

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**NORTHFIELD DISTRICT
COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, 17 MARCH 2017**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 17 MARCH 2017 AT 1400 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Councillors Steve Booton, Randal Brew, Debbie Clancy, Ian Cruise, Peter Douglas Osborn, Carole Griffiths, Peter Griffiths, Julie Johnson, Brett O'Reilly and Valerie Seabright.

ALSO PRESENT: -

Councillor Marje Bridle, Assistant Leader, BCC
Richard Burden, Member of Parliament, Northfield Constituency
Chris Caffrey, General Manager, Fortem
Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead
Inspector Simon Graham, West Midlands Police
PC Spencer Hunt, West Midlands Police
Detective Sergeant Alan Teague, West Midlands Police
Councillor Bruce Pitt, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council
Errol Wilson, Committee Manager
Mark Wright, Senior Services Manager, Place Directorate

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 409 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

- 410 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Andy Cartwright and Simon Jevon.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 411 The Chairman announced that the agenda had been changed so that the Police could attend the meeting. He expressed thanks to the Police for attending at short

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notice given the situation with gang crime in Northfield. He invited Richard Burden, MP to make a brief comment on the hostage situation in Northfield as there was a hostage situation in Northfield earlier today.

Mr Burden advised that he had just heard about the hostage situation within the last half an hour, but that there had been a hostage situation in Northfield this morning where an armed person took hostage of a person in a bank. The hostage situation had come to an end and the Police had made an arrest. He requested that the District Committee sends its best wishes to the Police for having brought the situation to a swift conclusion.

Councillor Brew commented that he was made aware of the situation a quarter of an hour ago, but that he had gathered that it was not quite as it seemed as it was not quite as high profile as it was coming across on the news channels. He concurred with Mr Burden that the District Committee sends its best wishes to the Police for bringing it to a swift conclusion and to congratulate them.

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

UPDATE ON GANG CRIME IN NORTHFIELD DISTRICT

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Detective Sergeant Alan Teague, West Midlands Police, and Inspector Simon Graham, West Midlands Police attended. Detective Sergeant Teague made introductory comments and then gave a PowerPoint presentation titled *South Birmingham Emerging Urban Street Gangs*.

(See document No. 1)

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

1. In relation to the social media company, an investigation was being done by the Police Prevent Team who was pursuing all civil interventions. They were currently looking at that company and were considering the control they could place on them as it did not seem right that they could post videos which were glorifying gang culture and violence between groups. They were aware of the impact this was having on the schools and education.
2. Approximately 35 key members of the three groups were identified and they were reviewing each individual as it was apparent that whilst they were involved in very serious offences and gang activity, it did not feature on the Police system. This gives very little in the way of statutory control through the Youth Offending Service. Anything that they did with them was voluntary, but this did not mean that there were no other options available to them through schools for those who were of school age.
3. In terms of some of the youths who were 16 – 18 years old, what they were finding, it did not appear that many of them were in education. They had presented to a majority of schools in the south of Birmingham and they were engaged and coming forward with some intelligence.

4. Of concerns were the various agencies including schools that were not sharing intelligence with the Police. However, they were now seeing a flow of this intelligence around the issue. As a priority, they were trying to get short-term intervention in place and those that wanted to help would be referred to Operation Sora. There was a slight stall in trying to get forums involved, but there was a need to join up what they were doing for it to be effective.
5. Detective Sergeant Teague noted Mr Burden's, MP comment and stated that he echoed his statement. He requested that if members were able to reach out to the communities, that they try to get intelligence and information to the Police as this would be welcomed, as they did not see that flow of intelligence coming into the Police.
6. In terms of communications, unfortunately they were a team of 5 officers that covers the whole of Birmingham's organised crimes and gangs. Whilst south Birmingham (in his opinion) was a priority, they had other on-going work that covers the City Centre. They would love to be able to come out to speak with every individual, but the point of contact would be the local Neighbourhood Team.
7. In relation to PCSO Sharon Hadley, they would encourage members to submit any information through her. Messages could also be submitted to the Neighbourhood Team through Inspector Mandy Platt who covers the Birmingham West area. They wanted to get some control over the situation quickly. There was some scope to getting some funding out to the community as there was not a lot of funding for youths age 16 – 18 years old or slightly older.
8. It was noted that there was a real gap in south Birmingham and Mark Price, Station Commander at Kings Norton Fire Station was keen to get things off the ground and was a useful ally as he was doing some useful work in the background. Station Commander Price was looking to engage with youths who were at risk of becoming the next gang member, which fits in nicely with what the Police was doing.

