

Walsall for All Partnership Board Meeting

Date: 23rd September 2020

Time: 16:30 - 18:30

Venue: Zoom Video Call

Welcome & Introduction

David Primrose welcomed board members to the online Zoom meeting.

The meeting began with a brief update from One Walsall, where Dee informed the board that Manjit Dehal had been appointed as the new CEO. Dee will be returning to her substantive role as Partnership Manager when Manjit begins in November. Both Dee and Manjit hope to attend the next meeting.

Diversity and Inclusion

Earlier this year, David, Maureen and Balbir shared what community cohesion and integration means to them as a way of raising awareness of diversity and inclusion. It is hoped that other board members will be able to contribute. Charlotte is happy to circulate the clips to those who would like to have a look.

This weaved into the work Jamie Hobday was doing in terms of the Police's work on diversity and inclusion.

Jamie mentioned he was looking at ways we can have conversations around cohesion and integration with Walsall communities, in light of recent movements such as Black Lives Matter.

He is leading on some work called "Connect with People" (discussed later on in the meeting), which is around building public trust, confidence and strengthening communities and working closely with the public to develop and deliver the services they need.

Walsall Town Centre and Bloxwich Deal

For reference: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsallcom/Governance/Town-Deal-Board>

Irena explained to the board that Walsall is part of the Towns Fund, which is being managed by MHCLG. There was a call for ideas in terms of where there should be investment. Some organisations have already been involved in some of the conversations.

There is an urgent need for ideas for Bloxwich Town Centre to improve infrastructure and create capital projects. If you would like to put forward any suggestions or ideas. Initially the deadline was autumn time, but it had been extended. The board are encouraged to contact Zoey West (zoey.west@walsall.gov.uk) if they have any ideas or questions.

Dee mentioned that One Walsall hosted two forums for the Walsall and Bloxwich Town Deals. Arcadis chaired the forums. Irena said she would check for an update in terms of consultation and engagement.

For larger projects over £1m, these would have been picked up by Arcadis, but there is some emphasis on local funding for smaller ideas.

Walsall for All Pledge

Charlotte gave an update on the Walsall for All Pledge Project.

Key headlines:

- The Pledge is about demonstrating the work people and organisations do to commit to promoting cohesion and integration within Walsall communities, declaring support for a more integrated Walsall and connecting with others who have shared goals.
- As of 20/09/2020, 82 people (out of a target of 100) and 57 organisations (out of a target of 30) have signed up to the Pledge. *Please note the sign up numbers have increased since then.*
- The majority of organisation sign-ups are from charity and voluntary sector, education and health & social care. Some council services, faith groups and private sector groups have also signed up.
- The board were asked to consider three things:
 - Why sign up to the Walsall for All Pledge?
 - How can we commit to promoting cohesion and integration within Walsall communities?
 - Who will you invite in your networks to sign up?

Feedback:

- We have not reached half of the Walsall population, and there is a challenge of how we can increase sign ups significantly. The private sector would be key to this. The challenge to each organisation is for their staff to sign up.
- Jan mentioned that she brought up the information about the Pledge at a previous Community Network meeting.
- Private sector is key. In terms of the community sector, diversity is also key. The pool needs to be widened in terms of where we haven't been before and break down barriers.
- Walsall Works have employers they work with. DWP also have partners they work with. These should be encouraged to sign up.
- Walsall Economic Board membership should also be encouraged to sign up.
- Claire leads on the Black Country Impact and grants programme. She asked if there was a minimum age on the pledge. Charlotte responded that there was no minimum age, as long as people can show a commitment to the pledge. Claire is keen to meet with Charlotte to discuss and ask more questions.
- The Pledge should be embedded in our work infrastructures e.g. signing up to the Pledge as a pre-requisite to signing a contract. Charlotte mentioned that some initial ideas were being discussed around working with Procurement.

- Suggestions from the Zoom chat included targeting schools, identifying measurable targets to get sign ups, Chamber of Commerce, LEP and local media organisations. Deb said the college would sign up to the pledge.
- The Pledge is fundamental and is part of a journey we're on.
- David is keen to hear back on the progress of the pledge.

