

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**EDGBASTON DISTRICT
COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2017**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDGBASTON DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2017 AT 1900 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Councillor John Alden in the Chair
Councillors Deirdre Alden, Matt Bennett, Kate Booth, Jayne Francis, Matthew
Gregson, Bruce Lines, James McKay and Fergus Robinson.

ALSO PRESENT: -

Dewan Choudhury - Place Directorate
Keith Dugmore – Edgbaston District Lead
Peter Howarth - Project Manager, Birmingham Cycle Revolution
Andy Middleton – Cycling Programme Manager, Economy Directorate
Colin Smith - Fortem
Errol Wilson - Committee Manager

NOTICE OF RECORDING

345 The District Committee were advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or
subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site and members of the
press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential
or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

346 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors John Clancy,
Des Flood and John Lines.

MINUTES

347 **RESOLVED:** -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017 having been previously
circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

The business of the meeting and all discussions in relation to individual reports was available for public inspection via the web-stream.

BIRMINGHAM CYCLE REVOLUTION CONSULTATION

348 Councillor Deirdre Alden enquired why the item was included on the agenda as the District was only supposed to discuss items that covered two or more Wards. The consultation was wholly in Edgbaston Ward. She further enquired why it was at this meeting as it was already presented at the Edgbaston Ward meeting.

The Chairman advised that as the proposed cycle route was a major change within transport in Edgbaston District it was considered important for all Councillors in the District be informed of what was happening.

Peter Howarth, Project Manager, Birmingham Cycle Revolution, Infrastructure Projects and Andy Middleton, Cycling Programme Manager, Economy Directorate attended. Mr Howarth made introductory comments and drew the attention of the members to the then presented the item.

Members then commented on the proposal as follows: -

- ❖ The information presented was a huge improvement on the previous proposal and the Edgbaston Councillors was in favour of the cycle lane going down the central reservation. There were problems that were identified which were fed into the consultation; the problem was from the knock on effect of changes to Priory Road junction with Bristol Road.
- ❖ Regarding the proposal, vehicles travelling towards the City Centre on Bristol Road were not able to turn left onto Priory Road. Heading out of the City on the Bristol Road, vehicles were not able to turn right onto Priory Road due to the difficulty of the cycle traffic. This meant that heading to Edgbaston from the City, there was no right turn until Edgbaston Park Road.
- ❖ In order to alleviate this problem there needed to be a change at the Bristol Road junction by McDonald's, where there was currently one right turn, but the queue was stretching back to turn. Vehicles could turn right into Wellington Road, but there was an option in the consultation to have a right turn onto Wellington Road which would result in more traffic going either up Lee Bank Middle Way and then turning left onto Spring Road which was a narrow road with speed bumps or if the Wellington Road option turning right onto Wellington Road.
- ❖ Either way the traffic would end onto Wellington Road. The next left turn after Spring Road was Ryland Road which they had just consulted on and the positive response was that there were a number of proposals including parking restrictions and to have a *No Entry* from the ring road. Any cars turning left there would not be able to turn onto Ryland Road and would follow down onto Spring Road or Wellington Road if that option was available. The flow of traffic onto those roads would increase significantly.

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- ❖ Another option was instead of turning right they would turn left down to Pershore Road and continue along Pershore Road and then take the right at that junction to Priory Road so they could then go up. This was another problem as some issues were identified at that junction and they had been asking for some pedestrian crossings to be placed there.
- ❖ With the increase in traffic, there was more of a need for pedestrian crossings, but as the scheme did not cover this junction, there would be no funding available from the scheme. There would be an impact on the roads around the scheme and something needed to be done particularly with the Priory Road/Pershore Road junction to try and alleviate the problem. Travelling from the City Centre, vehicles could not turn onto Sir Harrys Road as it would be closed.
- ❖ Of concern was the crossing facilities at Pershore Road, the fact that there was no money, the question was what would be done as Members were told that nothing could be done at the Bristol Road/Priory Road junction as they could not put in a pedestrian phase at these old junctions without making the congestion worst outside the guidelines they had to work to. Now something was being done, but only by stopping the right turns.
- ❖ If the capital spend was available to do something to help pedestrian crossing at Pershore Road, the question was what would be done as this was the same problem. If it could not be done without getting rid of the right turns, vehicles would not be able to turn onto Priory Road. The questions were what would be done and what would the plan be.
- ❖ There was also the Elmhurst problem as it was clear that the *U Turn* by Elmhurst Ballet School was a condition of planning when the Ballet School was built. It had to be there as the Ballet School paid for it. It was suggested that there was a way around this, but this would involve the removal of five mature trees. Of concern was the trees as saplings and semi-mature trees did not have the same health benefits as mature trees.

