

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**COMMONWEALTH GAMES, CULTURE & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
O&S COMMITTEE**

1330 hours on 3rd February 2021, Online Meeting – Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Mariam Khan (Chair)

Councillors: Alex Aitken, Morriam Jan, John Lines, Zhor Malik, Hendrina Quinnen, Ron Storer and Martin Straker Welds

Also Present:

Dean Hill, Sport Birmingham

Paul Moore, AD, Active Places, The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS)

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Mark Sears, TAWS

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Hamira Sultan, Director for Future Parks Accelerator

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.civico.net/birmingham) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES

(See document No. 1).

RESOLVED:

The action notes of the meeting held on the 13th January 2021 were agreed.

5. FUTURE PARKS ACCELERATOR

(See documents No. 2 and 3)

Hamira Sultan, Director for Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) attended for this item.

The main points in the presentation included:

- Birmingham's FPA is called Naturally Birmingham and is one of eight urban areas which are part of an initiative formed jointly by the National Trust, National Lottery Heritage fund, and the Ministry for Communities, Housing and Local Government, designed to enhance and secure the future of the UK's green spaces.
- They are working with a lot of organisations such as TAWS.
- The aim of the programme is to find ways of embedding the value of green space across the council and within our communities. They have five strategic outcomes that fit in with the 2022 Council Plan: jobs and skills, housing and the built environment, the future of children, health and wellbeing, and maximising the benefits from hosting the Commonwealth Games.
- One of the big drivers is to get people out of their cars and help people to better connect with their communities.
- They are looking at setting up a Parks Foundation whereby the community have a real say, and it is a way to access funding that complements the Council's parks service.
- For the developing skills agenda they have moved to a virtual platform due to Covid. This has approximately 30 different jobs that people can do in green spaces and it has had 600 YouTube hits.
- They want the community to use the green space and are proud of their mentoring programme, which has seen 50 young people either in care or care leavers being supported to access green spaces. This has been a positive experience for the young people and the mentors.
- It is about building in resilience and sustainability and there being other ways to bring additional money into parks, such as crowdfunding etc.
- The programme is split into five frameworks: a new governance model for Birmingham's green space, environmental justice, a healthy city, sustainable finance, and citizen involvement.
- Environmental Justice has a key link to the Commonwealth Games (CWG) legacy and tackling inequalities. Nature connects to all capitals: natural capital (natural resources in the environment), social capital (culture and community), human capital (skills and knowledge), financial capital, and manufactured capital (built environment and wider infrastructure).
- The map of IMD overlaid with green spaces demonstrates that there are more good quality green spaces where there is less deprivation. They would therefore like to use green spaces to level up as green space offers huge benefits to health and wellbeing, and by making sure those in more need of it can access it will go some way to achieving environmental justice.

- The Commonwealth Games and the FPA want green spaces to be seen as assets and both want to tackle inequalities. The FPA are part of the Commonwealth Games legacy working group.
- When undertaking building developments there needs to be a way of mitigating the loss of any green space.
- Examples were provided of working with groups and this included their work with Witton Lodge Park, whereby they have encouraged residents to become walk leaders to help improve wellbeing as well as connectedness, especially with groups that have previously been isolated.
- There are 591 parks and green spaces in Birmingham with not all being readily available to residents.
- They would like to pursue something similar to the London Greenground map (this was inspired by the London tube map as an alternative sustainable transport map).

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members the main points included:

- Details of the assistance available about neglected parks, such as Perry Barr, was requested. Members were informed that they currently have £10,000 seed funding which they are hoping to increase to £90,000 with the assistance of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum. This funding is not available yet and information for those who wish to apply for the funding when it is available will be provided. Hamira is happy to be the conduit and share information.
- Green spaces can become unloved and a site of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) leading to the land being developed for new homes. It is acknowledged there is a need for more homes, and therefore it is about working with planning to mitigate the loss of any green space.
- The Witton Lake pilot is about social prescribing, whereby they have nature walks led by volunteers who are residents in the community. They have been able to do some of these virtually during Covid.
- Connectiveness is about connectiveness to nature and this is about people noticing nature such as bird songs and colour. This is good for our mental health, and that is why the sensory walking groups are important. A Member thought that 'awareness' may be a better way of describing this.
- Dudley Council's Healthy Towns Programme regenerated four parks over a 3 year period that led to a 75% reduction in crime and ASB. This was due to residents' values changing and them having ownership of the concept and the place as the programmes developed. This was 12 years ago and demonstrates a long term outcome.
- Sustainability and longevity of community groups can be an issue, especially when people move away or priorities change. It was acknowledged that this is not easy to solve, however there are things that can help and these include: residents becoming connected or affiliated to a larger organisation such as Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) to meet likeminded people, and set up a friends of park group. Also, residents being connected and using WhatsApp

and Facebook groups could assist as there needs to be at least 20 people to share the load. More information on this will be provided to Members.

