

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

HODGE HILL DISTRICT COMMITTEE 22 MARCH 2016
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HODGE
HILL DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD
ON TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2016 AT
1330 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL
HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT: - Councillor Uzma Ahmed in the Chair.

Mohammed Aikhlaq, John Cotton, Majid Mahmood,
Mariam Khan and Fiona Williams

ALSO PRESENT:-

Mike Davis	- Hodge Hill/Erdington District Head
Chris Robinson	- Acting Senior Housing Manager
Mark Rodgers	- Contract Team Manager
Louisa Nisbett	- Legal and Democratic Services

NOTICE OF RECORDING

283 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

284 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Marje Bridle, Ansar Ali Khan, Mohammed Idrees, Shafique Shah, Anita Ward and Ian Ward for their inability to attend the meeting.

MINUTES

285 That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2016, having been circulated to Members were confirmed as a true and correct record subject to the following amendments:

It was noted that Councillor Cotton was in attendance at the above-mentioned meeting although it had not been recorded.

Under the Community Safety update item, issues raised around prostitution in Ward End Park and opposite Northleigh Road although discussed had not been recorded.

MATTERS ARISING

Inconsiderate Parking on Grass Verges

- 286 Councillor Mahmood referred to Corporate Parenting and the CSE training that he and Councillor Aikhlaq would be attending this afternoon and subsequently apologised for having to leave the meeting prematurely. He added that it was imperative that all members should attend the training.
- Councillor Mahmood highlighted the issues associated with the inconsiderate parking on grass verges and how this was being addressed in Hodge Hill Ward and the need to replicate the scheme that was in place at Brownfield Road, Shard End. He suggested that a 'mini' neighbourhood challenge be undertaken now rather than later.
- Councillor Cotton agreed that it would be useful to carry out a piece of work as it was a continued reoccurrence and it would not be resolved without a systematic look at the entirety of the problem.
- Mike Davis, Hodge Hill/Erdington District Head, detailed the two options that could be taken; which was either the shorter option of inviting officers and Amey to a meeting to discuss the issue, or the more lengthy option, of taking evidence and producing a report within 6 to 12 months, adding that it may be worth starting off the process with the first option, and if there were still wider issues that members wished to explore, this could be taken forward in the next municipal year as a neighbourhood challenge.
- Councillor Mahmood referred to the issue being raised at City Council extensive media coverage which had resulted in letters and emails from residents from the district as well as across the city. He suggested that if work began now on the challenge, it would give officers the next 3 months to begin the work behind the scenes with input from elected members, which could then be brought forward to the meeting in June 2016.
- Councillor Khan agreed that whilst this issue affected the whole of the City he questioned whether it was advisable to identify a new neighbourhood challenge at this time.
- Mike Davis stated that each district was expected to carry out one neighbourhood challenge in the next municipal year and would be happy to be guided by members if this was something that was to be proposed for the coming year. He added that other members had not been consulted or had the opportunity to suggest any other neighbourhood challenge relevant to the district, and whilst recognising that it was an

important issue, some members may want to consider other pressing issues arising in the coming year.

Councillor Mahmood referred to the original neighbourhood challenge and the work that would be ongoing, adding that districts were not restricted to one challenge. He reiterated that the work could be undertaken between now and June and could all come to fruition by the next meeting.

Councillor Cotton suggested that all members of the district needed to give this some attention, and agreed with the point made by Mike Davis to ensure all colleagues had input into the work programme for next year, and to be mindful, that membership of the Committee was going to change and therefore did not want to exclude members who would be joining in the new municipal year, from having input to shaping the work programme. He further suggested that perhaps the best way forward would be to take as an item at the next district committee meeting which would provide a platform to begin with, and to invite the relevant officers in to scope that out and to also obtain feedback from the pilot carried out in Shard End. He added regardless of how it was taken forward this was something that had to be focused on in the coming year.

Mike Davis suggested that it be an item on the agenda at the first meeting of the municipal year and if issues were not resolved there could be the potential of a neighbourhood challenge.

Councillor Mahmood suggested that the report be brought in June, and if issues were still unresolved that it convert to a neighbourhood challenge. He commented that if it could be put into effect with what Shard End had introduced, and then there would not be the need to go down the route of a neighbourhood challenge.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

287

There were no declarations of interest.

HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2015/16 & HODGE HILL DISTRICT NARRATIVE

The following report of the Service Director, Housing Transformation was submitted:-

(See document No. 1)

Mr Chris Robinson, Acting Senior Housing Manager gave an overview of the report and the narrative and as a result of several comments and questions from members, the following were amongst the points made:-

He agreed to provide members with a breakdown of the live anti-social behaviour figures by wards. He referred to 'Think Family' and confirmed that there had been very high levels of success in terms of managing families, adding that there had only been several cases where progress had not been achieved. He further added that it was a long-term initiative and it tackled some quite deep rooted issues and

subsequently agreed to provide further detail. He confirmed that Wates the new repairs contractor for the City Council would be required to attend housing liaison board meetings.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

288

RESOLVED:-

That the report and comments be noted.

LANDLORDS SERVICES ANNUAL VISIT REPORT

The following report of the Head of Landlord Services was submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

Mr Chris Robinson, Acting Senior Housing provided an update of Phase 1 of the Annual Tenancy Visit Programme which included the number of completed visits and subsequently outlined the details for Phase 2 of the programme.

As a result of several comments and questions from members, the following were amongst the points made:-

He referred to the issue around social housing fraud and the consideration that was given to different cultures and vulnerability, and confirmed that very few of the 600 cases had resulted in taking the decision that people were not living in their properties. He confirmed that tenants that were definitely sub-letting and were not living there had been tracked down to other addresses and action had been taken.

With regard to the actions on breach of tenancy conditions, he confirmed that most times retrospective permission was given. However, where there was concern for example the laminate flooring in flats and due to the noise transference issue this was not acceptable, although in a house, it was not such an issue.

He referred to the action taken on unkempt gardens, where he confirmed that there was no simple answer as it depended upon the household's composition, age, disability and vulnerability. He stated that for some tenants the city did clear their gardens. He referred to 'Age Concern' and their low cost gardening scheme for older people, which operated between April to October and at this time of year needed to be publicised. He further referred to the 'garden tool loan' scheme and the B & Q vouchers that were given to people to help them with their decorating.

With regard to smoke alarms, they were provided free of charge by West Midlands Fire Service, however, the problem was that some tenants were not taking responsibility for changing their batteries in ensuring that they worked. He added that most properties had alarms fitted.

He confirmed that the City needed to take positive action against breach of tenancy conditions and regarding people parking on grass verges and causing damage, the conditions of tenancy would cover this. However, if it was an owner/occupier this

was a different situation, and in this case, they would not want to penalise council tenants over owner/occupiers. He stated that the city was looking at public space protection orders (PSPOs) as a mechanism which was across tenure, fairly low cost and an effective tool to use in protecting grass verges. He referred to the discussion relating to the orders of the traffic act, and explained the reasoning why this would not be an effective tool to use due to the regulations and highlighted that there was the need to look at other solutions. He referred to the increased issues relating to the dropped kerbs and parking bays and that the city was looking into this area.

Mr Chris Robinson referred to the annual tenancy visits and stated that when they had first started the visits, a number had to be rebooked due to the fact that they had been booked randomly, now they write to people a few weeks in advance offering a time for an appointment and if unsuitable rearrange accordingly. It was noted that premature visits were not counted and only after a subsequent visit had taken place and information had been gathered that they were considered completed.

In response to Councillor Williams' concerns and questions, Mr Chris Robinson stated that 3 storey and above accommodation were eligible to have window locks and requested the relevant information in order that the concern could be followed up. He referred to housing benefit letters and the fact that they were designed to provide people with the maximum information in explaining the reasons for under and over payments, and subsequently agreed to discuss with colleagues why letters were sent out unnecessarily.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

289

RESOLVED:-

That the report and comments be noted.

HOUSING INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2015/16

The following report of the Service Director Housing Transformation was submitted:-

(See document No. 3)

Mr Mark Rodgers, Contract Team Manager provided an update on the projects that had been approved for 2015/16 by referring to Appendix 1.

He highlighted that the purchase of the Nomad cameras across all 4 wards had taken longer than expected and that officers were now in the process of purchasing the cameras. He referred to the Hodge Hill Consultation on the resurfacing of the access road at Northleigh Road which was due to terminate tomorrow. It was noted that there had been some objections to the proposal however once all feedback had been received the information would be evaluated.

He referred to the funding that had been approved to provide bin storage cupboards at 173, 175, and 177 Washwood Heath Road however due to the scope of work being more extensive than expected, this had raised the cost. It was therefore decided by Landlord Services team to provide cupboards for 173 and 177

Washwood Heath Road and recommend to committee, to further fund the bin storage cupboard for 175 Washwood Heath Road during the next financial year.

