

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

<b>NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE FRIDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2015</b>
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON  
FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 1400 HOURS,  
IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL  
HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:** - Councillor Peter Griffiths in the Chair

Councillors Simon Jevon, Valerie Seabright Andy Cartwright,  
Randal Brew, Debbie Clancy and Steve Booton.

**ALSO PRESENT:** -

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward  
Richard Burden, Member of Parliament, Northfield Constituency  
Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead  
Martin Eade, Team Manager, Strategic Planning  
Councillor Samuel Goodwin, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council  
Fazal Khan, Finance Manager  
Inspector Catherine Webb-Jones, Birmingham South Policing Unit  
Errol Wilson, Committee Manager

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**NOTICE OF RECORDING**

203      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**

- 204 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ian Cruise, Jess Phillips, Brett O'Reilly, Peter Douglas Osborn and Eddie Freeman. An apology for lateness was submitted on behalf of Richard Burden, MP.
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**MINUTES**

- 205 **RESOLVED: -**

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 25 March 2015 and 12 June 2015 having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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**MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

- 206 The membership of the Committee was noted as follows: -
- Councillors Simon Jevon, Peter Griffiths, Valerie Seabright (Kings Norton Ward).
- Councillors Andy Cartwright, Ian Cruise, Jess Phillips (Longbridge Ward).
- Councillors Randal Brew, Debbie Clancy, Brett O'Reilly (Northfield Ward).
- Councillors Steve Booton, Peter Douglas Osborn, Eddie Freeman (Weoley Ward).
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**LEAD OFFICER ARRANGEMENTS**

- 207 The lead officer arrangements were noted as follows: -
- Lead Officer: - Richard Davies Northfield District Lead
- Support Officers:-
- District Contact Lawyer: - Tarndip Sidhu
- Committee Services: - Errol Wilson
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**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

- 208 No declarations of interest were submitted.
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**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The following Code of Conduct for District Committees was submitted:-

(See document No. 1)

209

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Code of Conduct for meetings of the District Committee be noted.

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**DISTRICT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

210

(a) **West Midlands Police and West Midlands Fire Service Co-opted Members**

**RESOLVED:-**

That Inspector Catherine Webb-Jones, West Midlands Police and Station Commander Neil Johnson, West Midlands Fire Service be co-opted to the District Committee;

(b) **Councillor Champions**

(i) **Corporate Parenting Champion**

**RESOLVED:-**

That Councillors Valerie Seabright and Debbie Clancy be appointed as the Councillor Champion for Corporate Parenting for the Northfield District.

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(ii) **Youth Champions**

**RESOLVED: -**

That Councillors Brett O'Reilly and Eddie Freeman be appointed as Youth Champion for Northfield District

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(iii) **A Cultural Heritage Champion**

**RESOLVED:-**

That Councillors Andy Cartwright and Peter Douglas Osborn be appointed the Cultural and Heritage Champion for Northfield District.

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**NORTHFIELD DISTRICT - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR  
ENDING 31 MARCH 2015**

The following report of the Service Directors, District Services Housing Transformation, Sports Events and Parks and the Director of Finance was submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

## **Northfield District Committee - 18 September 2015**

Fazal Khan, Finance manager, Place introduced the item and advised that the report was the final in the cycle for the Northfield District for the 2014/15 financial year, detailing the District's financial position and performance and that the report was for noting. He drew the Committee's attention to the information in the report and the appendices that were attached to the report.

Councillor Brew made reference to paragraph 5.5 of the report and commented that it was disappointing that there had been an underspend of £699k when there were delays in undertaking repairs. He stated that the Housing Revenue Account was different as this was a general fund which was funded by Council Tenants with their rents. This should be invested in the service to them

The Chairman advised that the matter would be taken up when they meet with the Head of Northfield District Housing.

The Chairman expressed congratulations to the officers concerned and Councillor Brett O'Reilly on behalf of the Committee for the task of finding savings from a shrinking budget. He added that they did well in getting the District to this figure. . Councillor Seabright voiced concerns regarding the write off when they were trying to save money in each Ward.

The Chairman thanked Fazal Khan for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

It was

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### **RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the net overspend of £0.308m for Directly Managed and SLA Services, as detailed in report Appendix 1, compared to a projected overspend of £0.459m at month 10, after taking into account the write off of debt balances from 2013/14 of £0.226m. The net overspend will be written off corporately as approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2015 be noted;
- (ii) that the financial position of the Community Chest projects as detailed in report Appendix 2, of spend d matching the budget be noted; and
- (iii) That an appropriation to reserves of £0.062m had been made to meet commitments in 2015/16 relating primarily to projects undertaken by the District Engineer, be noted.