Hate Crime Presentation

Nasar provided an update on action plans to tackle Hate Crime:

- This was started in August 2020, after delays due to COVID-19.
- The Hate Crime Ambassadors project is going well, with a “train the trainer” element in place to enable current ambassadors to train new recruits.
- A successful taster session recently took place with a training provider regarding victim support.
- With Jamie’s help, Nasar has been able to acquire the data so that analysis can take place. There was a delay, due to a blanket ban on releasing data. Jamie added that this decision was due to the realisation that the research wasn’t being used as effectively as it could have been to improve service, so before more data was released, the Police wanted to ensure that insights provided by the data were being learned from and used to their maximum potential. COVID-19 has caused delays but this will be progressed as soon as possible.
- Laurence queried the data transparency issue with Jamie. Jamie confirmed that the decision is temporary and does not represent a lack of Police commitment to being more open with data, however it is important to find a balance between producing documents from the data and taking the time to listen to feedback.
- Nasar met with West Midlands Police Restorative Justice hub, who supported mainly what they are doing but advised some changes were needed in the investigation process, to ensure any suitable cases can be referred to the hub as and when required.
- Nasar has issued a contract with Birmingham University for research to commence. The contract is currently being reviewed by the Contracts team and it is anticipated that the project will start in October 2020.
- A Strategic Hate Crime away-day is planned for October. This will look at Hate Crime Pledge work models.
- The Hate Crime website is in progress.
- Recruitment is taking place for a Project Administrator and a Volunteer Coordinator.
- The Law Commission has put out a review regarding Hate Crime and Nasar is hosting a focus group. The Hate Crime network has been given funding for 2 years, and the work is anticipated to start in 2 weeks.
- A’isha queried whether training could have taken place online. Nasar did ask the training providers but they explained that it would not be suitable, due to

the requirement for trainers to be able to assess candidates' suitability, particularly as the work will be dealing with vulnerable victims in need of support. Nasar is exploring options for when restrictions are eased.

- Jamie confirmed that Hate Crime decreased when the first lockdown started but went back up as lockdown increased. Nasar is working with Leicester University, looking at whether this is due to more reporting. Work is taking place online to raise awareness of Hate Crime, as there is currently little face-to-face activity. A WhatsApp group has been created which includes people with protected characteristics and partners, which looks at supporting ongoing issues around Hate Crime.
- The work is promoted online, including on Twitter, with the support of the ambassadors.

Nasar will send promotional links to Charlotte for circulation. (AP 1)

- Phil noted that the Restorative Justice work is encouraging, and an important aspect of this work. The group is in agreement.
- Nigel observed that there has been apathy regarding Hate Crime reporting, indicating an attitude of acceptance in some people. Reporting has increased, seemingly in correlation with online promotion. The activity of ambassadors indicates a strong network, as messages are communicated among communities and groups. This has contributed to people being encouraged to report. The Police's research is valuable to Walsall for All and will help to facilitate an environment where Hate Crime is not accepted by victims or witnesses.
- Balbir added that the raising of how to report online has been challenging, and it might explain the increase in reports.

Community Dialogue Presentation

- Phil shared slides onscreen. The goal set pre-COVID remains the same:

"People having open and honest conversations about issues that matter to them around local concerns, integration, faith, race and more."

The outcome is:

"Trust established between different identity groups."

Dialogue with participants has been put online, partly due to the current restrictions and also to ensure availability and continuity in the event of another lockdown.

- The project was paused in April and restarted in September. The opportunity has been taken to recruit new participants and to reassess who needs to engage, particularly in light of Black Lives Matter.

- The Community Recognition Awards is a project designed to recognise various community groups who play an important role in integration and cohesion. This will ideally be dovetailed with the Community Dialogue project.
- The next few months will see the creation of a group of current community leaders who will drive engagement between groups. These will be known as Community Connectors. The roles will be voluntary and the project will continue until March 2021.
- IFF (MHCLG-linked evaluator) will be working with the group to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project. A final event to share learning will take place in February / March 2021.
- Phase 1 of the project took place pre-COVID, which evidence indicated was successful. It involved 8 community dialogue sessions with 14 groups, who will also be involved in the online restart.
- New organisations are being recruited for Phase 2. These include MENCAP, ESOL groups, and Walsall Refugee and Migrant Centre. Their community leaders will join in facilitating the dialogue process.
- Recruitment and the online work has been challenging, so The Faith and Belief Forum are open to running sessions themselves, and to running more open-themed events.
- The pool of community leaders is gradually being built. A meeting with 4 community leaders took place, with another scheduled in 2 weeks' time with a different group.
- Jamie asked whether there could be a role for Police volunteers and PCSO's, either as connectors or participants. Phil explained the importance of building trust and being aware of dynamics between community representatives and local government agencies.