Mr Mark Rodgers referred to the uncompleted projects and after seeking confirmation from colleagues in Finance, confirmed that the under-spend would be carried forward to 2016/17 in order that the committee did not lose any funding. With regard to funding for the new municipal year it was noted that citywide £800,000 had been allocated for capital environmental works and that the city for each district, was presently being worked out. He added that it tended to be based on a pro-rata basis on the number of local authority homes within each district and on that basis, anticipated that it was likely the district would receive £105,600 for next year.

Councillor Mahmood stated that residents were displeased with the resurfacing scheme due to various reasons and were against the proposal and this being the case, highlighted that elected members could not support this scheme going ahead. As advised by Firoza Loonat, Tenant Participation Officer, to consider alternative schemes and following agreement from Councillors Ward and Williams, the following projects were suggested:-

The continuation of raised kerbs off Bromford Drive on the corner opposite the shop due to high levels of inconsiderate parking.

Additional purchase of CCTV to assist with more enforcement due to people dumping rubbish and fly-tipping.

Tipperary Close behind the 6 properties a piece of land which was next to where the two blocks stood. As the land was not used it had become a haven for leaves. Look to landscape in order to prevent any accidents or falls happening to the elderly.

Councillor Mahmood proposed with the agreement of Hodge Hill District Committee that if resurfacing of the access road at Northleigh Road was not accepted, that commencement of work could take place on the 3 above-mentioned projects and any surplus could be carried forward through to next year.

At this juncture all members agreed with the proposal.

Mr Mark Rodgers agreed to work with Firoza Loonat, in order to try and bring those proposals within the budget of £16,000, adding that it looked most likely that they would not be spending on the former proposal.

With regard to the installation of the nomad cameras, he confirmed that the intention would be to get them working as soon as possible and agreed to provide members with specific dates next week.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mark Rodgers for attending the meeting.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

That Councillor Mahmood proposed a motion and it was agreed by Hodge Hill District Committee that if the resurfacing of the access road at Northleigh Road was not accepted, that commencement of work could take place on the 3 alternative projects, and any surplus could be carried forward through to next year.

At this juncture, the Chairman agreed to change the order of the agenda.

UPDATE FROM EACH WARD WITHIN HODGE HILL DISTRICT

Bordesley Green Ward

291 Councillor Aikhlaq reported that there had been 2 ward committee meetings and the main issue discussed had been the parking on grass verges. He referred to the areas along the perimeters of Heartlands Hospital that had deteriorated due to the usage by hospital staff. He confirmed that at the next ward meeting, representatives from the hospital had been invited to discuss what could be done in resolving this issue.

He referred to the rise in anti-social behaviour around Heybarnes Park and that Sergeant Ullah had highlighted that the biggest issue was the lack of reporting by residents. He stated that the police could only act on the number of calls they received and that they were looking to meeting with residents.

He referred to the concerns of parking and speeding around Waverley School and believed work was ongoing with highways with regard to putting in some speeding measures outside the school.

He reported that residents were looking to arrange community clean ups with elected members and youth volunteers and although there needed more residents to partake, they were looking to using social media in order to promote this type of activity. Reference was made to the issues associated with Ideal Park, the setting up of a 'friends of the park' group and the bi-monthly meetings held with residents. It was noted that there were issues around the back of Hugh Villas and the Pod whereby they would be looking to use some of the remaining environmental budget from the gating scheme for fencing around the Pod and also looking into providing more cameras.

Hodge Hill Ward

Councillor Williams referred to HS2 and the number of jobs that would be created not just for the district but also other areas of the city. Reference was made to the improvements made to the pavements at Fox and Goose Shopping Centre. It was noted that there would be a new astra turf pitch for Hodge Hill College and discussions were continuing regarding the cycle path at Washwood Heath Road. Reference was made to the planting of fruit trees in Bromford Estate for the residents' community use and residents had been given permission to plant redcurrants and blackcurrants. It was noted that Hodge Hill Primary Schools had

expressed an interest in taking on Brockhurst playing fields and discussions were ongoing with various parties in order to see whether it was viable.

At this juncture, Councillor Mahmood declared a non-pecuniary interest as he sat on the board as a governor at Hodge Hill College.