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### **CONSULTATION ON THE BIRMINGHAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION INSPECTOR PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS**

The following report of the Director of Planning and Regeneration that was submitted to the Cabinet Committee on 25 July 2015 and the relevant Cabinet Committee decision was submitted:-

(See document No. 3)

## **Northfield District Committee - 18 September 2015**

Martin Eade, Team Manager, Planning Strategy introduced the item and advised that the report was to update the Committee concerning the on-going processes that were involved in preparing the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP). He advised that this was a Plan that would set an overall framework for development and growth in Birmingham for the next 15 – 20 years. He stated that it was a statutory requirement for the City Council to produce a Plan and that there was a lengthy complicated process that they had to go through in producing this which includes an independent examination by the Planning Inspector at the end. Once adopted the Plan would be the basis for all the planning decisions the City Council makes. Preparing the Plan was a long process and various versions had been to the District Committees over the last few years. He added that they were getting near the end of the process and that the Plan was submitted for examination In July 2014.

An Examination hearing took place in October/November in 2014 and they had now received from the Inspector the main modifications that he was proposing to the Plan. These were changes the Inspector thinks were necessary to the Plan in order for it to be adopted by the Council. Mr Eade advised that they were currently consulting on those modifications.

Mr Eade advised that in terms of the modifications, the Inspector had proposed no significant changes to the key pillars which were parts of the Plan. The overall level of growth they were proposing in Birmingham had not been changed through the examination process. The strategy that they had for delivering that growth in a series of growth areas across the City including Longbridge had not changed. The Inspector made no fundamental changes to the proposals which are included for development in the Green Belt to the North East of the City at Langley and Pedmore.

In relation to the Green Belt it was important to state that the Inspector had not made any further proposal for Green Belt development. It was noted that the City was not able to accommodate all of its housing growth within Birmingham boundary. The Inspector had supported that position and the approach the City was taking with working with its neighbouring authorities to secure land for Birmingham Housing in the adjoining areas. This was an endorsement of the approach the Council was taking. That said, there were a number of modifications, the vast majority were of a detailed changes which sought to add clarity to the text of the document to bring it in line with Government Policy, in some cases to update it to reflect changes in Government Policy. The more significant of these were summarised in paragraph 5.5 of the Cabinet report.

In terms of Longbridge, there were some changes in relation to what the Inspector was proposing. These were essentially updating the policy to reflect what was happening on the ground. It updates the policy to reflect the decision to grant planning permission for the Marks and Spencer's store at Longbridge and so the Inspector acknowledge the new centre at Longbridge would have a larger role than had originally been expected. This includes some protection which prevents further development from taking place at Longbridge without the full impact of this on adjoining centres being assessed which was an important caveat. The Longbridge infrastructure tariff would cease to have effect once the community levy comes into effect in January 2016.

With regard to the North Worcestershire Golf Course (NWGC), the Plan as submitted made no proposal for the NWGC. NWGC and Bloor Homes were looking to try and

promote a housing scheme. They had made representation to the examination, but the Inspector made no changes to the Plan in relation to that. As things stands at this point there were no proposal for the NWGC for housing within this Plan. The consultation runs until the 12 October 2015 and all comments received would be submitted to the Inspector who will take account of these comments before he produces his final report and recommendations towards the end of this year. It would then be for the Council to take the Plan forward and adopt it.

The Chairman made reference to paragraph 5.5 bullet point 7 of the report and enquired whether the proposal for *gypsy and traveller* use would have any impact in terms of the regular trips onto the green sites in Northfield to take the pressure off the Police. Mr Eade advised that the two sites were put forward with the assessment of what the requirement was for the City to meet both for the residents' *gypsy and travellers*. These sites were not confirmed as they were part of the consultation exercise.

Councillor Cartwright voiced concerns regarding North Worcestershire Golf Course and stated that they had just had a consultation which involved over 7000 people. He added that a number of persons were concerned that if homes were built on the site whether it would affect the roads. He further stated that in his opinion the NWGC proposal should have been taken into consideration. The question was whether the residents would be consulted again concerning their proposal. Mr Eade advised that the position as far as the Plan was concerned was that the Inspector had not accepted the points made by Bloor Homes through the examination process regarding their proposal for the site. This did not prevent Bloor Homes from submitting a planning application in due course. There was a general expectation that this was likely to be what would happen. They would do what they could to persuade Bloor Homes to speak with the local people in the area concerning their position.

In terms of local transportation in the area, it was certain that Transportation colleagues would be keen to ensure that whatever was necessary with regard to highways improvements etc. would be put in place. Councillor Cartwright commented that real consultation was needed. Councillor Brew echoed Councillor Cartwright's comments and stated that information was needed as to what the up to date position was even if there was no new information. Councillor Cartwright had also raised the issue of road. There would also be a school on the site which would have an impact on education and a whole range of services. There was a need for this to be taken into account. He expressed disappointment that the Inspectors did not take this into account.