Following the presentation and in response to members' comments and questions the following points were made:-

- a. With regard to the proposal to banning the right turn at Priory Road was to solve the solution referred to by Councillor Alden. There was finite amount of capacity at that junction and if they wanted to maintain traffic capacity, maintain all the turns and introduce pedestrian facility, this would not work as something had to give.
- b. Previously when looking at pedestrian crossings, it was considered that the output from modelling that, the delay would increase four fold. The solution to try to not make the traffic capacity significantly worst and to introduce the pedestrian benefits at the same time as the cycle benefits was that something had to give and what they were proposing was banning the turns. This only affects 5% - 6% of traffic that uses the turn at the junction and there were alternate routes.
- c. One of the possible alternate routes from the City Centre to get to Priory Road was through Pershore Road and to turn right at Pershore Road. In terms of

what could be done they did not look into that yet as it was not part of the scheme, but what they would do as part of the cycle scheme was to mitigate any rerouting of traffic as a consequence of the cycle route.

- d. If there was any more traffic using Pershore Road (which was anticipated would happen) they would optimise the junction in terms of the timings to make that work more efficiently. If they could put some more pedestrian benefits in at the same time they would look to do so, but it was probably unlikely at the moment without doing a more fundamental scheme.
- e. When they were looking at the rerouting of traffic, introducing the right turn on Wellington Road was another option they were consulting on. One of the issues they were looking to introduce was to off-set the fact that there would not be a right turn on Priory Road. They were improving the Belgrave Road interchange junction to make it easier to turn right at that junction so the demand to turn right at Wellington Road was anticipated would decrease.
- f. The other issue they were trying to deal with at Wellington Road was the fact that a lot of people still made the illegal *U Turn* to then turn left at Wellington Road, but they turn legitimately right to turn into the shop car park to come back out the shop car park and then onto Wellington Road. This in itself was a safety issue as there was a crash in November when a cyclist was killed. They were looking at how they could introduce a safer facility at that location.
- g. In terms of the Elmhurst Ballet School, they had a solution for that which includes not taking away the *U Turn* and allowing a right turn out of the school. This was something they would be discussing with the school when they meet with them next week. This did not include any extra loss of trees.
- h. In relation to the trees, they were currently suggesting that 17 trees would need to be removed and they were endeavouring to put in 2 for 1 replacement. They were undertaking a tree survey currently as taking out mature trees and replacing them with saplings was not ideal. Majority of the 17 trees were not mature trees and 8 of them were fairly small. They were looking to replace them in the same vicinity on the same stretch of road.

The Chairman commented that he was relieved to hear that something would be done to ensure that the work that was paid for by the Elmhurst School would still be there.

- i. Andy Middleton, Cycling Programme Manager, Economy Directorate stated that in relation to Priory Road/Pershore Road junction, what they were looking to do as part of this scheme was the signal timings. Given the change in traffic flow in the vicinity, there was opportunity to improve the efficiency of the junction. There was a concern about the amount of traffic that would use this junction as a result of the changes on the Bristol Road.
- j. The whole principle of the scheme that they were putting in was a quality cycle scheme which was an integrated infrastructure for cyclist and all the feedback from the schemes in other parts of the country was that if you put quality infrastructure in, you get a significant modal shift from people using cars to people who were using cycles. Along the Bristol Road/Pershore Road corridor, it was hoped that there would be a reduction in the amount of road

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traffic in that corridor. As far as the junction was concerned, off-set against the changes in the new route it was hoped that there would be some reduction of vehicles in the area.

