

**BALSALL HEATH WEST WARD MEETING NOTES**

<b>WARD: Balsall Heath West</b>	<b>DATE: 13 December 2022</b>
<b>VENUE: Balsall Heath Church Centre, Mary Street</b>	<b>START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm - 8.35pm</b>
<b>COUNCILLOR Shelah Moledina</b>	<b>NOs OF ATTENDEES: 22</b>
<b>OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b> Alan Porter, Local Engineering Manager Rachel West, Community Development & Support Officer Sergeant Chris Gallon & PC Adam Jones, West Midlands Police Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	<b>GUEST SPEAKER/S</b> Councillor Liz Clements, Cabinet Member for Transport  Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment

**MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:****1. Welcome and Introductions from Councillor Moledina****2. Notice of Recording:**

Councillor Moledina advised that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items

### **3. Police Update from Sergeant Gallon**

Sergeant Gallon gave a local police update and made the following main points –

- As the sergeant for the Impact Team he had been brought into the area to tackle violent crime and drug issues but was also dealing with burglary
- Force priorities were serious youth violence, gangs, drugs and theft of/from motor vehicles
- The team was dealing with robberies in parks/open spaces
- 'Chop shop' on Moseley Road had recently been closed
- Seasonal trend/cost of living crisis had seen an increase in residential burglaries
- Team was increasing shift hours to enable patrols to 3/4am rather than 11pm
- Working with BCC to get a PSPO in place to crack down on drug dealing. Drug dealers known to be carrying weapons were targeted and warrants issued in respect of cannabis farms, but care needed to be taken with resources and so officers could not stop and search people on suspicion of cannabis use.
- Concerns of drug dealing in Speedwell Road would be forwarded to Sergeant Sharma with a request for patrols. Officers were on the streets as much as possible
- Good News – recent warrant recovered 14 zombie knives, class A drugs and over the last 12 months 170 arrests had recovered £14m worth of cannabis
- Crimes/information could be reported anonymously via Crimestoppers

Resident expressed concern regarding drug issues in the area, especially involving young people. Other issues such as speeding and robberies were affecting children and the lack of police officers on the street did not instil confidence. A request was made for a meeting to focus on policing in the ward. Sergeant Gallon suggested inviting Inspector Kirkpatrick to a future meeting.

Councillor Moledina said that crime was a ward priority as residents were not feeling safe in their home environment. She said that a future ward meeting could focus on police and crime issues. Sergeant Gallon said that the team had been visiting the elderly, residential homes and schools offering prevention advice and to homes where burglaries had been committed.

#### **4. Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Council Ballot Update**

Joe Holyoak, member of the Neighbourhood Council Steering Group, gave an update on the progress of the referendum. The ballot was open until Thursday and he encouraged residents, who lived within the boundary, to use their vote. However, concern was expressed regarding the effect of the postal strike and the councillor requested to request the council Elections Officer to extend the date for return of ballot papers. Councillor Moledina undertook to investigate the request.

A local resident said he had received very limited information regarding the Neighbourhood Council and expressed concern regarding the levy and the prospect of an increase year on year. The meeting was advised that the expected cost was £1 per week that would give devolved powers that residents could influence. Members of the Steering Group said they had held thousands of conversations with residents explaining the Neighbourhood Council and ballot process.

#### **5. Cabinet Member for Transport**

Councillor Liz Clements outlined her role as Cabinet Member for Transport and referred to the Birmingham Transport Plan ideas for shifting the focus away from cars towards more sustainable travel, including better options for public

transport, walking, cycling and reducing local traffic.