Councillor Brew made reference to PMM 24 with regard to Longbridge and stated that when the Longbridge Area Action Plan was drawn up if they had significantly increased retail; it would have an impact on what they could do in other areas. He added that there was a need to have some idea in terms of lowering their expectations in respect of land available for housing, whether the numbers would be the same for job creation and office space etc. He voiced concern regarding the issue and suggested that there was a need to revisit the Longbridge Area Action Plan, and redraw what it should be given today's conditions. He accepted that this was drawn up before they had the *credit crunch* which had affected it, but that he would like to see the Longbridge Area Action Plan that was drawn up knowing what was in place now and what the expectations were.

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Councillor Brew made reference to PMM57 and the reference on the second page pertaining to retail- Class A1 use. He enquired whether Class A1 includes Charity Shops and Money Shops etc. Mr Eade advised that this include Charity Shops, but that there was a need to check whether Money Shops were included. Mr Eade advised that it was the intention to review the Longbridge Area Action Plan shortly.

In response to Councillor Brew's enquiry concerning the Community Infrastructure Levy and its impact on the Longbridge Infrastructure Tariff, he undertook to get his colleagues to investigate the issue. He added that his understanding was that when the Community Infrastructure Levy comes into effect in January, it would supersede Longbridge Infrastructure Tariff, but that he would investigate the issue. In terms of the North Worcestershire Golf Course, the Inspector made the decision on the information present to him before arriving at his conclusion.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Goodwin, Frankley in Birmingham, Mr Eade advised that they had close links with District Councils in the northern part of Worcestershire such as Bromsgrove and Redditch and Wye Forrest Districts as these Councils were a part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (BSLEP). Planning applications that were in Bromsgrove might potentially affect Birmingham, it was hoped that Bromsgrove would contact Birmingham City Council regarding this issue.

The Chairman thanked Martin Eade for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

It was

### **RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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## **BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2015/16**

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward introduced the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the Northfield District Capital Environmental Budget Position Statement 2015/16.

(See document No. 4)

Ms Bowles advised that the information in green were the ones that were approved over the period as a result of Chair's Action, the information in yellow were ones that were awaiting quotes.

Councillor Seabright enquired what the process was that had been gone through concerning the projects to get to this point. She voiced concerns that they had agreed to a number of things in the report, but there appeared to be a disproportionate amount over the District and there was very little in Weoley Ward. She enquired where the suggestions had come from as she had raised on two occasions a Low Rise Block in Kings Norton, which was part of the regeneration

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area. She added that it was hoped that this was not being ignored. She stated that the conditions of those buildings were dire.

Councillor Seabright stated that a number of people were still living in the regeneration area, which were paying full rent and Council Tax and were not in receipt of Welfare Benefits, but around them were slums that would take years to get rid of. She commented that clarification was needed as to how they got to this point and the reasons for the quotes taking so long.

Councillor Clancy enquired how they came to the decision on what materials would be used and whether this was standard across all districts, how did the quotes go whether they differ across districts.

Councillor Booton voiced concerns regarding the distributions of the projects as they were trying to get projects from each Ward. He enquired what the timescale was. Councillor Cartwright commented that he had been contacted by residents about the Roundabout and that he had been informed by one of the officers that this would be done, but the information now presented showed it was awaiting a quote. He added that this was not fair on him and the residents.

Councillor Brew echoed Councillors Seabright and Booton's comments and stated that the blocks in Northfield were in a poorer state and that there was a need for money to be spent. He added that this was a finite sum of money which was spent sparingly by identifying schemes that were driven by the residents and the housing Liaison Boards (HLB). He questioned how much of the Housing Revenue Budget repairs could have been spent on these projects.

Ms Bowles made the following statements: -

- Estate assessment was a walk about with residents and the views of officers. In terms of this year's budget and where it had been spent, the majority of this had been used on properties on Thorough Grove, an area they had difficulty letting properties. Whilst they were doing this work to improve the area they were also improving the let ability of the properties. There were properties that had stood empty which were available properties so they were looking at the let ability of these properties.
- Historically, it appeared that Northfield was top heavy and then waiting for Kings Norton quotes to come in. From last year's budget, Kings Norton had £134k of that budget for 13 projects; Northfield had £38k with 4 projects; Weoley had nothing for that particular year and Longbridge had £29k with 2 projects.
- Bushwood Road has had money spent on it earlier this year regarding fencing work around the Block.
- The contractor used was Willmott Dixon. The project proposal was drawn up with the Contract Works Officer who then contacts Willmott Dixon to come back with a price. Willmott Dixon would then use sub-contractors for the work they could not do. The Contract Works Officer would then look at the price to ascertain whether this was reasonable and value for money at which point it then comes back to Housing. This was the same for the HLBs.