- k. Mr Howarth noted Councillor McKay's comments concerning traffic turning right across the Bristol Road and advised that there was a number of different ways of getting pass bus stops and they manage to do so with a few of them where there was not enough space. This was a floating bus stop where there was the footway, the cycleway and an extra piece of landing strip to get on and off the bus.
- l. On the narrower sections one option was that they would flip the cycle arrows down. This had been done elsewhere, such as Leeds and from feedback with the thought being a two way cycleway which was the balance of having enough cycle space. This was a comment that was welcomed on the consultation and as there were no right or wrong it was better to define a space even if there was a narrow space. They were looking for feedback on the proposal and would implement what the best solution would be.
- m. Mr Middleton stated that as far as the Bristol Road scheme was concerned, they were in the middle of the consultation. To date they had received 550 replies to the consultation exercise. They were at the moment processing those responses so that they could identify the key themes people were raising about the scheme. At the end of the consultation they would be presenting a summary and would be bringing that to the Cabinet Member and to a future District Committee meeting once all the information had been collected.
- n. Mr Middleton noted Councillor Bruce Lines comment concerning the Woodgate Valley scheme and advised that they had produced a summary of the consultation and had provided that to Ward Members. This was as provided at the consultation stage which was an exact replication as was provided to them. They had provided a detailed analysis of the consultation.
- o. Mr Howarth advised that in terms of maintenance there would be a change in the highway and a reduction in carriage and footway space in the creation of the cycle space. There would be an effect to the revenue cost and this would come out of the revenue highways maintenance budget.
- p. In terms of the road alignment on the left hand side, they were not proposing to realign the road. If they were doing everything from scratch they could do something different in terms of the overall space to what was currently there now. The footway on the eastern side of the road was narrower particularly just south of the Wellington Road where it was only just over 2m wide. That would only be wide enough for a footway and not a cycleway.
- q. The funding for the scheme was to be spent by 18 March 2017 and they were trying to get on site in June to give enough time to construct the scheme. They were looking to get Cabinet approval in April 2017 so they could then appoint a contractor to mobilise the start after June.

The Chairman thanked Peter Howarth and Andy Middleton for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT - REPAIRS

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Dewan Choudhury, Service Co-ordinator, Place Directorate and Colin Smith, Fortem attended the meeting and gave the following verbal presentation: -.

1. Mr Choudhury advised that from April 2016, Wilmott Dixon was rebranded as Fortem for the south of the City. They were the largest in terms of the number of properties - 23,721 properties for the south and the contract was for a period of 8 years starting from the 1st April. With the new contract there had been a significant change to the cost savings for the city.
2. New technology had been embraced with standardised approach to technology. This was the first time they had utilised industry leading technology which gives the tenants better visibility which could identify real time information. They had experienced some operational difficulties with the new technology, but this had now been addressed.
3. Since the start of the contract, for the south of the city they had completed 21,875 gas servicing in relation to the annual gas safety checks. With regards to gas servicing, they would complete 100% gas service by 31 March 2017. Our standard Key Performance Indicator (KPI) target for gas servicing was 98%. They had completed 752 new central heating installation which were all 'A' rated combination boilers. 20,501 gas repairs were completed since the start of the contract and 1,840 void properties were brought into use with an average turnaround time of 11 days.

Councillor Gregson commented that at the Committee meeting in January they had a number of statistics in the *Housing Transformation Board Performance* report. He stated that the item on the agenda mentioned the above report, but that the paper work they had was an Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) report that dates back to January and a note about the key challenges facing the Housing service in the District, but they did not have any statistics. He added that it would be helpful to have the detail of the information that they were now being provided with in advance of the meeting today.

The Committee Manager advised that the ASB report and the note concerning the key challenges facing the Housing service in the District were the responses to the questions that were raised at the Committee meeting in January. He was requested to append these responses to the Minutes of that meeting. The item was in relation to the questions raised at the last meeting concerning repairs and was the reason the officers were asked to attend.

Councillor Gregson stated that one of the things they were told at the last meeting was that a number of KPIs was *Red* in relation to repairs and they had gone through some examples. The information they had just been given had indicated that the situation regarding repairs was quite different. It comes back to the information the Members were provided with to engage with the agenda item.

4. Mr Choudhury stated that the KPIs with this contract were challenging and the contractors were paid on performance. If they did not achieve a *Green* KPI,

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they would lose money. As it was a challenging KPI and there had been some improvement – a number of KPIs had now gone *Green*.

In response to the Chairman's request, Dewan Choudhury undertook to send the information to the Committee Manager for circulation to the Committee.

Councillor Bennett commented that he did not like receiving verbal items like this and that it would be good to see the information beforehand. He questioned why they were in this position where officers came to the meeting to present the Committee with information, but no one had insisted that the paper work was presented to Members in time as was normally the case with every Council Committee he had sat on. He added that they should not be receiving reports from officers without the paper work up front.

