DWP)
Ian Cotterill (Publicus)
Jamie Hobday (Walsall Police Partnerships)
John Elsegood (Communications Team, Walsall Council)
Kerrie Allward (Executive Director, Adult Social Care - Walsall Council)
Laurence Lessard-Phillips (University of Birmingham)
Manjit Dehal (One Walsall)
Matthew Green (Publicus)
Maureen Lewis (Walsall Black Sisters Collective)
Nigel Rowe (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)
Paul Gordon (Director, Resilient Communities - Walsall Council)
Vikki Tolley (Public Health, Walsall Council)

Apologies:

Ibrahim Sohail (Youth of Walsall)
Irena Hergottova (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)
James Norris (Walsall College)
Jenny Phillimore (University of Birmingham)
Manjit Jhooty (Business representative for board, Jhoots Pharmacy)
Marie Smith (WATMOS)
Stephen Gunther (Director, Public Health - Walsall Council)