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- The timescale for the work was as and when the work came through and it was passed to the Contract Works Officer. This was sometimes not as quick as they would like, but they were now having regular meetings with their Contract Works Officer who were putting pressure on Willmott Dixon to get the quotes back. There were some difficulties during the summer months which had resulted in Chairs Action. The quotes usually last for 3 months and if there were delays, this then becomes problematic.
- Ms Bowles noted Councillor Cartwright's comment concerning the Roundabout and advised that this would be taken on board.

Councillor Seabright requested a copy of the details of what had happened in the past since they had the budget. She enquired whether there was any linking up with what the HLBs did. With regard to Sheltered Housing, this was also an issue and that it was necessary for there to be a focus as people were not going to want to go with Sheltered Housing in the High Rise properties. If more environmental work was being done, these properties would perhaps become more attractive - Campion House was a good example.

The Chairman highlighted that items in *green* were already approved by Chairs Action. The Committee then noted these projects. Items in *yellow* together with the two additional items 24 and 26 from those in *red* were agreed by the Committee. The Chairman stated that for clarity, a meeting would be held shortly with Housing and that the process would be raised concerning the issue. He added that the original system was that all these bids would come from the HLB to the District Housing Panel who along with Ms Bowles would then come to a conclusion as to what would be recommended to the District Committee. The District Committee as budget holder would then make the decision. There was not much representation for the Weoley Ward over the last two years, but it was hope that this would be resolved shortly.

Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead advised that there was a range of personnel on the District Housing Panel. There were representatives from the City Council, Housing Associations, and the HLBs etc. He added that the meeting referred to by the Chairman would be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and would be an opportunity to review feedback from this Committee in terms of the environmental budget and how they move forward. At this point they were looking at the way forward. The Housing Panel was a different meeting with each District having a District Housing Panel. The purpose of the meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015, was to look at how the Housing Panel was constituted and what it does and how the Northfield District Capital Environmental Budget was used.

The Chairman advised that presently the Housing Panel was chaired by an independent Chair. He added that the Local Executive Member for Northfield District attended the Housing Panel meetings, but that he had decided to stay neutral in the discussions in order that they could have a debate about things. He advised that Councillor Booton will now be attending the Housing panel meetings and that it was hoped they would agree on things. He further stated that the structure of the Housing Panel may be changed, subsequent to meetings with Housing.

The Chairman thanked Ruth Bowles for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

It was

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

At this juncture the Chairman welcomed Mr Richard Burden, Member of Parliament for Northfield Constituency to the meeting. (The MP arrived at 1501 hours)

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**HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 2014-15**

214

The following performance report and performance narrative from the Service Director, Housing Transformation was submitted:-

(See Document No. 5)

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward presented the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the report.

Councillor Clancy referred to the June 2015, 3.5 tonne Tipper Waggon and enquired whether the majority of rubbish was internal or external. Ms Bowles advised that this was external rubbish.

Councillor Seabright referred to Bentmead Grove and stated that this was the third time of asking the same question. Of the 100% of those that were audited, what Members never had was a record of what was being audited. She stated that it would be useful to have this information on a Ward by Ward basis so that they know that Housing was not just using the same information. She voiced concern that the Members would not have to deal with so much case work if 100% of people were satisfied with their tenancies. She added that she had a large amount of case work over the last 4 years of people who were moving in as first time tenancies or moving on, where they were not happy as there were things to be done to make the property liveable. She stated that in her opinion there was some discrepancies if they were saying that 100% of those asked were satisfied. They would not have the case work if there was 100% satisfaction.

Councillor Seabright made reference to the sheltered accommodations and stated that she would like to know where they stand as there were 4 void properties and how this compared across the City. She enquired whether it was possible to have an up to date list of the number of voids Ward by Ward with sheltered accommodations across the City as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Booton made reference to Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and enquired whether he could have some information regarding the kind of issues involved; the percentage, whether it was neighbour noise or violence. He further enquired what the general scope was. He added that ASB generally affects people in different ways which could be a minor/serious incident. He enquired whether the City Council deals with ASB for non-Council tenants such as a Housing Association tenant or owner occupier etc.

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Ms Bowles undertook to provide a breakdown of the issues on a Ward by Ward basis. With regards to ASB from private tenants and private owners, they would deal with these. If they were from a Housing Association they would involve the Housing Association with the issue. They have a team working under the same Directorate that dealt with ASB issues.

Councillor Brew made reference to voids and lettings and stated that they were disappointed with regard to the turnaround of 30.3 days and 60 days for sheltered accommodation. He added that he had discussed the issue with Gary Nicholls, Senior Service Manager, South, Place who was responsible for voids across the City. He stated that Mr Nicholls were looking at a system where they started the process of letting the voids whilst the existing tenants were about to leave. This was copying what was in the private sector which was good practice and would improve the numbers. Councillor Brew expressed congratulations to Mr Nicholls and staff on the achievements and requested that Ms Bowles passed this information on to Mr Nicholls and staff. He added that the Neighbourhood Caretakers go beyond what they needed to do and that this should also be recognised.