Phil and Jamie to discuss Jamie's idea. (AP2)

- The Black community is one of the under-represented groups, however it is hoped that issues that matter to them will be discussed through the dialogue process. Phil is talking to Zara about organising an event during Black History Month.
- Nigel noted that there is a risk in relying on groups to raise specific topics for discussion. Some of the community groups are predominantly white so may think that the "Black Lives Matter" point doesn't affect them. Furthermore it is a borough-wide issue so it may be better to address it with a standalone initiative.
- Kerrie added that Walsall Council is political. We represent people but we are restricted by our political nature, so it is essential to maintain boundaries between our political remit and doing what is right via Walsall for All, for example.
- A'isha agrees with Nigel, adding that it is important to constructively discuss topics that people may be uncomfortable with in order to change it into a positive and reduce discrimination.
- Phil explained that the project is designed to bring groups together who don't usually engage with each other, including but not limited to white and non-

white groups. Phil is happy to be part of discussions but realises that the issue is bigger than this project. David noted that it should be taken forward outside of the meeting.

Council Perspective on Walsall for All

- Kerrie stated that the council is fully committed to achieving a more cohesive and integrated population in Walsall, and recognises Walsall for All's contribution. The Council should not seek to address further integration issues alone because best outcomes are achieved via partnership working. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities in the borough, e.g. the BAME community has felt the impacted more severely. The economic impact is also disproportionate. Kerrie would like Walsall for All to help address these inequalities and support economic recovery.

Connect with People Project

- Jamie talked about the Connect with People project he is leading on in Walsall Police.
- The initiative is about building public confidence and strength in communities, delivering much-needed services. This will also increase volunteering opportunities. A lot of work takes place to tackle local crime such as ASB, which the Police want to take to the next level by encouraging a community response. This is especially relevant to locations experiencing repeated ASB. The Police are exploring a more collaborative Police Cadet model, offering more to youth and community groups.
- The Police are looking at measuring compliance standards and obtaining feedback on quality of service they deliver, especially Hate Crime management. One aim is for every victim to feed back to the Police on the quality of their support.
- Connecting with people in need of support due to exploitation will be a key element. The Police are exploring new ways working with partners through the multi-agency hub, which will enable a more holistic approach. Work with communities will take place to make them more resilient and reduce exploitation. Jamie is encouraging ideas from partners to take back to the Police, which will be used to inform this work.

Jamie will send information to Charlotte for circulation and feedback. (AP 3)

Partnership Creation

- Matthew explained that the first stage of managing the review process involved developing a Theory of Change model, considering elements such as what kinds of ideas, relationships and feedback would be most beneficial. The process required a mechanism to develop lines of enquiry and enable

conversations. 12 key lines were developed, plus additional lines across domains such as health, housing and policing. Current local practice was looked at in order to decide the best questions to ask.

- Conversations have taken place with Walsall for All, partners, providers and subject experts over the last few months, facilitating completion of most of the aims at this stage. Information was acquired on people's experience of being in an integrated area and how that contrasts with being in Walsall.
- Matthew showed a model on screen to illustrate the process for coming up with key lines of enquiry, which inform the questions. These are:
 - Learning about cohesion and integration;
 - Relative significance of cohesion and integration in Walsall;
 - The recent history of tackling cohesion and integration in Walsall;
 - The emergence of Walsall or All;
 - The governance, structure and affordances of Walsall for All;
 - The Walsall for All strategy; process, content and causal assumptions;
 - The Walsall for All programme, commissioning, evidence and outcomes;
 - Walsall for All as a project partner;
 - Research, evaluation and learning;
 - Cohesion and COVID-19;
 - Cohesion and thematic domains (e.g. health, housing, policing).
- Matthew provided some headline insights:
 - There are competing frames, where people were seeing Walsall for All as either a programme or an open-ended commitment. We need to be clear how we really frame Walsall for All and what it means. Quality relationships between the Walsall for All team and delivery partners were a significant factor. Quality relationships did much to mitigate challenges from competing framings. Relationships were not a magic bullet – you cannot overcome all challenges.
 - Walsall for All exhibited two main styles of action; intervention and asset-enabled approaches. Interventions are moderately effective, but there are questions over legacy and sustainability (what continues once the funding stops).
 - Asset-enabled approaches are more interesting. Matthew used the ESOL programme delivery as an example (commissioning, provider delivery and end of the programme). What has happened through Walsall for All is different. Providers have been identified and a community practice has developed where assets are invested.
- In terms of the shape of future activity, there is a need for:
 - **Community interventions** (asset driven and relational).
 - **Organisational interventions** (Walsall for All as a local excellence for cohesion and integration and helping partners design mainstream activity to promote cohesion).