5. In response to members' comments, Dewan Choudhury apologised for the lack of a written report and confirmed that he would feedback members' comments. He advised that the number of repairs completed was 58,256 and they were getting 4, 900 jobs per month.
6. During the winter months the repairs increased by 20%. In terms of capital improvements, the budget had been reduced significantly, but they were doing targeted improvements, condition surveys and identifying properties for kitchen, bathrooms, roofing etc. Repairs were prioritised as 1 day; 3 days; 7 days and 30 days. They also had emergencies for vulnerable tenants and 1 hour for gas leaks. They had a dedicated customer enquiries team and their office was based at Stonebrook Way.
7. Colin Smith, Fortem advised that the first year of the contract was a challenging one as there was a huge change over to some substantial numbers in both general repairs and gas but they were now stabilising particularly with the KPIs. There were some good KPIs, customer service in particular had been good over the last 12 months and the others had started on an upward trend. They were still experiencing some IT issues and some tenant issues that they needed to be resolved, but they were keeping on top of them now. They had a dedicated team and had recently set up a quick response team for both general repairs and gas repairs so they could start dealing with high priority jobs quickly.

Councillor Booth requested that assurance be given that gas checks would not be undertaken in December and January. There was also the issue of operatives turning up at properties when there was no one in. Mr Choudhury explained the 42 days process and the gas access process. Mr Smith advised that some cold calling was undertaken to meet some of the KPIs as they needed to get to these properties quickly. They had emailed, texted or invited the occupants to ring. The average turnaround time to get a property fit for letting was 11 days. There had been issues, but there were real improvements. An overview of the statistics was to be submitted.

The Chairman thanked Dewan Choudhury and Colin Smith for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

EDGBASTON DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN

- 350 Keith Dugmore, Edgbaston District Lead introduced the item and advised that they had set up the Community Plan with the 8 different themes, but they had not yet met with the Councillors, but a lot of work had been done in relation to each theme. He stated that an email was sent to ascertain if he could meet with the Councillors next week or so to get an update on all the individual themes and where they were and to look at any issues the Councillors had in relation to their theme.

In terms of environmental, they had 3 local clear ups in the District; working with a fostering group at Holloway Hall to see what support was given to fostering in the local area; health and wellbeing – they were working with Bartley Green Leisure Centre and partners to see if they could keep this in operation; they were looking at the Pits Wood access in Quinton and was working with the Head teacher and partners to look at this; transportation and parking they received funding of £1,000 to support the DVD Stonehouse Gang they had promised to support. A number of highways issues were being dealt with and he would be working with Marie Brown, District Engineer concerning the issues.

The Chairman thanked Keith Dugmore for presenting the information.

DATE OF NEXT EDGBASTON DISTRICT COMMITTEE

- 351 The Chairman introduced the item and stated that it was noted that some Members were unable to attend the Committee meetings on Thursdays. He enquired whether Members would be happy for the meetings to be held on Tuesdays. A brief discussion then ensued concerning the meetings being held in the evenings. The Chairman advised that the comments would be taken into account.

It was noted that the next Edgbaston District Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 6 June 2017, at 1900 hours, in Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB. The other meeting dates were provisional and would be ratified at the Committee meeting on the 6th June 2017

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- 352 Bartley Green Leisure Centre

Councillor B Lines stated that there was light at the end of the tunnel as the leisure centre had remained open. The Leisure Trust was willing to take on the operating of the Bartley Green Leisure Centre without any redundancy. Councillor B Lines and the Chairman expressed well done to Keith Dugmore for his hard work concerning the issue and also expressed thanks to the Edgbaston District Committee for their support over the years.

Car Parking Charges

The Chairman referred to an email he had received to advice of the increase in car parking charges in all the Council car parks across the City. The 1 hour charge would be abolished and there would be a 2 hour, 4 hours and 24 hours charges. He

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advised that he had pointed out the unintended consequence this would have in some shopping centres such as Harborne High Street. He further stated that the report on Proposed Off-Street Parking Charges – Local Car Parks 2017/18 had been *called in*. In the event that the report did go ahead he intended to request that Recommendation 2.1 of the report be reviewed to have a 1 hour charge included.

Grass Verges

The Chairman stated that the grass verges throughout the District had been churned up and that something needed to be done to preserve the grass verges. It was suggested that Amey be invited to attend the next District Committee meeting in June 2017. A suggestion was that raised kerbs could be used to deter parking on the grass verged. A brief discussion then ensued concerning the issue.

Transitioning of District Committees

The Committee requested that the Assistant Leaders be invited to attend the next Committee meeting to present the item.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

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RESOLVED: -

Chairman to move:-

"That in an urgent situation between meetings, the Chairman jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee."

The meeting ended at 2010 hours.

CHAIRMAN