- They have three pilot sites in terms of parks and green spaces:
 - Dawberry Fields Park is the children's pilot site. The team set up a simple nature trail around the benches, and they saw 60 people using this in one day.
 - Witton Lakes Park is the health and wellbeing pilot site and they have had sessions about being connected to nature, and where the sensory walks are being developed with the community. These have also been done virtually and were supported by TAWS.
 - Ward End Park is the employment and skills pilot site.
- In relation to environmental justice, they are speaking to officers regarding a public open space map being available in the public domain so an audit can be undertaken to ensure 100% accuracy, as there are concerns regarding the data quality. They are also going to be mapping out key data about access to green space and key public health data within three pilots. In the next 3 – 6 months they should be able to report back.
- In terms of the FPA programme, they have approximately another 1 ½ years funding. They have started with a finance framework led by Cllr Chatfield, Cabinet Member, Finance and Resources. They have a healthy city framework, led by Cllr Hamilton, Cabinet Member, Health and Social Care. They are in the process of setting up environmental justice and citizen involvement.
- Adopting parks and residents loving their green spaces is important. They have a map of all the parks and green spaces that have a friends of parks groups. They need a map that shows those that don't have these, and Councillors can assist with this.
- Hamira wrote to all Members asking if they wanted to be a part of Green Champions Programme and approximately 80 people signed up and this includes residents. The purpose is to help people understand how to get involved. Hamira will send out the e-mail again to all Members informing them that this had been discussed at the committee meeting. The Chair is happy for the reminder e-mail to be sent.
- It was suggested that Hamira may wish to contact the officers in the Council to discuss the mapping of cycle routes, as many of the cycle routes are to and from parks and open spaces.

RESOLVED:

The update was noted and:

- Hamira Sultan is happy to be the conduit and share information and this includes Members putting residents who are interested in applying for funding to improve parks in touch.
- Members to be provided with information for residents including helping the sustainability and longevity of community groups.

- Hamira Sultan to ask the appropriate officer to contact the Committee regarding problems with maintenance or technical problems with the parks and green open spaces, such as getting water onto the sites.
- The map of all the parks and green spaces that have a friends of parks groups to be shared with Members.
- Hamira to re-issue the email to all Members regarding the Green Champions Programme informing them that it has been discussed at the committee meeting. Included within this e-mail will be an offer from Hamira to attend ward meetings to discuss the FPA.
- Details regarding the Ward End Park Pilot to be provided to the Chair as a lot of residents in her ward use the park.

6. UPDATE FROM THE ACTIVE WELLBEING SOCIETY (TAWS)

(See document No. 4)

Mark Sears and Paul Moore from TAWS, and Dean Hill from Sport Birmingham attended for this item.

The main points in the presentation included:

- The Council adopted its Sports and Activity Strategy in 2015 and this strategy led to the successful tender for the Commonwealth Games and Sports England innovation programme, the Local Delivery Pilot (LDP).
- TAWS is the lead partner for the LDP and is a key member of the Physical Activity and Wellbeing Legacy Group chaired by Dean Hill, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead for the CWG, as are Sport England.
- The local delivery pilot contains six priority areas in Birmingham and Solihull. These are the focus for the pilot; however, they may do things outside these areas.
- The purpose is to build resilient communities and get more people active. They do this by using active citizens opportunities to engage those least likely to be physically active.
- There are nine different work packages, and this includes the bikes and cycling work.
- Reclaim the wild commons work package is similar to the FPA and they are working closely together. They are exploring whether they can create a new relationship between people and place, with parks and green spaces supporting physical activities in communities that are experiencing the highest level of deprivation.
- Green space is inequitably distributed in Birmingham. This is contributing to long-term health inequality and impacts children and BAME communities disproportionately.
- There remain significant barriers stopping communities from accessing green space. These include physical barriers, such as dual carriageways, and cultural barriers, such as only seeing the green space suitable for dog walkers.

Working together and not seeing land in terms of financial value will help to break down these barriers.

- Covid 19 galvanised their focus and it is about social and environmental justice. It's about providing equitable access and supporting green spaces, and this can include a disused car park.
- Last year was the test and learn phase whereby they created seven new 'Wild Common Sites' with 74 community members driving higher levels of participation.
- There are several key learning points, and this includes multi-use space being key, spaces to grow food and play etc. It's not about recreating allotments.
- Members were shown a video on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px_k-bcQp9U&feature=youtu.be showcasing the work.
- Plans 2021-22: They are in the process of working with Sport England to secure funding for the next phase of the programme. They will continue with the programme and this includes more common spaces, building community capacity and collaborative action. They will be working with the PFA etc., to break down barriers and overcome the inequality and do something radical on the social justice barrier.
- Dean Hill is the physical activity and wellbeing legacy lead for the CWG, and his post is funded by Sports England. His key role is creating active environments in the right way with a community led approach.
- The awarding of the CWG was predicated on its legacy approach. The Active Communities programme is part of the CWG Active Environments Legacy. Parks and green spaces are key as they are social connectors. It is about being low cost and sustainable and is predicated on the approach being taken into policy for long-term change. They have also connected this into other legacy programmes such as volunteering.
- In relation to the venue sites, it is about how those settings can be made more attractive to people who don't usually use these.
- They have a budget predicated on Sport England money, who will be looking at this being a growth vehicle, and they will be looking for match funding from other places, such as Comic and Sport Relief, WMCA etc.,
- During Covid the City Council asked TAWS and BVSC to be the leads to help those most in need in the most deprived communities and this is called #Brumtogether. Examples were given of the work TAWS, with the approval of their funders, has been doing during Covid.
- They are building on the work undertaken during Covid and some of the services are becoming permanent.

In course of the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members the main points included:

- TAWS is keen to work with Members and Birmingham is starting to lead the way and the CWG provides a catalyst.

- Cllr Jan requested a meeting outside of this committee meeting and TAWS was happy to arrange this.
- Members thought the work they are doing in response to Covid, such as the food distribution is fantastic, and this should be highlighted in other platforms.
- The film was useful, and these sorts of projects need to be incorporated in new housing developments.

RESOLVED:

The update was noted and Members to receive contact details for the Listen and Connect Service.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 5).

The Chair suggested that the Committee's March meeting is cancelled as it will be more appropriate for Members to attend the Proud Host City Members Forum and details of this have been circulated. Members agreed with this suggestion.

RESOLVED:

- The work programme was noted.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday, 7th April 2021 at 1.30pm was noted.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Agreed.

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 15.39 hours.