- **Strategic interventions** (developing the Walsall for All strategy and influencing the strategy of other local partners).

Conversations are taking place with senior stakeholders on the headlines of the review and to understand what a post-integration version of Walsall for All will look like.

Ian added that even though there have been significant conversations, there is still an opportunity for people to contribute to the review. Ian added his thanks to David Primrose for helping with the facilitation of meetings.

A working group will be formed to look at the legacy in detail and feedback at the next board meeting in December.

Information to be sent out to the board members about the working group (AP 4).

Feedback:

- Laurence said that the Pledge presentation was a good link to Matthew's presentation in relation to the success of the Pledge among organisations working together. She asked if there was a role in MHCLG around influence. Matthew commented that he spoke to the other integration areas and noticed that Walsall's approach was mature and different. It would be good to understand MHCLG's perspective on what they would find exciting going forward.

Any Other Business

David declared an interest as he is a leader within a faith community. He mentioned the [Cohesive Societies report](#) by The Faith and Belief Forum and invited the board to have a look at the report in their own time.

Bally Pahal from DWP provided an update on the work her team are doing:

- Throughout the pandemic, the team have been engaging with the ladies often through wellbeing calls and providing advice and guidance, which has slowly transitioned into providing training and job opportunities. The messages around employment, education and training have been very subtle.
- More Empowering Women Workshops and Motivate Your Mind workshops will be taking place both online and face-to-face (with COVID-secure measures in place). Bally said she is open to anyone who is able to offer community facilities to host sessions.
- DWP have made connections with Black Country Women's Aid, NHS social prescribers and other partners. They have also been working with Probation Services.
- As a success story, an ex-offender was referred and supported by one of the connectors. She was offered a job as a project manager.

Reflection and Close of Meeting

Near the beginning of the meeting, Charlotte mentioned three questions for the board to consider around the Walsall for All Pledge. The board were asked to think about it after the meeting.

At the next board meeting, Matthew and Ian (along with the working group) will share about the review findings and legacy of the programme. David is willing to host a number of meetings about the legacy of Walsall for All with those who are interested.

Dates of the next board meeting

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

- December 2nd 2020
- 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)
Bally Pahal (DWP)
Balbir Seimar (Walsall Hindu Forum)
Charlotte Gough (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)
Claire Wills (Black Country Impact - Walsall Council)
David Primrose (Diocese of Lichfield and Board Chair)
Dee Lytton (One Walsall)
Deb Rajania (Walsall College)
Geraint Griffiths (NHS Walsall CCG)
Ian Cotterill (Publicus)
Ibrahim Sohail (Youth of Walsall)
Irena Hergottova (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)
Jamie Hobday (Walsall Police Partnerships)
Jaishree Patel (Faith and Belief Forum)
Janet Davies (Chair of Walsall Community Network and manager at Brownhills Community Centre)
Kerrie Allward (Adult Social Care - Walsall Council)
Laurence Lessard-Phillips (University of Birmingham)
Mahmooda Quershi (Faith and Belief Forum)
Matthew Green (Publicus)
Nasar Iqbal (Black Country Innovate)
Nigel Rowe (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)
Phil Champain (Faith and Belief Forum)
Rachel Davies (Walsall College)

Apologies:

Andy Seager (Bloxwich Academy)
Jenny Phillimore (University of Birmingham)
Marie Smith (WATMOS)
Paul Gordon (Walsall Council)