He referred to the recent permission that had been granted to build an astro turf football pitch, changing rooms and the refurbishment of the swimming pool whereby funding was being provided from the football foundation and Sports England. He highlighted that there had been some objection around the spillage of flood lighting albeit minimal spillage, adding that there was also going to be some landscaping undertaken. Reference was made to the application to build 26 properties on Collingbourne Avenue (the old Comet Public House site) and there had been a further application on the old Beaufort site for 40 dwellings. An objection had been received from the bowling club who had wanted it designated as a community asset transfer.

Councillor Mahmood highlighted that the main issue within the ward was the parking on grass verges and subsequently confirmed that the issue relating to prostitution around the park had reduced since it had received media coverage.

Councillor Williams concluded by referring to the constant complaint received regarding the strip of land at Washwood Heath Road near the junction of Drews Land behind the bus stop. She stressed that it was a terrible site and although members had tried to deal with the issue it was proving difficult as to where the ownership lay.

Washwood Heath Ward

Councillor Khan confirmed that they had been engaging with residents and a great deal had been done with the Faith Watch group. The group were working alongside West Midlands Police, residents, the mosque, local church, local businesses and local schools. She highlighted that the Faith Watch were doing fantastic work and were being very proactive which included undertaking walkabouts on a regular basis.

Reference was made to the active work taking place with the various primary schools which included meeting parents and discussing how issues were taken forward that had been previously rife in the ward. It was noted that they always tried to have a representative at the housing liaison board, where the main issues affecting the ward were highlighted which included environmental, crime and most recently street robberies which were taking place during day light. It was noted that fly-tipping was a major issue identified through walkabouts, and through the housing liaison board working with council officers they had tried to tackle these issues as soon as they occurred.

She confirmed that members attended regular events which included cultural and religious, and were actively involved with a number of projects which included working closely with Liam Byrne, MP on a project called 'Neighbours United.'

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Reference was made to the Halal Supermarket and the new car park which had opened which was an excellent facility for shoppers. It was noted that the pool in Ward End Park needed urgent attention and it was hoped that work would commence next year.

She concluded by formally thanking the Faith Watch Group for their work and subsequently welcomed a new women's group called 'Women Empowering Women' which was originally based in Bordesley Green Ward. She stated that they had since moved, and their official launch was being held at St Peter's College on 26 March 2016 between 12 – 4 pm.

Shard End Ward

Councillor Cotton confirmed that the ward forum meetings had been held and that there had been a very high level of attendance which had resulted in some good and robust discussions. Reference was made to the huge amount of work undertaken by Phil Grainger, Place Manager and his team, especially with regard to the 'clean and green' agenda. Reference was made to the tasking arrangements which included representation from all of the residents groups in the ward, which continued to grow and were working closely with Phil and his team.

Reference was made to the changes with regard to Kitsland Road area where there had been issues with anti-social behaviour and with regard to the green agenda, there had been planting of a community orchard in Tile Cross with the Urban Orchard project, whereby residents had been assisted by Phil and his team.

With regard to issues around anti-social behaviour this had been addressed by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) whereby there was one in place in Norman Chamberlain Park, which was helping to resolve ongoing problems concerning quad bikes and scramblers and due to the success of this, they were looking to use this tool in other areas of the ward.

He highlighted that the 55a bus service would be remaining, adding that further discussions had taken place with National Express whereupon it had been highlighted that it was a vital service especially for the area of Yorkswood.

Councillor Cotton concluded by referring to 'Shardfest' which had been organised by local residents and was self-financing. He confirmed that it was scheduled for 23 and 24 July 2016 and subsequently detailed the web site where tickets could be obtained. He stated that it was a brilliant event and that it had helped in putting Shard End on the map.

HODGE HILL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2015/16

The following Hodge Hill District Governance Statement 2015/16 was submitted:-

(See document No. 4)

Mike Davis made introductory comments to the statement adding that although somewhat late, due to the template being in place now, there was the expectation

that it would be brought to Committee earlier in the new municipal year. He stated that it sets out the decision making process and gave members some flavour of what the programme was and an indication of the type of partnership activity that was taking place across the district.

In response to Councillor Khan's enquiry relating to the Jobs and Skills Champion and whether it needed to be added to the statement, Mike Davis believed that the role would complement the district's neighbourhood challenge around youth and employment. He highlighted that there was ongoing work at city level, which brought together a city wide forum and either the district Chair or the Champion around jobs and skills would be invited to those meetings, and therefore believed that it could be added, as it was particularly important for the district.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

292

RESOLVED:-

That the information be noted.

HODGE HILL DISTRICT CONVENTION REPORT

The following Hodge Hill District Convention Report was submitted:-

(See document No. 5)

Mike Davis whilst providing introductory comments to the report highlighted the attendance at the convention had been quite good and that Hasanat College had provided the accommodation for the event without any cost.

He referred to the 'cradle to the grave' workshops that had taken place which had looked at the needs of children and young people across the district, and then progressed to considering the needs of those in middle years/late years and how those needs were being met by statutory bodies and also community organisations. He further referred to the report that detailed some of the outcomes from the workshop sessions and confirmed that all the discussions that had taken place were recorded within the document.

He reported that the next steps were detailed in page 25 of the report and that the report would be shared with all of the groups. He added that all the findings from the convention from the various groups would be shared and that any relevant information as a result of this could be included within their own work programmes.

He referred to the pledges that had been made and where interests lay and the need to continue to provide key information to these organisations in order to allow opportunities to move forward. He added that the information would be used in the producing the Hodge Hill District Plan which would be brought to the first meeting of the committee in the new municipal year.

Councillor Khan welcomed the report and highlighted that it had been a good convention with very realistic objectives. She stated that the 'cradle to the grave'

theme was good as it included all ages of society and covered a variety of areas which included what support network was available and employment issues that were often faced.

She highlighted that now the information had been submitted to district it could now be circulated to all.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

293

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

HODGE HILL DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE (DRAFT) REPORT – YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The following Hodge Hill District Neighbourhood Challenge (Draft) Report – Youth Unemployment was submitted:-

(See document No. 6)

Mike Davis provided a comprehensive breakdown of the report whilst apologising for the document being tabled at the meeting. He referred to the work that had taken place over recent months with regard to youth employment as to what the issues were and what opportunities there might be with moving forward. He highlighted that section 2 sets out the purpose of the challenge links relating to what had been undertaken in the district regarding the Kerslake Report. He referred to section 3 of the report which detailed the main areas that were requested for exploration with businesses and schools, and the engaging more widely with young people regarding their opportunities.

He further referred to the interviews with key partners and businesses around jobs and skills that had taken place whereupon the evidence had been recently circulated to members. Reference was made to the involvement of Councillor Khan at the job centre where members would have the opportunity to visit and see the work that was taking place through the job centre. It was noted that the job centre was now working in a more collaborative way which included looking at working in various venues away from the main centre.

Mike Davis referred to the evidence session that had been held at the Pump with members looking at what was working and where improvements needed to be made, he subsequently referred to the conclusions under each of the headings and encouraged members to read the report in detail.

He highlighted that in recommendation 12 of the report there was the intention to review progress in delivering these recommendations by means of a progress report in six months (September 2016) and again in 12 months (March 2017). He added that the report would be circulated again for any changes to be made and once the

report had been endorsed, progression could be made to move some of these actions forward over the forthcoming weeks.

Councillor Khan thanked Mike for the report and suggested that members would require time to read the report thoroughly. She referred to the meeting that had taken place at the job centre which had been good. She referred to the staff at the job centre working in a more 'outreach' way and detailed the various areas where this was happening which included doctors' surgeries and the mosque. She added that they were looking to engage further with service providers and members in Hodge Hill District.

She made reference to recommendation 6 of the report, and the importance of identifying young people and signposting them to opportunities. She further referred to the importance of closing the skills gap in helping to get people into employment and identifying links with local businesses in mentoring young people in order to learn about working life, adding, that it would be good if there was mentoring out there for schools to take up.

She referred to recommendations 8 and 9 of the report whereby the job centres would like the city council to try and facilitate and engage local businesses to get involved with them. Reference was made to the good positive recommendation in providing a leaflet presenting a combined employer support offer from JCP, BCC and local providers that could be used to engage employers to consider working with Hodge Hill partners around work placements, apprenticeships and jobs.

She concluded by referring to the job centre visit where she had identified that there was a national pilot scheme for schools being able to approach the job centre. The schools worked closely with the job centre whereby the centre was able to provide advice to young people regarding job elements.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

294 **RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

295 The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 22 March 2016 at 13.30 hours in Committee Rooms 3 & 4.

PETITIONS

296 There were no petitions submitted to the meeting.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

297 **RESOLVED:-**

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

The meeting ended at 15:35 hours.

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CHAIRMAN