

Birmingham City Council
Sparkbrook Ward Meeting
12 October 2018 at 7pm
at Balsall Heath Church Centre, Mary Street

Present: Councillor Mohammed Azim (Chair), Councillor Victoria Quinn &
Councillor Tony Kennedy
Karen Cheney, Head of Neighbourhood Support & Community Development & Hall
Green District
John Mole, Community Support & Development Officer
Kay Thomas, Neighbourhood Development & Support Unit

There were 32 residents also in attendance

1. **ELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR 2017/18** – Councillor Azim
2. **NOTICE OF RECORDING** – Noted
3. **APOLOGIES** – none
4. **PETITIONS** – From residents of Birchwood Road objecting to the opening of several new restaurants on Ladypool Road which had led to excessive amounts of litter, parking problems, drug dealing and prostitution. Residents request the Council to provide more frequent street cleaning, more litter bins and signage, consideration of a resident's parking scheme and investment in the area which is an alternative venue for visitors to the city centre.

Action: Councillors to submit to next City Council meeting

5. **LOCAL INNOVATION FUND**

John Mole outlined the LIF criteria and process.

The following groups then made presentations in support of their LIF applications;

a) **Balsall Heath Sparkbrook Social Action Hub**

Christina, Suba and Ash presented a plan to enable the Balsall Heath & Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Forums to work jointly across the ward and develop a social action hub with residents & partners using deliberative democracy to co-produce community led solutions to long standing community problems in a more organised way. Events and consultations had already been held. Reference made to the Balsall Heath Development Plan and the environmental work and older peoples group already established in Sparkbrook. The groups already worked together through the KIKIT project in response to the drug problem in the ward but the LIF would enable more collaborative work to take place following on from workshops organised by residents to find out residents views. Other funding would be sought.

b) **Get Balsall Heath Reading**

Councillor Kennedy declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of St Pauls Community Development Trust.

Hafsha Shaikh, Alison Moore (St Pauls) and Kathleen Roche-Nagi (Approachable Parenting) outlined a proposal to encourage and involve parents in their child's reading and learning, including numeracy and IT, by helping parents reading & numeracy skills. The project would be delivered collaboratively by 3 partners and involve volunteers – parents trained as mentors - and families from across the ward.

c) Carers Forward Hub

Haleema and Ishak set out the proposal to improve services for families in need, in particular for women, BME, single parents and vulnerable groups by providing days out, self- help, support schemes, coffee mornings, advice workshops. It had been proved that being a carer and isolation affected health but that breaks and interaction could be of benefit and enable people to express their needs. Services on offer would then need to be expanded. In response to concerns regarding sustainability the meeting was advised that funding was available from other sources and families would pay towards short breaks and activities. There was more demand than could be catered for therefore financial assistance was required to expand services.

After some discussion, support for Get Balsall Heath Reading and Balsall Heath/Sparkbrook Social Action Hub was announced by Councillor Kennedy. Carers Forward Hub did not meet the LIF criteria but councillors asked John Mole to work with the group to find alternative means of funding.

Karen Cheney confirmed that the LIF criteria was specific and proposals had to be innovative, sustainable and benefit the ward to meet ward priorities, delivered in a community setting. All of the proposals put forward had been good and officers would work with those that did not meet the criteria.

6. WARD PLAN

Councillor Kennedy explained the concept of ward plans and the meeting broke out into small groups to discuss and come up with priorities for the ward and where improvements could be made. The information from the groups would be used to draw up the plan for Sparkbrook.

7. RESIDENTS ISSUES

a) Leaves on the footpath

A local resident referred to the amount of leaves on footpaths making it dangerous for pedestrians. Councillor Kennedy explained that there was no budget for clearing leaves across the city but acknowledged that there were issues in certain parts of the ward and undertook to raise with parks/highways. Councillor Quinn referred to the ward plan exercise and queried what solution could be suggested by residents. In response to residents who said they cleared leaves from in front of their properties but had difficulty disposing of the leaves as they did not have a garden waste collection, Councillor Quinn referred to a community composting idea that had been organised elsewhere and suggested that residents could do similar. It was also suggested that schools could be involved.

b) Parking Enforcement

Residents referred to the inconsiderate and illegal parking that was common place across the ward and specific mention was made of Ladypool Road. The piles of black bags dumped around the ward were also a major cause of concern. There was no enforcement taking place and residents felt that the ward had been 'abandoned' by the council and sought assurance from the councillors that they would take up this issue on behalf of residents. Councillor Kennedy said that there had been projects to tackle issues on Ladypool Road and enforcement action was taken when evidence could be collected. Neighbours needed to work together and the collaboration between Balsall Heath and Sparkbrook Forums was a way of achieving this. Vehicles would be going to the Ladypool Road to clear the rubbish and action would be taken where evidence could be collected.

Residents called on the council to be more proactive and for the police to provide a local number for residents to call to report drug dealing etc as the 101 was not answered.

c) Cleveden Road/ Lincoln Street

A local resident thanked the council for the prompt removal of rubbish and suggested that more CCTV was installed.

d) Speeding, Edward Road

Residents reported persistent speeding along Edward Road which had not been helped by the mini roundabout. Several accidents had occurred and speed calming measures were required in the road along with adequate enforcement.

e) Rubbish

In response to comments Councillor Quinn thanked residents for their patience during the recent industrial action and now that the service was returning to normal councillors were reliant on residents to advise where rubbish was mounting up so that they could ensure it was cleared. It was also evident that the traders needed to be involved and that information was needed about where traders were dumping their rubbish with household waste.

Thanks were extended to the street cleaner covering Staunton Road/Stoney Lane for the excellent job they were doing.

The councillors were asked to note that the playground in Clifton Road had been closed due to a rat infestation and that large amounts of food were being put out for the birds in Sparkhill Park which was attracting rats.

8. AUTHORITY TO ACT BETWEEN MEETINGS

Noted and agreed

Meeting ended at 9.00pm