Residents then made the following comments and Councillor Clements responded –

- Concerns expressed regarding safety of electric scoots and conflict with pedestrians and cars
- Street lighting required upgrading and a programme of improvements was requested
- Numerous potholes reported and the condition of local roads highlighted
- Cycle path along Cheddar Road was in a poor condition
- Concern regarding road closures without consultation/notification
- Edgbaston Cricket Club match day parking on local roads
- Birmingham Transport Plan vision welcomed but concern that the changes in the city centre would impact on Balsall Heath West given its proximity to the city centre and mitigating factors were questioned
- Councillor Clements advised that a number of the issues raised related to the highways maintenance programme that was managed by Kier and suggested Councillor Moledina take these up with the Kier Highway Steward and Local Engineer. **Councillor Moledina undertook to arrange a walkabout and invite the Highway Steward to a future meeting.** Regarding e-scooter safety, the city council was in serious dialogue with Voi Scooters regarding safety and safeguarding issues. With regard to the impact of city centre improvements on outlying areas the meeting was advise that the vision was to reduce the numbers of cars and improve bus services, cycling and walking routes so reducing car ownership.

## **6. The Environment**

Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for the Environment outlined his role & responsibilities. He explained that Balsall Heath West had benefitted from additional street cleaning operations as the ward was in the top 15 for fly tipping and so received additional resources to include one-off clean up days under the Love Your Environment initiative once per month and additional Love Your Street days. The community had been involved with the Love Your Street days to clean up parks and hot spots. Rubbish bags from flats above shops were now collected three times a week and MRHC would be allocated to the ward once a month.

With regard to parks, Balsall Heath West would be receiving funding for improvements to its parks as part of the City of Nature plan which would also assist Friends of Groups to lever in additional funding for eg equipment for outdoor gyms. Councillor Mahmood undertook to attend a future meeting to provide more information regarding park improvements.

The meeting was advised of the Balsall Heath retrofitting initiative which had seen the area prioritised and 1000 residents signed up. Work was beginning and would continue to March. Councillor Mahmood thanked all those involved in the project which had followed from a pilot in Hodge Hill but noted that it was reliant on Government funding.

In response to concerns raised regarding pavements blocked by shop keepers displaying goods on the shop frontages, Councillor Moledina said that she was looking at this problem and would be taking up with Kier.

The following issues were raised by residents and Councillor Mahmood undertook to ask officers to take up

- The overgrown trees on the River Rea embankment behind Constance Road were having an impact on nearby

properties

- Calthorpe Park pedestrian bridges surface – in urgent need or repair
- Green site – Corner of Willows Rd/ Jakeman Rd – this site needed to be adopted back by BCC and managed in consultation with the Mosque
- In response to comments made regarding weed killers, Councillor Mahmood advised that alternatives were being examined and initiatives such as No Mow May being considered

## **7. Update from Local Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator, Maria Lopresti-Saunders**

Apology submitted on behalf of Maria

## **8. Residents Updates/Issue**

- a) Notified Issue – Moseley Road Bus Priority Scheme Review – proposal to ban right turns into Cromer Road/Brighton Road would generate more traffic on Tindal Street that was already used as a shortcut and had a school and other venues along its length. There had been no real consultation with residents and a site visit was requested so that the accumulative effect of additional traffic on the surrounding narrow roads could be appreciated.
  - Councillor Moledina said that she had forwarded concerns to the Cabinet Member and had got the consultation period extended and undertook to speak to the councillors in the neighbouring ward regarding a site visit.
- b) Ring & Ride – a local resident raised concerns regarding difficulties with evening trips now that the Ring & Ride offices had moved to Wednesbury. Councillor Moledina undertook to take the details at the conclusion of the

meeting.

- c) Local Ward Highway Budget – Councillor Moledina reported that she had referred the requests made regarding safety improvements to the Hallam Street/Lincoln Street junction to the Local Highway Engineer. Alan Porter reported that the junction had been assessed and chosen for improvements. There had already been a safety scheme undertaken at the junction and therefore the existing problems had to be assessed and data was being analysed. Residents advised that the problems centred around the pedestrian lights at the junction and motorists mistakenly seeing the green pedestrian light as a traffic light.