

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
HODGE HILL WARD LMEETING
TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2018
7:00PM
BLUE CROSS UNITED REFORM CHURCH
242 COLESHILL ROAD
HODGE HILL
B36 8BG

MEETING NOTES

Present: Councillors Diane Donaldson and Majid Mahmood

Officers: PC Boraston – West Midlands Police
PC Burke – West Midlands Police
Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Team
Pete Hobbs - Service Head, Private Rented Services and Tenant Engagement

There were 25 residents present.

Cllr Donaldson in the Chair

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING

The Chair advised that members of the press and public could record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

Residents were reminded that only those living in the ward would be allowed to contribute to the discussions.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Fiona Williams and Sgt Marnell. Residents were advised that Sgt Marnell had been involved with successfully executing a warrant in the ward earlier in the day; the news was warmly welcomed by residents.

3. LOCAL NEWS/UPDATES FROM WARD COUNCILLORS

Residents were advised of the following:-

- Businesses were looking to recruit local people as the housing redevelopment proposals across the ward were being put forward to the Planning Department.

- Brockhurst Playing Fields – Education officers had confirmed that arrangements would be made to reduce unauthorised access to the fields. There were no plans for the playing fields to be sold/disposed of as open green space remained crucial to the ward. Permission would have to be given by the Secretary of State if the field was deemed to

be surplus to requirements. A local football team had expressed an interest in using the fields as their home ground and taking on the care/management of the facilities.

- Beauford Social Club – the facilities had sold to developers. A Planning Application for the redevelopment of the site was expected to be submitted in due course.
- Holbrook Tower – demolition was expected to take place within the next few weeks.
- Warstone Tower – a number of issues still had to be resolved before demolition could take place. Residents would continue to be kept informed.
- Former Neighbourhood Office – was recently sold at Auction. Proposals for the site have yet to be submitted. In the meantime, the area around parade of shops would be tidied up.
- Land behind the former police station, Old Bromford Road –the future use of the land was yet known; a planning application had not yet been submitted.

There were no other updates.

Action: All to Note

5. POLICING AND HMO ISSUES/CONCERNS IN THE WARD

Members and residents welcomed Pete Hobbs, Private Rented Services, BCC and PCs Boraston and Burke, West Midlands Police.

HMO Issues (House in Multiple Occupation)

Pete Hobbs advised of the following:-

- A HMO is where three or more people (who were not related) occupy a house, pay rent for their own bedroom and shared all other facilities.
- The increase in HMOs across the city was a cause of concern for many residents and neighbourhoods. Landlords who owned a HMO were strongly advised and encouraged to apply for a HMO licence.
- A mandatory licence was required if the HMO comprised of three or more storeys; with five or more people in occupation who form two or more single households.
- The City Council has discretionary powers to widen the remit of licensing to include smaller HMOs if several in an area were badly managed.
- Residents with concerns about HMOs should contact officers in the Private Rented Sector Team via telephone or email: 0121 303 5070; prs@birmingham.gov.uk

Several residents advised of anti-social/nuisance behaviour and acts of criminality including drug use by occupants living in HMO in the area. A number of complaints and concerns had been made to the landlord however these appear to have been ignored. Following further discussion, it was agreed that residents would discuss the concerns in more detail with Mr Hobbs at the end of the meeting.

Policing Update

PCs Boraston and Burke advised of the following:-

- There had been an increase in burglaries across the city. Locally, 15 burglaries had been reported during Jan – Feb 2018. Cash and jewellery were the items mostly stolen.
- Vehicle crime had also increased, with specific models targeted for use in repairing written off cars bought at auction. Following a successful CID led operation, 20 arrests had been made.
- Offender management remained one of the key priorities for the neighbourhood policing teams across West Midlands Police. Officers were also making better use of social media to gather information/evidence on activities/acts of criminality. A recent 'Stop and Search' activity had resulted in one arrest and several cautions.

Residents were reminded to remain vigilant, and to ensure their homes and vehicles were properly secured, and valuables kept out of sight. Officers were also keen to help and support residents with local initiatives like Streetwatch and setting up their own neighbourhood/residents groups.

Residents advised of a number of concerns relating to drugs related incidents in the ward, including drugs dealing openly carried out in public. Residents expressed frustrations that even though evidence, including car registration numbers had been passed on to the police, there was little or no change, and the dealers had become very arrogant and 'untouchable' in their manner and attitude.

Responding to residents' comments, the officers explained that ongoing investigations and surveillance were not always visible; a number of activities were done 'behind the scenes' in order to successfully apprehend/arrest the alleged perpetrator. The officers acknowledged that communication and feedback/updates from officers involved in operations could be improved and offer reassurance to the community, and would take this back to the senior officers for their consideration and action.

The officers agreed to discuss specific issues and concerns with residents at the end of the meeting.

Bringing the discussions to a close, the Chair thanked Mr Hobbs and PCs Boraston and Burke for their attendance and updates.

Action: All to Note

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed following the Local Elections on 3 May 2018.

7. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Noted and agreed 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 closed at 8.32pm.