The Chairman thanked Detective Sergeant Teague and colleagues for attending and presenting the information.

MINUTES

In relation to matters arising from the Minutes, the following were amongst the matters raised: -

- a. Councillor Brew made reference to paragraph i) on page 282 of the Minutes and enquired whether any progress had been made on the Committee's desire to meet out in the District - Minute No. 399, paragraph i) refers.

Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead advised that he had investigated the issue and that there were a couple of companies that could assist. Given the agenda item on the main agenda in respect of the presentation by the Assistant Leader in relation to District Committees, it may be wise to put a

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hold on this until it was understood how District Committee meetings would take place in the future and their role as transition teams. Pending that, they had some information, but would pursue this once it was known how the structure of District Committees would be and how they go forward.

- b. The Chairman noted Councillor Cruise query concerning cycle safety on the Bristol Road and advised that he had made enquiries, but was unable to get any definitive response as to whether they could get some effective enforcement. He proposed that an interim meeting be held on the issue of parking by the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital and that they invite all the people concerned to discuss how they could take the matter forward. The Committee agreed the proposal.
- c. Councillor Julie Johnson requested that Sainsbury's be included on the circulation list for the newsletter. She advised that she had a meeting with the manager last week, but they were not included on the circulation list for the newsletter.
- d. Councillor Seabright made reference to the libraries and commented that she understood that a number of experienced staffs were leaving. She enquired whether this would impact on the service given that it was changing. She added that it would be good to say thanks to those people who had worked hard over the years they had been there, particularly over the last four years.

Mr Davies advised that Cabinet had approved the report on the 14 February 2017 which put forward a tiered model of library provision. The detail of the impact on libraries in Northfield was stated on page 284 of the Minutes.

In terms of Weoley and Frankley libraries, there was no change, a slight reduction in Northfield Library and a slight increase in Kings Norton library. The West Heath Library issue was still being worked on. It was anticipated that they would provide a good service and they were also seeking to modernise the service. A brief discussion concerning the issue then ensued.

Mr Davies noted Councillor Clancy's comment concerning money for new books and advised that there was more money available for new books and they were working through how this money would be distributed. They were looking at an allocation per tier of libraries.

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RESOLVED: -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2017, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ASSISTANT LEADER'S REPORT

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Councillor Marje Bridle introduced the item and stated that the Assistant Leaders (AL) were passionate in getting a better deal for neighbourhoods for making devolution happen. Devolution did not happen partly because no one had really been driving it. She highlighted the following: -

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- A report was submitted to Cabinet last year that spoke about the centre of gravity shifting from the Leader and Cabinet to the local leadership of Councillors in their communities and from Districts to Wards and real neighbourhoods and from formal decisions made by Cabinet to decisions made with the community.
- The ALs was trying to make various things happen and they were proposing to put together a *Prospectus for Action*. They wanted to *flesh out* about having repurposed officers called Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinators so that people who could join up things in the local Ward, help find solutions, take the initiative and be proactive people.
- They were looking at having Ward Teams, named officers from different services with a real *can do attitude* as a lot of this was about the culture of the Council and the officers they were working with. They were looking at the ability to flex services locally and were thinking particularly of frontline services.
- The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment Councillor Lisa Trickett had set the pace for this with the local street clean plans. It was thought that they could look at reversed commissioning where it could be stated what they wanted at local level in terms of highways and the various kind of front facing services made to happen without necessarily having the budget, but with the ability to get agreement to flex the service.
- They were looking at some tool-kits for local solutions to problems. There was a working group looking at what the possible solutions were to alleyways. They were also looking at the possibility of local budgets, but this was a difficult one.
- In terms of frontline services, they were thinking of enforcements, community safety, parking enforcements, Amey and highways being particularly important local services that they had the ability to flex.
- With regard to the Districts, they were thinking that the District Teams should become *Transition Teams* and the members were needed to work with the ALs to transition to the new ward and neighbourhoods working arrangements. The District Teams needed to help the ALs work through what needed to be happening at a level above the Wards – how do they cluster Wards to work together around issues such as jobs and skills; health for example in the east of the City.
- It made sense in terms of jobs and skills to work on a whole eastern corridor basis, but the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Skills, Councillor Brett O'Reilly's team would look at how to work on an officer basis to try and work on those unemployment issues in terms of the City.
- Councillor Bridle advised that she was pleased to report that they had had a meeting with the Acting Chief Executive, Angela Probate. They had been asked and it was in the Vision document for the Council to come up with a Neighbourhood Operating Model (NOM) which was part of the overall operating vision and part of the Future Operating Model (FOM).
- The other significant vision was that the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment Councillor Lisa Trickett would convene a session with the ALs and District Committee Chairs to talk through the next steps so they were all on the same agenda and they were all thinking it through together. There were a few meetings planned for that working group to make the transition happen.
- Governance needed to be looked at, the Districts had a particular remit which was stated in the Constitution which needed to be thought through.

