

SMALL HEATH WARD FORUM MEETING

Friday 19th October 2018

Khidmat Community Centre

2A Heather Road, Small Heath

B10 9TE

7pm – 8.55pm

COUNCILLOR/S: Cllr Zaheer Khan	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 50+
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Team Mushtaq Hussain – Local Housing Manager	GUEST SPEAKER: Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member

WARD PRIORITIES: Not Yet Identified

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, Cllr Zaheer Khan welcomed residents to the first meeting of the new Small Heath Ward. Residents were advised of the changes to all the Ward Boundaries in the city from May 2018. The number of wards had been increased from 40 to 69; 32 of which were represented by two Councillors and 37 by one Councillor.

Small Heath Ward was represented by two Councillors – Cllrs Safia Akhtar and Zaheer Khan – both had been elected at the Local Elections in May and would be serving as Councillors for the first time.

2. Notice of Recording

Residents were advised that members of the press/public may record and take photographs of the meeting.

3. Apologies for Absence

Submitted on behalf of Cllr Akhtar due to illness.

4. Local Updates

Cllrs Updates

Cllr Khan briefly advised that he was still getting used to his role of Ward Councillor and understanding/trying to address residents issues and concerns following his election in May. Residents were given details of his Advice Bureau and reminded that specific issues and concerns could be raised there or via telephone, home visits or emails.

Waste Collection Service – Update

Following introductions, Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member, Clean Streets, Waste & Recycling advised of the changes to the Service. Collection crews were now contracted to work over 5 days instead of 4 from w/c 24th September. Shifts started at 5.30am until 1.30pm approx. The scheduled collection days for the ward remained unchanged, however the rounds that crews worked would be different, and would inevitably take some time to settle down as crews got to know their new rounds/streets.

Recycling rates remained one of the lowest in the city and encouraged residents to make greater efforts to increase their recycling of paper, glass, plastics and cans. Additional or larger wheelie bins were also available for larger households; residents should contact their Cllrs or Cllr Mahmood with their request.

Fly-tipping was also a cause for concern; several hotspot areas had been identified and cleared on a regular basis. Local businesses were also actively encouraged to ensure that appropriate trade waste contracts were in place to avoid substantial fines by Waste Enforcement Officers.

Residents were reminded to remain vigilant and to continue to report all incidents of fly-tipping to Cllrs or the Contact Centre and details/description of the perpetrator/vehicle registration number if it was safe to do so.

The following concerns were raised:-

- Residents with vans were unable to take their rubbish to the HRC as they were being unfairly treated as traders and needed a licence which was unfair. If residents were allowed to use vans to help clear their rubbish, there would be less fly-tipping.
- The needs of the Asian community differed to those of other communities; families were much larger and as such tended to generate more rubbish. More help, support and consideration should be given to residents to address these issues.

- Street cleansing across the ward was urgently needed; roads and pavements were filthy and the increase in rats and mice was a concern for everyone.
- Residents had become disheartened and let down by service providers in the ward and the goodwill of many residents in keeping their streets and neighbourhoods clean and tidy had been lost.

Responding to residents, Cllr Mahmood explained that whilst he was willing to carry out site visits to areas of concern with residents, these must also include the Ward Cllrs as they were the elected representatives. Residents should also build on the work and commitment of a number of community groups and organisations in the ward who as volunteers did an enormous amount of good work in the community alongside the police and council services. The City Council no longer had the financial and officer resources to continue to provide the ongoing clean-ups that residents across the city expected, and that the mind-set, behaviours and practises of all residents needed to change. Support, information, advice and equipment would be provided to those residents/community groups who wanted to make a difference to their neighbourhood. Discussions were also ongoing with Veolia regarding van permits for residents and any associated costs if appropriate so that communities could help support each other with disposing of waste and bulky items correctly.

Residents thanked Cllr Mahmood for his attendance.

5. Residents Issues and Concerns

Residents advised of the following:-

- Too many fast food outlets along the Coventry Road; greater planning control and restrictions were needed. Residents would like to see Planning Officers invited to a future meeting.
- A more coordinated approach to encouraging local businesses to work together was needed; consideration should be given to setting up a Business Improvement District.
- An increase in street begging in the ward, not all of which was genuine. Residents felt uneasy and unsure about giving money to those asking for money, but felt morally bound to help. Clearer advice regarding helping street begging was needed.
- On-street and often obstructive parking in residential roads was a huge problem and often the source of discord between neighbours – Banks Road was particularly problematic.

6. Petitions

None submitted

7. Any Other Business

None raised.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

To be agreed and residents advised accordingly.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm