

**Sutton Reddicap Ward Meeting**  
**Monday January 22nd 2024**  
**Falcon Lodge Community Centre**  
**6.30pm to 8pm**

**1. Birmingham City Council (BCC) financial crisis update:**

- Equal pay liability (est £760m but rising by £14m a month if agreement with unions not reached April next year)
- £100m-plus failed Oracle IT system implementation – five times over budget, three years late and still not working (currently paying £500k a month for 20-30 staff to carry out manual bank reconciliations etc)
- Budget overspend of over £80m

Implications to residents will be finalized in next month's budget but we can expect to see:

- A **Council Tax increase of 21% over the next two years** is feared after BCC approached the Government for approval to raise it by more than the 5% cap. The increase (not yet confirmed) is widely expected to be 10% this year from April 2024, and the same again next year. These increases will then be 'baked in' for further increases to be added to them over additional years.

Taking a Band D property as an example:

The BCC element of Council Tax has increased from £1,114 in 2011/12 to £1,630 this year ie increase of £516 (46%) since Labour took control of the City Council (*having promised no increase Council Tax*).

The proposed increase of 9.99% for 2024/25 will take it to £1,791 and a further 9.99% increase next year will make it £1,969.

This would represent a Council Tax increase of £855 for a Band D property since 2011/12, or 77%.

- **Green Waste collection has now been increased by 20%** this year to £60 (or 33% over two years)
- BCC has to achieve a **£300m savings target over two years** (only £230m identified so far). However, latest reports indicate that this target is likely to increase by '*tens of millions*' as more issues are identified.  
NB 82% of savings targets were missed by BCC last year

- At least **600 job losses** – possibly more – have already been announced
- **£500m assets to be sold this year.** Need to closely monitor if any impact on Reddicap.
- **Non-essential spend frozen** – Spend Board review everything
- **Ward funding cancelled:** Community Chest £10k and balance of Beyond Birmingham Commonwealth Games funds of £14,300 given to Reddicap (£12,300 of which was fortunately used up before BCC went bankrupt) have been cancelled. New projects will now be increasingly difficult to fund; mainly maintenance work is taking place at the moment

Other Ward funds:

No news yet on the availability of Highways funding (last year £10k) and Housing ward funding (last year £13,600)

I am also awaiting confirmation that BCC will continue to pay for room hire for Ward Meetings and monthly Advice Surgeries in the next financial year (April 2024 onwards). These could both be at risk from spending cuts.

## **2. Brum Breathes Funding:**

Both *Brum Breathes* projects for Reddicap have been **approved**

Reddicap is one of only three wards out of 69 wards across the city which has presented plans and had them approved:

- **Newdigate Fields** (£16k Brum Breathes plus £59k S106 funds): Works are expected to start around March and last for 6 weeks approx.; hoping to mark up two kids pitches (Romulus to maintain?); I am awaiting finalized costs/designs
- **20mph localized zone** (£21k Brum Breathes): I am now just awaiting confirmation that the 30 year maintenance costs of this project can be approved. Highway Officers will be presenting a full business case to Brum Breathes/BCC on this soon

### **3. On-going projects:**

Despite the increasingly bleak news coming out of Birmingham there are a number of other projects which are still (hopefully) still moving forwards. These include:

- **Garage projects:** new gates and locks at five locations on Fowler Road, Lindridge Road x 2 and Wyatt Road x 2. Fowler Road has been approved – awaiting feedback on the other four
- **Churchill Road benches:** hoping to secure funding for four benches in the communal garden area of the sheltered accommodation on Churchill Road (mainly elderly residents) to replace the ones which have rotted away. Possible joint BCC/TC project
- **Replacement bus shelters:** The two bus stops at bottom Carhampton Road will be replaced by two new bus shelters – both with seats – after I successfully lobbied TFWM. Expected mid to late March
- **New bus shelter:** I am hoping to convince TFWM to install a new bus shelter outside St Chads Church on Hollyfield Road to replace old bench. A local resident has organized a petition which already has over 120 signatures. I am continuing to liaise with TFWM on this.
- **New bus stop Rectory Road** will *hopefully* be installed shortly (Reddicap side) after old one had to be relocated as it was too close to the junction with the new development. The new location has been agreed with residents and I am now seeking funding via TFWM or the developer to pay for it
- **Parking outside ASDA:** the line markings have been complete by BCC and a TRO to make them enforceable is going through. Four bollards will also be installed and I am hoping tha too. Have also requested the damaged grass area on Churchill Road will be seeded or re-turfed
- **New Hall Cemetery:** temporary one-way measures have been approved for Mother's Day (Xmas Eve was a recent success) and I hope to successfully apply for he same measures on Father's Day, Eid (x 4 days) and Xmas Eve. Some new temporary perimeter fencing has also been ordered to replaces damaged and missing sections
- **New planters funded by the Town Council:** four new planters with winter bedding have been installed on Churchill Road. I am hoping to secure a few more for outside the Community Centre and the shops area opposite Pesto (TBC)