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- In terms of local governance, Scrutiny Committee was keen on looking at what happened with Sutton Coldfield Town Council and possibly Frankley Parish Council to look at how they could set up other local community councils across the city.

In response to questions and comments from Members, Councillor Bridle made the following statements: -

1. They were a team of ALs and they had different skills and interests. The Ward Support Officers (WSO) was not the same as the proposed Neighbourhood Action Coordinators (NAC). They were speaking of a coordinator type of person who could bring together the entire residents group to talk through what was happening in the Ward(s) and make things happen. The NAC would then identify that there was something that was needed that they could get a hold of and to sort out that problem.
2. In terms of parking enforcements, it was a mystery to local Councillors. In Shard End they had (in the whole of Birmingham) the ability to do parking enforcement in terms of a ban on parking on the grass verge. The City Council had a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in place for the whole City, but only one road in Shard End Ward that is activated by the special signs along the road. Even then, they had found it hard to get a hold of the information to establish what parking enforcement had been done along that road. They needed localised information so that it was known what was happening and then they could call the contractor to account and have the issue resolved.
3. Councillor Bridle noted Councillor Brew's comment concerning cross-party working and advised that this was what they tried to do with the co-production sessions and it needed to be like that to make it happen.
4. In terms of community councils etc. it was not about imposing models on people and this was one of the problems they had in Birmingham, where they had come up with structures without thinking through things to make it happen. There was a need to think about what was needed first and then develop the structures that were appropriate. There was a need to think about solutions that were appropriate for the areas that they represent.
5. Councillor Bridle noted Councillor Cruise's comments and stated that partnerships needed to be thought through, but the key word with all the things they were doing as ALs were action, not talking shops. If they set them up and they had a partnership at local level it had to be about action. They were keen on resurrecting the Neighbourhood Plans. Her experience was that Ward Plans were written by Council officers instead of coming from the community and was something that was created from the bottom up, it was Council officers that were writing the plans. They were revisiting the idea of having Neighbourhood Plans.
6. Total Place, Our Place Initiatives etc. they had so many of these and Shard End was one of the three areas they did all these stuff and some officers were working forever getting information on what public money was being spent in Shard End which was an interesting exercise that went nowhere.

7. In terms of local economic areas, she was keen on seeing this happen as jobs and skills was a big issue in the east of the City, but it was working at the right level and digging down in what could be done locally to support the plans that they had strategically. She undertook to continue discussions with Councillor Bruce Pitt, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Councillor.
8. Councillor Bridle noted Councillor Clancy's enquiry concerning which AL was allocated to which Wards and advised that it was believed that in the next phase the ALs would be allocated to areas of the City.
9. In terms of parking they needed to get to grips with that and it was hoped that the *can do officer* would be able to deal with that.
10. With regard to casework management and people doing so, she was keen on this happening. It was important to get away from the Council having to do everything. We all had to do things for ourselves and this way of thinking needed to be promoted.
11. A mechanism for residents was needed where they did not have to go through Councillors, but to go direct to get a problem resolved. This would not be easy, but a discussion was needed about what ability there was for a residence group. There were a number of budgets around that was mysterious. There were also grants that were available that they were told that Birmingham was had a leveraging outside money which was another part of the work.
12. A workshop concerning bid writing was held, but it would be helpful to have someone within the Council that could assist with understanding if you were a community group what was available for them to tap into. The cross-party and skills set was important and the NACs, but they were not talking about one person for every Ward. This would be more complicated as they would be having new wards. It was proposed to have a NAC for every three members