Mr Richard Burden, MP apologised to the Committee for his lateness in attending this meeting due to a prior engagement. He echoed Councillor Brew's comments to the staff. He added that his question was around homelessness and the definition. There was performance targets recorded for the number of homelessness preventions, but that he had concerns regarding the way homelessness had been mentioned and defined presently. At different times it was defined in different ways as in some cases it was measured by using the base line of those who had gone as far as completing a full homeless application. At other times it was people just turning up and if they go away and were not seen again it was recorded that homelessness were prevented and at other times it was defined in a different way. Mr Burden, MP questioned how the case being looked at was defined and how success was being defined and homelessness being prevented.

Ms Bowles advised that she would not be able to give an answer at present, but undertook to respond to the questions raised at a later date.

Councillor Cartwright expressed thanks to the Frankley Parish Council and the Street Champions for the tremendous work they had done in the Ryles. He added that a number of persons were volunteers and that they were also involved with the walkabouts. The Chairman echoed Councillor Cartwright's thanks to Frankley Councillors.

The Chairman thanked Ruth Bowles for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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### **PLACE DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1**

214

The following Place Directorate performance report from the Service Director was submitted:-

(See Document No.6)

The Chairman introduced the item and advised that the report was for noting.

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Councillor Seabright commented that with regard to some of the statistics presented it would be helpful to have a Ward by Ward breakdown. In relation to the Youth Service a definition of what an outcome was would be useful as it was uncertain what this meant. She enquired what was happening in terms of the highways as most of the Wards had purchased speed visors which had only been in operation once within the Kings Norton Ward. At a Tasking meeting with the local Sergeant and Constable it had been agreed where the speed visors should be placed next, but this had not been done.

Councillor Seabright stated that she was advised that due to the adverse weather conditions they could not install the speed visor the last time she enquired. She added that there was no feedback from the first one and that she was concerned that this was not happening. She further stated there was a need for a report on the issue as there were speeding on a number of the estates.

Councillor Brew echoed Councillor Seabright's earlier comments. He added that the report was from the Service Director, but there was no resolution to note it. He stated that there were a number of concerning statistics and that he wished to acknowledge that there were those that were moving in the right direction, but there were those that were moving in the wrong direction. He made reference to page 15 of the report as an example pertaining to the *percentage of rubbish on land requests dealt with within 5 working days*. This was consistently going down with 94.9% in quarter 1 in 2014/15. They were down to 78.9% in quarter 4 and 66.7% in quarter 1 in 2015/16.

Councillor Brew stated that they had received complaints that there was rubbish lying around. He added that although they had the 3.5 tonne Tipper they were looking for this to be cleared. He further stated that if they look at people who feel safe outside parks and play areas, he was concerned that they were down in the 80% when they should be in the 90%. He added that he was not convinced that this would increase. He voiced concern that they were in danger of reducing the standard of service as some of the indicators were worrying. Some of these were under the control of the City, but some were under the control of what used to be the Service Level Agreement (SLA). It was hoped that these could be considered at a future meeting and for an officer to attend to respond to questions.

Councillor Cartwright referred to the Youth Service and commented that at a number of meetings that he had attended with youth workers, they had given him figures of young people who were attending the youth centres including kids' football, but that as much as he had appreciated the youths playing football, they were not using the youth centres. He added that he was in agreement with Councillor Brew's comment that people did not feel safe within the parks. He stated that he was an advocate for getting youth workers onto the streets to undertake some outreach work instead of stopping in the centres as this was needed now more than ever. He suggested that this be placed on the agenda for a future District Committee meeting.

The Chairman raised the issue of community safety and commented that the total number of recorded crime for 2014/15 to 2015/16 had increased from 2.2% in the first quarter to 6.7%. Taking this on board in relation to what may or may not be seen was critical. When they get to the future work programme, this would be included as one of the items.

Councillor Clancy commented that this must be difficult for the Police to try and extend the services as much as was required within the District in relation to funding. She enquired how difficult Inspector Webb-Jones and the Police were finding things. She made reference to a television news programme today that had stated that “do the Police know where to target quickly in terms of priorities on a daily basis, weekly reports coming through where there were hotspots” Councillor Clancy stated that she would request Inspector Webb-Jones’ input on the issue.

Inspector Webb-Jones highlighted that she had the year to date figures compared to last year which was +2.7% for Northfield District area only. In terms of the specific question, they had to focus their resources and time based on areas of high demand such as ASB, threat of harm, public space violence and serious risk of crime. They were trying to do a lot by focusing on offender management as it was proven with business crimes over the last 12 – 18 months, that when they focus their resources on offender management; they were diverting those offenders away from re-offending. It was not just the place management and the location patrol that was important. It was getting the offender management area that it was found to be successful. The Police had to prioritise, but the way they did that business was different from this time last year.

