

BORDESLEY & HIGHGATE WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Bordesley & Highgate	DATE: 7th March 2024
VENUE: Stanhope Hall, Ketley Croft B12 0XG	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 8pm
COUNCILLOR Yvonne Mosquito	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 14
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Colin Murphy & Sadie Thomson-Ashworth – Lendlease Doreen Wiffen-Jones, Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator Pat Whyte, Community Development & Support Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	VISITING SPEAKER – Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member, Environment

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:

1. Welcome & Notice of Recording

Councillor Mosquito welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the public/press could photograph and record the meeting, except where there were exempt or confidential items.

2. Police Update

Apology submitted on behalf of the police team.

3. Smithfield Development Consultation

With the aid of a power point presentation, Colin Murphy explained the revised plans for the Smithfield development and made the following main points –

- Plans had been revised around markets, office space, housing (mix) and cultural/arts buildings following comments/objections received during the initial consultation.
- Changes had been made to the historic site within the development as a result of comments from Historic England to preserve the moat site and open sight lines to St Martins Church.

- The scheme aimed to provide better connectivity between Smithfield and neighbouring areas, create local jobs, create garden areas, plant 1000 trees across the site and provide the infrastructure for the introduction of the tram from Digbeth to Edgbaston in future years.
- Total development was projected to take 10 years. First phase would be retail, and following a consultation period, was expected to start on site October 2024. The shape of the development would be informed by people's views over the duration of the project.

In response to resident's comments/questions the following responses were provided –

- Regarding Birmingham Pride the meeting was advised that the new Square would provide a smaller space than currently for the festival, but it was in line with other cities capacity. Residents' concerns regarding protecting Pride were acknowledged.
- Trees would be medium sized and would be maintained. The cost of planting/maintenance would be the responsibility of those living/working there and would not be BCC funded.
- The scheme was a joint venture between Lendlease and BCC and the 2 organisations had worked well in the past. The balance between residential, recreational and business use was key to ensure the development worked.
- Residents stressed the need for an event/function space to enable Pride, fairs etc to continue.
- BCC was keen not to promote car use but there needed to be a balance between public and private transport use and the plans created that balance.
- Sadie said that with regard to employment, jobs would be ring fenced to local people and she would advocate obligations with businesses/architects/developers. Lendlease would also work to develop appropriate local skill sets and work with schools on career choices so that over the 10year plan there would be the jobs/careers that young people wanted to be involved with. Other operators would be working on site and making offers to local organisations/groups etc through social value principals. The meeting was advised that local consultation would continue, and Sadie would continue to meet residents at Stanhope Hall to gather local ideas.

4. Discussion with Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member Environment

Councillor Mahmood set out his role and responsibilities as Cabinet Member for the Environment. He went on to make the following main points –

- Thanks extended to the 8 litter picking groups in the ward that had collectively collected an incredible amount of litter.
- Love Your Environment all out days held monthly in Bordesley & Highgate would continue.
- Mobile Household Recycling Centres would also continue but would focus on waste rather than recycling. The use of these centres needed to be promoted more to increase use in the ward.
- Recycling needed to be increased in inner city wards, including Bordesley & Highgate, and a second recycling bin could be provided for residents who had sufficient space.

- Tower block refuse management required improvement.
- Bordesley & Highgate ward was a priority in the Future Parks Strategy and would benefit from additional tree planting.
- There was a schedule of street cleaning for the ward but no contingency for sickness etc. Any major issue could be reported via Cllr Mosquito
- From 2026 the council would have a legal duty to offer food waste collection, funded via the government. Food caddies would be provided.
- Support for litter picking groups would continue through provision of equipment. There had been a supply issue with the black bags and the poor quality was acknowledged and was being addressed.

Residents expressed concern regarding proposals for a fortnightly waste collection service, fearing that the already unacceptable numbers of black refuse sacks left on the street and side waste would increase. Concern was also expressed regarding increases in odours, vermin and dumped rubbish. There appeared to be limited street cleaning in Highgate and residents in Spooner Croft had been advised they were not on a schedule. Residents had attempted to organise a litter pick with the housing department as much of the litter was on housing department land, but no action had yet been agreed. Councillor Mahmood explained he was not responsible for housing land but was discussing transfer of budgets to enable waste management to clear all council owned land.

Councillor Mahmood advised that not all households would receive a fortnightly collection, including those on black sack collections, flats above shops and tower blocks. Larger bins were available for larger families which would stop the need for side waste. Side waste was not collected (except at Christmas/Ramadan) as with the right sized bin and recycling, all waste should be contained. There was considerable work to be undertaken before the introduction of fortnightly collections, including communication with residents and a pilot scheme. Residents were advised that the food collection service would reduce the amount of waste going into bins and the food caddy, which would be emptied via a weekly collection, could be kept inside or outside.

In response to queries regarding Household Recycling Centres, the present booking system would continue as it had reduced congestion around the sites and had increased the use of HRC's since introduction. Residents could phone the Contact Centre for assistance with booking an appointment and if in receipt of assisted collections, free bulky collections were available.

Friends of Bradford Street raised the following and Councillor Mahmood undertook to look into the matters –

- Request for additional bins in Bradford Street area, particularly Green Street – a litter hotspot.
- Apartment blocks on Cheapside – assistance required re management/assessment of bin provision and removal of litter/rubbish etc.

Councillor Mahmood also undertook to ask officers to undertake a site visit to Angelina Street to investigate rubbish dumping around the electricity sub-station as reported by residents.

In response to a suggestion for a monetary incentive scheme on the return of drink bottles at recycling centres, Councillor Mahmood said this was supposed to have been introduced via the Environment Act but had been dropped by government. He assured residents that if there was ever an opportunity to be involved in such a scheme, he would take it up.

5. Update – Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator

Doreen Wiffen-Jones explained her role as a Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator for the ward, working together with residents, community groups to offer support, access funding and support the ward plan priorities. Since taking up post Doreen advised she had been working with groups at Stanhope Hall, youth groups in the area, the Family Centre and TAWS. At Stanhope Hall she had been working with the residents steering group to develop the range of activities on offer.

In response to questions, Councillor Mosquito advised she was not aware of any plans regarding Stanhope Hall and that the discussion at the last meeting had been around resident's suggestions for a Friends of Group to work in partnership with other groups/organisations to best serve the residents of the ward.

6. Councillor Updates

- a) B5 Central community safety issues had been reported to the police.
- b) Residents advised that they did not have to wait for a ward meeting as Councillor Mosquito was willing to attend resident's meetings to discuss specific topics. She would attend a Friends of Bradford Street meeting if details could be forwarded.
- c) Residents Parking Scheme – residents should have received a letter with details and further information would be circulated.

Residents Updates

- a) Pest Control Tower Blocks – resident requested automatic twice-yearly pest control treatment rather than the current ad-hoc arrangement for treatment which relied on residents reporting vermin infestations. Regular shrub pruning around the blocks and maintenance of communal areas through a regular plan would help to reduce complaints. Councillor Mosquito undertook to raise with the Cabinet Member.

