

Birmingham City Council
Notes of the meeting of the Weoley Ward Forum
Saturday 10 November 2016 at 10.30am at St Gabriel's Church Centre, Marston Road

Present: Councillor Steve Booton (in the Chair), Councillor Julie Johnson & Councillor Peter Douglas Osborn

Chris Smith, West Midlands Travel

Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager

There were 18 residents also in attendance

1. **Notice of Recording** – Noted

2. **Apologies** – Richard Burden M.P.

3. **Notes of Last Meeting**

Councillor Douglas Osborne said that he would like it noted that he had proposed Cllr Booton as Chair.

A resident confirmed that at (c) it was also that the bins were left in the road and across the pavement.

Actions: The Chair undertook to get in touch with the Traders Association

4. **Police Update** – item deferred to next meeting.

5. **Main Item for Discussion**

– Bus Services

In connection with issues raised at the previous meeting regarding the no. 48 bus service residents raised the following issues of concern;

- a) Concern about how the bus route was planned & lack of consultation with residents.
- b) The new route was not well used and was not what was needed by residents
- c) Residents now struggled to travel into Birmingham but the merits of being able to travel to West Bromwich were questioned.
- d) The original service was run using a small bus (smaller than a single deck vehicle) and was always well used. Since the route had changed people had stopped using it which must affect its profitability.
- e) There was a safety concern in relation to the double deck bus on the route as the vehicle repeatedly hit overhanging branches en route and there had been an accident by the school recently.
- f) The route around Weoley was not suitable for a double deck bus
- g) The double deck bus was very noisy compared to the single deck bus.
- h) The change to a double deck bus had a negative impact on residents. It was intrusive to those residents on Swarthmore Road especially as the road was not designed to accommodate that size of vehicle. When the original bus route had been agreed residents had been assured it would be a small bus, even a single deck bus had not had the impact that the double deck bus had – where the houses were lower on one

side of Swarthmore Road people on the upper deck could see into the houses. The pavements were narrow and when the bus passed pedestrians had to stop walking and let the bus pass. The buses were also very noisy and residents were disturbed at night.

- i) It was unfair for people in Weoley to have to suffer an inadequate service to enable a route to be run to West Bromwich. It was an illogical route as no-one wanted to travel that way.
- j) The bus company appeared to have lost touch with what customers wanted. There were no inspectors on the buses to check how the service was running.
- k) Concerns were also raised about buses on Bristol Road and problems of overcrowding.

Residents stressed that they did not want to lose the bus service but wanted more suitable vehicles and a more user friendly route to enable them to get to Northfield, the City Centre, hospital etc.

Councillor Peter Douglas Osborn said that the message needed to go back that a good service was not being provided and consequently people were not using it.

Councillor Johnson reported the following comments that had been passed to her by residents;

- l) The double deck buses caused windows in houses to shake
- m) Buses were speeding
- n) The buses were continually empty – so why use double deckers?
- o) In comparison the no.61 was always full and passengers could not get on as it was a single deck bus
- p) Concerns about the safety of children and pedestrians as the local roads were too narrow for double deck buses and routes through side roads were not appropriate.
- q) Resident consultation on whole service in the area was required.

Chris Smith responded to the points raised as follows;

1. Passenger numbers, usage etc were studied when setting routes but it was acknowledged that not all passengers would be satisfied with all routes but on occasion it was necessary to do things that upset a smaller group for the larger majority.
2. A risk assessment was undertaken for each route.
3. It was acknowledged that a double deck bus was probably not warranted at the Weoley end of the route but it was needed in the West Bromwich area and when a single deck bus had been used there had been complaints.
4. There was no garage in the area therefore a local service could not be offered and had to have a joined up service to operate.

Residents made further comments as follows;

- r) Reference was made to the 22, 23, 24 & 29 services which changed route late evening and if passengers were not aware they could end up at an alternative location. It was requested that announcements be made on board to avoid confusion.
- s) The use of Swift cards was welcomed but it was noted that if an error was made on the bus drivers did not know how to rectify it and it was suggested that drivers be educated.
- t) An early 48 service on Sunday mornings would be helpful.
- u) It was noted that changes were being made to the 61 & 63 service.

Chris Smith responded;

1. Guidance was given to drivers regarding destination changes
2. Single deck buses should not be operated Bristol Road
3. The no 61 would become the X61, a limited stop service on Bristol Road and then all stops to Northfield to Frankley. The 63 service was increasing to every 7-8 minutes. The changes would be publicised.

Actions:-

- **Chris Smith to take back comments made re the no 48 service and while he could not guarantee changes there was a pilot scheme being undertaken in West Bromwich which included the no 48. Residents would also have the opportunity to comment through that process.**
- **Chris Smith to remind drivers re: destination changes**
- **Chris Smith to check with garages re: use of single deck buses on Bristol Road.**
- **The Chair emphasised that the real issue with the no.48 was the use of double deck buses on the residential roads in Weoley. A petition had been submitted in July setting out overwhelming opposition to the route as residents could not travel easily to the hospital or into the City Centre. Chris Smith was therefore asked to take back a request that the route be revised to include the hospital, city centre and that single deck buses and not double deck buses be used. An in depth consultation on routes, stops, frequency etc needed to be undertaken with events and public meetings to publicised. Chris to feedback a response to Councillors for an update at the next meeting.**

5. Any Other Business/ Residents Issues

a) Local Innovation Fund

Councillor Johnson explained the Local Innovation Fund, the process for proposals and how it could be used. The Chair advised that the next meeting on 10 December

would be to discuss LIF in more detail and look at the way forward for dealing with the ward's allocation.

b) Planning Application – Land at Manor House, Bristol Road South

Councillor Douglas Osborn advised the planning application for 138 new houses on the site had been approved on 13 October. The apartments would be in the mirror image style of the original manor house. Concern expressed on the effect on the local infrastructure, in particular congestion on local roads. Councillor Johnson suggested residents report any particular issues to the Councillors as there were problems at certain lights, junctions etc and they would look to see what could be done.

c) Square Club

The Chair reported on issues with the building and that the sale was now going to auction. Two groups had expressed an interest so it was hoped the building would be sold and the proceeds be used for youth provision in the ward.

6. Next Meeting

Saturday 10 December at 10.30am at Weoley Castle Library.

7. Authority to Act Between Meetings

Noted & Agreed

Meeting ended at 11.50 am