Councillor Cartwright made reference to the new houses being built in Longbridge Town Centre and commented that with all the proposed new housing, there was a need for resources for the Police to deal with what would come into the area. He questioned whether the Police would be able to deal with this when the new Town Centre is created and the additional houses that would be in place. Inspector Webb-Jones advised that there were no additional resources for the future of Longbridge in relation to Police resources. She added that would await West Midlands Police 2020, which was a 5 year plan to see how they were going to change their business. She further stated that they were investing in their different method of business, which may not be about resource management, PCSOs or policing the street, but better ways of policing.

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## **FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS/DISTRICT WORK PROGRAMME**

215 Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead gave a verbal presentation on the item. He advised that at the City Council Annual General meeting in May 2015, important changes were made to the work of District Committees and Ward Committees. A new way of working protocol was developed for District and Ward Committees. The changes were linked to the recommendations of Sir Bob Kerslake’s report and the Council’s own improvement Plan particularly partnership working and community engagement.

District Committees no longer have direct management of control in respect of services and budgets, but there were 3 key dimensions to their role: -

- Community Leadership
- Community Planning; and
- Community Governance

In terms of the leadership role, the purpose of the District was to provide leadership in respect of all public services across the District and to work in partnership with stakeholders and with those other public services to improve the social economic and environmental wellbeing within the District. This was a critical role for the District

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Committee Members in particular given the fact that the Committee would no longer be responsible for services and budgets. There were more of an enabler, supporter and facilitator.

In relation to community planning, each District Committee was required to publish an annual Community Plan, which would outline a clearer set of priorities based on evidence of local needs. There was an expectation that the Conventions which they had organised in recent years would continue, the primary purpose of which was to engage with stakeholders and residents to identify which needs and to move forward on social provision in the future.

In respect of governance, District Committees were being asked to look at governance on a number of different levels – at the District, Ward and Neighbourhood level, and to think about how in the future they could engage with people better and how they could develop partnership working and improve on that. A template for the community governance structure would be issued shortly. Although the District Committees will not have direct responsibility for budgets, from 2016/17 they will have responsibility for the Local Innovation Fund (LIF), which the committee would be able to allocate according to planned priorities as the aim would be to try and identify strategic priorities across the District as a whole as opposed to individual projects at a neighbourhood level.

With regard to officer structure, this was under review and proposals were being developed. There will not be an officer structure directly related to an individual District, but was likely to be area teams that would be formed to cover more than one District. There was also the Neighbourhood Challenge, the purpose of which was to investigate and review the performance of public services and make recommendations for improvements. The issues addressed would be expected to be focused on a priority plan. How the issues were identified would be either through this committee or something that was raised by the local partner such as the Police or could be an issue referred to the District Committee by the Executive or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the public and local organisations could also propose issues to be addressed through the Neighbourhood Challenge through the Executive Member. It was anticipated that there would possibly be 2 or 3 Neighbourhood Challenges over the year and it was expected that the Member or co-optee or Police or someone from the health sector would be a lead person to co-ordinate and develop that Neighbourhood Challenge. There would be some level of officer support which would be determined, but would effectively be the lead member or co-optee would gather information and circulate it prior to the meeting of the District Committee and this would take place as part of the District Committee meeting.

It was expected that some recommendations would be developed from that meeting. Following that a report would be written which would be agreed by the District Committee on the basis of a majority and then the report would either be implemented locally under delegated powers to this Committee or maybe submitted to a local partner or maybe that the report is issued by this Committee to the Executive with a recommendation for change. It could also be issued to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a recommendation for change, example a city wide review of that issue.

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In respect of Ward meetings, there were a number of primary roles for these meetings in the future. First there was the forum for community engagement, to coordinate the work of Councillors with local structures, residents associations and Neighbourhood Forums to make representations to the District Committee and Executive on matters affecting the Ward and to make comments on behalf of residents in respect of significant planning applications which may affect the Ward. Future meetings would not be formal meetings supported by Democratic Services and no formal minutes would be taken. However, there would be some officer support in terms of arranging meetings, publicised the meetings and manage the Ward Action Plan/Tracker which would basically be a document which would allow the officer concerned to update and identify what actions had been identified at the meeting as to whether they had been addressed adequately.

For each Ward, there would be a budget of £200 per year to identify and to pay for places where meetings could be held. Ward Chairmen would receive information about straining on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015, outlining in more detail the future role of Ward Committees was and how they would be managed. A meeting was also organised locally on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 for Ward Chairs to discuss in detail what their roles were and the way forward.

In terms of some of the issues this Committee may wish to consider and the governance framework for the District, there were some existing meetings that had taken place i.e. the District Strategic Partnership, Housing Panel, Wards and Neighbourhood Forums as well as some local organisations such as Parish Councils. How these were to be moved forward or change/improve or develop them to fit with the new role of the Ward and District Committee. There was also the opportunity of the 5 co-opted members for this Committee and they may need to consider co-opting 3 more members from different organisations to develop the partnership work within the District.