The Chairman thanked Councillor Marje Bridle for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO HOUSING REPAIRS

415 Mark Wright, Senior Service Manager, Place Directorate and Chris Caffrey, General Manager, Fortem attended and gave a verbal presentation concerning the policies and procedures relating to Housing repairs.

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

Vulnerable customers were defined by the Call Centre as someone with a child, elderly person, and persons with a disability. There was a script that the Call Centre followed so they would assess at the front end whether the customer was vulnerable or not. This was important as they would look at a two hour repair, 24 hours or 3 day repair in terms of a partial failure of a central heating system etc. In terms of the KPIs, the KPIs were the KPIs across the City that was presented in the Housing Transformation Board report which was the KPIs reported from the contractors back to the Centre. They should be talking about the same areas.

There had been some overarching features with the length of time the repairs had taken. When the repairs were reported through the Call Centre, and the operatives attended within the two hours and found they could not do the repair because a part was needed, they leave a temporary heater as they were required to do so. It was appreciated that there were some instances where the temporary heaters were unsuitable and this was a difficult scenario, but there had to be a follow up to carry out the repair and the issue was one of communication. It was found on a number of occasions that communication had broken down.

Early on in the contract as they went into the winter period there had been a high number of jobs coming in with a limited number of engineers to attend those jobs. Promises were made that they would return in two days to do the repair, but for a number of reasons this did not happen in some cases. The service was not wonderful in some areas particularly around gas repairs and they had to get better particularly with the engineers. It was written into the contract in *My Home*.

All operative was required to take ownership of any problems and resolve it. If they could not fix the repair on their first visit, they should follow this up and making the parts request to the store from the site, arranging the next appointment and informing the customer that they would be back on a specified day to carry out the work. For reasons this did not happen as quickly as they would have liked it to and they were still working on that.

From Wilmott Dixon /Fortem scenario, it was an integration of a new gas contract. Under the old contract terms previously, Wilmott Dixon was not delivering the gas; they were only delivering the repairs and void element. From a mobilisation perspective this was straightforward and they got the odd glitch that they resolved but in the main it was delivering what they needed to do.

With the integration of the gas contract, there were many influences that had impacted some of these scenarios around the communication element, one being the system and the engineers with the *My Home App* in managing vulnerability and communicating this back.

They were trying to allow technology to drive this forward, but there was evidence that where they had communicated the system had failed them. They were only aware of the problem when it was escalated, but this had now been resolved and a lot of the issues had been resolved. They were now moving forward ready for next year's winter planning as they were already discussing it, sharing best practice, looking at what went wrong and what they had learnt and how they could stop this moving forward.

The condition survey database detailed the types of boilers that they had. They also had a record of all the boilers and the CP12 which was the gas certificates; so that when the operative goes out they should be able to see the CP12 that would state what type of boiler it was.

In relation to the van stock, they wanted the vans to be stocked with all the common parts required to repair a boiler. They had numerous types of boilers and from experience the contractors knew which type of boilers had certain failures and the parts they require. They should also know which of the parts they could not get. If they were obsolete and they could not get the parts, they had to renew the boiler.

If they could not repair the boiler they would send a referral to his team to renew the boiler. They had various types of boilers, some of which they had difficulty in obtaining parts for. As part of the asset management strategy all the warm air system had been removed and they were working on the next stage of which was the high priority boilers to be renewed.

A number of boilers had been renewed including central heating systems over the last year. The skill of the assessor at the Call Centre – they were reliant on the scripting mechanism. Years ago they had the Call Centre operated by the contractors, but they now have a central Call Centre operated by operatives who also carry out other aspect of the service. It was down to how they follow the scripting mechanism and they were working closely with the Call Centre to iron out any problems. Regular monthly meetings were held with the Call Centre managers and any aspect of the script that was not working, they would change it to try and improve the service.

