

WFA Partnership Board

Minutes of Board meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2023

Attendees: A'isha Khan (Walsall For All Chair)
Paul Gordon (Walsall Council Resilient Communities)
Irena Hergottova (Walsall Council Continuity & Equality)
Nigel Rowe (Walsall Council, Cohesion)
Josna Patel (Walsall For All Admin Officer) - Minutes
Marianna Solodcaia (Walsall Council Integration Project Officer)
Harjinder Lal (Walsall Council Integration Project Officer)
Sarah Oakley (Walsall Council, Voluntary and Community Sector Lead)
Catherine Muxworthy (Walsall Council Events and Communications Officer)
Helena Platt (Walsall College Head of Personal Development)
Helen Billings (Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust)
Georgina Atkins (Walsall Council Early Help Childrens Service)
Clare Wills (Walsall Programme Management Team Leader)
Janet Davis (Brownhills Community Association Vice Chair)
Ana Tomulescu (NASH DOM CIC)
Shari Brown (Refugee and Migrant Centre)
Vicky Hines (One Walsall Chief Executive Officer)
Vicky Green (Walsall Housing Group)
Sanjay Patel (Walsall Hindu Forum)
Maureen Lewis (Walsall Black Sisters Collective)
Firoza Kasujee (DWP Jobcentre Plus)

Apologies: Lesley Bovington (Transforming Communities)
Kerrie Allward (Walsall Council Adult Social Care)
Ann Lloyd (Brownhills School Headteacher)
Jennie Phillimore (Birmingham University)
David Smith (Bluecoat School)
Benjamin Parker (Shelfield Academy Heritage Programme Officer)
Phil Dolby (West Midlands Police)

1 Welcome, Apologies, Introductions and Declaration of Interest

A'isha Khan (AK) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as recorded above. All Board members introduced themselves.

2 Board Membership – Terms of Reference

A draft Terms of Reference document had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Paul Gordon (PG) explained the importance of the Board and confirmed the council committed 2 years of funding. He asked the members to think about what aims and objectives should be included in the new Terms of Reference.

We will create a revised version of the Terms of Reference and circulate to the Board members for their comments.

Irena Hergottova (IH) suggested the Board should meet bi-monthly and they be hybrid meetings in future. What were everyone's thoughts on that? We could possibly hold future face to face meetings at Member's organisations. Members present agreed to have face to face meetings in different venues of the member organisations where hybrid meetings are possible.

Action: A revised version of ToR will be circulated to the Board for comments.

3 Walsall For All Conference March 2023

IH presented slides from the WFA Conference March 2023 and talked about outcomes from the three discussion groups – Health and Wellbeing, Cost of Living and Diverse Voices. (Members received notes from the discussion groups in their packs).

Members discussed at length and feedback from the Conference has highlighted a more joined up approach with the partners that support the Cost of Living Crisis.

Discussion took place about not duplicating the work, for example, there is already a forum for 'cost of living' in Walsall Connected and health inequalities are covered in some Walsall Together meetings.

Nigel Rowe (NR) talked about examples from Bradford, where they created an Anti-Poverty Strategy and asked how it can be developed in Walsall.

<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24295/Exec8JanDocAGApp1.pdf>

NR suggested an action for the board to read and decide whether WFA want to develop such a strategy considering the levels of multiple deprivation in Walsall, the cost of living and rising numbers falling into the poverty category who will be working and not eligible to claim benefits?

NR asked for a decision from the board in whether we have an all-encompassing Integration Strategy or it to be separated into different strands (e.g. disability, ethnicity, LGBTQ+) as integration will mean different things to different groups. The action plan should be split into actions which has direct impact on the dedicated group and outcomes impact directly on their experience and desired outcomes. It was agreed that the new Integration Strategy would be owned by Walsall For All.

Maureen Lewis (ML) thinks the Crisis Support Team should also be involved.

Firoza Kasujee (FK) asked how do people access the Household Support Fund?

IH asked if there should be subgroups focusing on Mental Health prevention work within the Faith groups in the community. AK suggested Helen Billings and Sanjay Patel come together on this to discuss further.

Actions: Irena and Nigel to share information about existing 'Cost of living' forums.

Irena to organise further meetings regarding The Housing Support Fund.

All to read Bradford's Anti Poverty Strategy (link attached) and decide whether WFA want to develop such a strategy.

Helen and Irena to explore a potential for Walsall for All – subgroup (or a one of meeting) to raise awareness of Wellbeing and MH services/prevention with faith networks.

4 Overview of Community Grant and UK SPF

Claire Wills **UK Shared Prosperity 2023 – 2025**

CW explained the primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, by empowering places to invest in local priorities across three pillars:

- Communities & Place
- Supporting Local Business
- People & Skills (including adult numeracy programme, Multiply)

For Walsall, £8,252,409m core UKSPF funding and £1.78m Multiply funding will be allocated and distributed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

The People and Skills priority is only eligible for spend in 2024/25 - Prior to 2024-2025, funding will be available for Multiply, a national programme to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population across the UK.

Action: Claire Wills (CW) to send Josna Patel (JP) a matrix to link community funding opportunities to challenges that came out of the discussions at the conference.

5 Social Integration and Cohesion Strategy

NR explained that he is currently tasked with reviewing the social Integration and Cohesion strategy. He talked about options for either one strategy, which combines all equality 'protected characteristics or several sub-sections – for example Integration Strategy for young people and LGBTQ community. He asked members if

they want to own the process as WFA approach or Walsall Council to lead on it? There will be funding available for engagement and consultations similar to We are Walsall 2040.

Ana Tomulescu (AT) commented that she did not see the content from the focus groups they run in the final version of the We are Walsall 2040. She said that if we consult on the Cohesion strategy in future, we should reflect different community's views and not generalise.

HB stated there should be a detailed description of what 'Cohesion' means in Walsall. IH explained that there is a lot of data, for example Cohesion Atlas that members would benefit from seeing. It might be worth to do a one off 'learning sessions' about changes to Census and population.

Action: Nigel to send information to members about what we mean by social integration/cohesion and any other supporting information.

All to feedback to Nigel about the ownership of the strategy and content.

Irena to organise a one off – changes in population (Census 2021, Cohesion Atlas) learning session.

6 Communication & Diversity Calendar Use of term BAME in communications

Catherine introduced herself as the Events and Communication Assistant for WFA.

IH and CM briefly mentioned the Diversity Calendar and asked Board members to send CM two celebrations/events per month that they are contributing towards in the community and would like them promoted. CM will add them to the WFA Diversity Calendar. We are hoping for a more joined-up communication.

IH highlighted that the term BAME is no longer used in WFA public communications. This comes from The Inclusive Britain Report and Government guidance which were both attached to the agenda. WFA made a commitment for ToRs to reflect this new guidance.

Action: CM to contact all Board members to promote their Diversity events and raise awareness

7 Forward Plan

A Draft will be produced from the meeting notes to help produce a strategy.

Members suggested in future agenda we put on Family hubs and social prescribing measures.

IH suggested a one-off meeting to discuss new Census data and Cohesion Atlas.

Action: The Chair and Resilient Communities team (Walsall Council) to prepare a draft forward plan for all members to comment on

8 Any other Business

PG stated we need communications regarding the violence in the local areas of Pleck, Caldmore and Palfrey. We need to map and bring together voluntary organisations and faith forums.

The meeting ended at 6pm.