With regard to the Frankley Parish Council, they had already referred to the good work of the Council. One of the issues that they may consider was whether they wanted to consider more Parish Councils within the District which could possibly develop further service improvement by levying a precept which could lead to work being done locally in terms of the new service and existing services.

In relation to the Neighbourhood Challenge the District Committee may wish to look at what are the key issues it sees as important to be addressed. Whether those issues identified who would be the lead Member and how would this work to be taken forward. These were some of the questions and issues the Committee might need to look at in terms of the future work programme.

Members then made the following comments: -

Councillor Booton suggested that Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) be considered given the information presented by Inspector Webb-Jones concerning the cuts in the Police service. Given the case load of Members concerning ASB issues and the different approaches by organisations and the effect ASB had on the community in general. One of the Neighbourhood Challenge could be to look at the possibility of joining together the agencies involved in that issue. It would be advantageous to all if the agencies could get together to discuss the issue. Councillor Booton agreed to be the lead Member for this Neighbourhood Challenge.

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Councillor Goodwin stated that they were experiencing problems with rogue motor cycles in Frankley, some of which were high speed machines and unlicensed being ridden on the footpaths. He suggested that evidence could be collated and given to the Police for action to be taken.

Councillor Brew suggested that a Neighbourhood Challenge could be looking at in the broadest possible term, the future of the youths in Northfield District. He added that they had from education, youth club facilities, and employment etc., there was a real challenge. There were various statistics that could be looked at and the young people of the District were their future. He voiced concerns in relation to where the youth service was going as there were concerns that the resource was not what they might be. He stated that he would like to them to consider joining the youth service with the private and public sectors including churches and uniformed organisations who could work more closely with the District. This could help to address the issue of young people feeling unsafe within the area.

Inspector Webb-Jones commented that they were trying to get the residents and people that work in the area to be the *eyes and ears* to submit intelligence to the Police. This could be anonymous or could be by crimestoppers, but some of the barriers to the Police tackling ASB were a lack of information and with their dwindling resource they could not be relied upon to be the *eyes and ears*. There were some good examples that they could give the public over the next few weeks in relation to Northfield and Kings Norton Wards where residents had come together and had worked with the Police and as a result they had driven down some ASB as well as some crime types.

Councillor Seabright stated that there were two major items that the District Committee should be addressing – corporate parenting as a standing item, but there was a need to look at young people as a whole. Over the last 12 months was the development of the Birmingham Education Partnership and they had appointed their District lead members. She suggested that when the names of the District lead for Northfield was known, that this person be co-opted onto the Committee as there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed in the District in terms of sufficiency of school places; what was happening with children with special needs and placements; exclusions and attainment.

Mr Burden, MP stated that the issue was how this would be followed through. He added that in the past in the District, partnership working was either a model for the City whilst at other times it was the opposite. Even when it was at its height, there was always the issue about how partnership working worked. Essentially, the question was whether the City saw itself as the central player in the area and the success measures on whether they consulted other partners. This might be alright, but it was not partnership working, but one big organisation consulting others.

If this was to work in the new environment, a really challenging environment, the whole situation in terms of finance etc. was horrible, based on the Police this was horrible and the whole situation would get worst. When the partnership body was created, the question was how this would work, who would own the decisions and who would have the responsibility for carrying through the decisions were important issues that needed to be clarified if more people were to be co-opted onto the Committee which was a good thing, but they had to know that their role on the Committee was not just to sit alongside the Councillors and MP, but they had to

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know that they were full members of the Committee and that their contributions were just as valid as anyone else. This was the cultural shift that had to be made.

The other issue was when particular topics such as ASB or other topics were to be explored; there was a need to be clear as to what the objectives were. When things were agreed, where they would go and what the success measures of this would be and that they were followed up. Unless this was done, they might have some really useful discussions, which might lead to some good things happening, but the danger was that they had lots of discussions and it just disappeared. The partners that would want to get involved would become less. There was a need to be disciplined as to what the culture of partnership working were and not just that the lead member was, but when something was decided who carries this out, who they tell about it and what the success ratio was and what comes out of it. A brief discussion concerning the issue then ensued.

The Chairman commented that the items would need to be defined some of which would have a route through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for example, if they were looking at street cleaning. There were other items that were outside of the Council's control that would also be considered.