- **Hanging baskets, plants on rails outside Churchill Road shops and planters** will be installed in the ward this summer – the same as per last year, again funded by the Town Council. I have also put in a request for wildflower meadow on Churchill Road to be extended
- Two Woodington Road hardstanding areas for wheelie bins have now installed: I am pleased to say that (to the best of my knowledge) **all flats in Falcon Lodge now have wheelie bins** which was one of my pledges when elected Councillor in May 2022
- **Access road into Sutton United Football Club and New Hall Allotments off Coleshill Rd:** this access road is suffering from terrible pothole issues and is almost impassable in places. I am currently liaising with the Town Council, the Football Club and BCC about improving the road surface and am hopeful for good news on this shortly
- **Falcon Lodge Allotments:** these allotments are next in line to be transferred to Sutton Town Council from BCC (only two of the town's 13 allotments have been successfully transferred so far). Progress remains slow but the Town Council is making some improvements regardless. Rangers are carrying out perimeter clearance work, putting in fences etc from the end of January onwards, and a Health and Safety assessment was recently carried out identifying areas for improvement whilst TC and BCC legal services go through the transfer paperwork
- **Data strips to analyse vehicle speeds:** a data strip has been installed on Springfield Rd (junction with Churchill Road) and I am awaiting results; and a data strip will also be installed on Berryfields Road on January 29<sup>th</sup>. These data strips will analyse traffic speeds to determine if any traffic calming measures can be justified (although the next issue would be securing funding)
- **Access road applications for Langley** were withdrawn by developers before Christmas but we expect the applications will come back again with – hopefully – recognizing demands of residents to retain more of the existing trees and hedges. I have registered my concerns about the A38 access road at the end of OxLeys Road which would push more North bound/incoming traffic through the ward.
- **Remedial works for damaged area at junction of Springfield Road/Lindridge Road:** due for completion any day now
- Recent increase in **graffiti attacks** on Churchill Road (shutters, bins, bus stops, road signs etc): Town Council Rangers keep clearing up the graffiti but they repeatedly come back again

#### **4. Recent projects completed:**

- **New bus service:** the new 77B bus service between Beggars Bush/New Oscott and Fairfax/John Willmott Schools started 8.1.24 after I convinced National Express to put on a new direct bus service from Boldmere to the schools to cope with demand. The effectiveness of this new service is currently being. Hopefully will reduce numbers of cars coming to the schools if parents can put their kids on buses instead. Initial indications are that the service is working well
- **Berryfields Rd resurfacing now completed** – fully resurfaced. Delighted to confirm that in addition to Berryfields Road, over the past two years I have also successfully campaigned for the full resurfacing of three key roads in the ward - Reddicap Heath Road, Springfield Road and Sir Alfreds Way
- The height of the **Rectory Road speed cushions** has been reduced (was damaging cars)
- Various **trip rail repairs** have been repaired around the estate and **broken road signs** fixed, with more repairs reported and awaiting completion
- **Police projects:** over the next few weeks I will be conducting a Speedwatch campaign and taking part in a walkabout with the Police. A Police 'pop-up advice surgery' will be taking place soon

Details of other ward projects completed since the previous Ward Meeting can be found on my Facebook page '**Reddicap Ward News**'

**Cllr Richard Parkin**