Councillor Brew stated that he endorsed Mr Burden, MP's comments. He added that there was a need to have an end result for the Neighbourhood Challenge if they were inviting partners to attend. He further stated that he would like to see junior partners rather than senior partners. There was a need to define what they were expecting from this and to identify who would drive it through. Councillor Brew stated that driving things through in creating the Neighbourhood Challenges, he would like the Executive to give a response to driving things through and reporting back to Districts on initiatives. Devolution was looked at under the previous administration and this could be relevant for the current administration as there might be instances when they might like to work in conjunction with their neighbours in terms of the Neighbourhood Challenges such as Selly Oak or Edgbaston where they might get more from doing so and driving things forward. He suggested that the Chairman could discuss the issue with the relevant colleagues concerning the issue.

The Chairman undertook to speak with the Executive Members for Edgbaston and Selly Oak concerning the suggestion.

In terms of the neighbourhood level, they had the Parish Council, but what they did not have in the District was Neighbourhood Forums which they may wish to consider which was below the Ward level but covers a smaller geographical area. He added that there was a structure for this in the City and there was the opportunity to access a small amount of funds to develop these. This could be something that the Committee might want to think about. The whole idea was about moving forward and engagement with partnership which links in with the Council's improvement plan and what the engagement with Sir Bob Kerslake's report were that they had to do as a City. These issues would be discussed with the Ward Chairs at the meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Seabright, Mr Davies advised that the Local Innovation Fund would not come on stream until 2016/2017 and this would be within the remit of the District Committee. It was uncertain at this stage what the amount would be, but it was to be used by the District Committee to adjust the District Plan and in partnership with other agencies within the District. The other

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thing being referred to was Neighbourhood Forums, which was a formal structure and at a neighbourhood level which had a small budget to assist with the development of those organisations. These were formally constituted organisations and there were guidelines etc., in their formation. Mr Davies undertook to circulate this information to Members if required.

At this juncture, Members then made the follow suggestions for a Neighbourhood Challenge: -

Lettings Panel for Regeneration  
Linking health with housing in the District

Community safety focussed on children engaging the schools in what they would like to see done to make their environment safer. This could be a project that could operate across the District. This could be linked in with other polices such as policing parking outside schools and the 20mph speed limit

Traffic calming and speeding issues – could involve young people and could invite them to the District Committee to speak about the campaign

Jobs and skills as this were also considered by other Districts across the City. This was identified at a previous Convention as a major issue in Northfield as they were considered to be the *low paid capital of Birmingham*.

It may be that whatever Neighbourhood Challenge was chosen, could lead to a Convention or could be for a Convention.

Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) could be a Neighbourhood Challenge as they could reach out to this *pocket* as they were slightly older and were bordering the childhood minor/adult stage. Councillor Clancy volunteered to lead on this as a Neighbourhood Challenge.

The Chairman undertook to work with Mr Davies to prioritise how this would work and to ascertain which would be the first Neighbourhood Challenge for the District Committee.

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### **RESOLVED: -**

That for a Neighbourhood Challenge, Councillor Booton be the lead on ASB as the first challenge and that Councillor Clancy be the lead on NEET in the New Year; that Inspector Webb-Jones work with the Chairman on children safety; and Councillor Seabright on education.

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## **DATES OF FUTURE NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEES**

### **RESOLVED**

217

That the Northfield District Committee meet at 1400 hours, at the Council House on the following dates:-

20 November 2015  
22 January 2016

## **Northfield District Committee - 18 September 2015**

18 March 2016

All meetings will be held at 2:00pm in Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B1 1BB

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### **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

#### **(a) Police Constable Levy**

- 218 Councillor Seabright advised that one of the local Police Constables Marjorie Levy was nominated Police Constable of the Year. She added that the work PC Levy had done in Kings Norton and around the other areas it would be good to congratulate her for the hard work that she as a member of the team had been involved in. The Chairman commented that this was a good idea and that a letter would be sent to her on her achievement as she had been a stalwart in the area for a number of years.

#### **(b) Northfield District Convention**

- 219 Councillor Brew stated that there was a need to plan the next District Convention which would take place after Christmas. He suggested that a draft plan be tabled at the next District Committee meeting scheduled for November. The Chairman stated that it was needed to plan the Convention in conjunction with the future work programme as a future item.

#### **(c) Collection of Refuse Sacks - Litter Picking**

- 220 Councillor Goodwin stated that with the advent of the wheelie bins, as volunteers they would be in trouble in trying to litter pick as the City Council will no longer take the black refuse sacks. He enquired how the volunteers could carry on if they could not get rid of the rubbish they were picking up. The Chairman undertook to investigate the issue. He added that he had recently been supplied with 200 black refuse sacks for community pick-ups and that he was certain that the service would continue. Mr Burden, MP stated that he would also look into the issue particularly with the Frankley situation.

#### **(d) Rugby World Cup**

- 221 The Chairman expressed best wishes on behalf of Northfield District Committee to all the Rugby Teams that would be playing in the Rugby World Cup over the next 6 weeks.
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### **AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

- 222 **RESOLVED: -**

Chairman to move:-

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

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The meeting ended at 1604 hours.

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CHAIRMAN