In terms of vulnerability, it would be detailed in the Call Centre if they were previously classed as vulnerable. As they work through the scripting mechanism, they would assess whether a person was vulnerable or not and then depending on how they work through that scripting it would come out with a priority.

With regard to the *My Home* approach, it was in the contractor's interest to get every job done on the first visit as they were not paid to go back and do the job a second time. They were given the price for the property, price for gas, price for void etc., every time they go there it cost them money. The stock condition programme was a huge one as there were 65,000 properties each of which would be surveyed and they were in the process of doing that survey. They had prioritised certain aspect of the stock that they had and the lower priority properties and would come nearer the end of the stock condition survey.

They came across 43 different boiler types that had different part. Now they had a better knowledge and understanding of that as they had integrated the gas contract this year. As a business they did not have this data, now they had that data to be better prepared for next year. They were engaging with their supplier in terms of the parts arena which was the distribution and imminent access to parts. Engineers carried all sorts in the vans, but they had van stocks to reflect what they envisaged to be the problem.

In relation to *My Home*, they were retraining the operatives to embed the *My Home* culture as this was not embedded with the previous contractor. Now the heat had come off the deployment to ensure that they got to customers, they were revisiting that training and making people aware of the different vulnerability criteria and how they respond. Where they were aware that boiler parts were obsolete they had fitted new boilers and were trying to mitigate any problems for next winter.

It was accepted that temporary heaters were difficult in the main and 80% of what they did was probably fit for purpose. The things that they did not get specifically, due to data protection were the actual vulnerability of customers and it was a visual observation at that point in time.

The Chairman thanked Mark Wright and Chris Caffrey for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF NORTHFIELD LEISURE CENTRE

The following briefing note in relation to concerns raised by the District Committee about the effect on traffic across a busy junction during the stages of construction for the new Northfield Pool was submitted.

(See document No. 2)

416 **RESOLVED: -**

That the briefing note be tabled.

NORTHFIELD DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE UPDATE

417 Councillor Clancy gave the following verbal update: -

- ✚ She had a meeting on the 15 February 2017 with the Chairman and Mr Davies to briefly discuss what would be the next steps. Post this they were working through some dates at present to get some key people involved that they had in mind – a couple of secondary schools, a representative from Bournville College and the DWP.
- ✚ There were some key points made at the last District Committee regarding Bournville College potentially getting the correct data at the right time as to what might be a potential NEET.
- ✚ They had also discussed the lower 20% of children in schools below standard and this would be taken further with the schools.
- ✚ This was work in progress and a date for a further meeting/workshop would be arranged prior to the District Committee meeting on the 9th June 2017

Members then commented as follows: -

1. Councillor O'Reilly commented that it was appropriate that when things go right they should shout about it as they had some fantastic achievements in Birmingham. He was pleased to report that they now had the official figures for NEET across Birmingham which was 2.7%. In comparison with other core cities, Birmingham was now the top performing core city on NEET. They had been helped slightly now that the Government had revised the figures by moving a certain cohort from the overall figure.
2. 2.7% was an impressive figure and he expressed congratulation to the officers. He stated that he was looking forward to the workshop on NEETs locally as this could be a key aspect for work for the local Jobs and Skills Board when the economics was considered and ensuring that the local youths get the opportunity to succeed. He stated that he supported the initiative going forward.

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3. Councillor Seabright stated that looking at the figures for results across Birmingham in primary schools for the last year, the figures varied depending on where they lived. Northfield District came quite low in terms of the basic reading, writing and maths. This suggested that there had been a problem of what they could be expecting in another 8 or 9 years' time partly because of those figures and partly because of the lack of aspiration and the inter-generational problems in the area. It was felt that in terms of NEETs and jobs and skills generally, they should be looking at that level as well. They needed to think of innovative ways of getting that intervention not only to help with reading but with aspirations etc. and the whole work ethos was something that needed to be looked at across the board.
4. Mr Burden, MP commented that with regard to NEETs, it was a dire situation in terms of unemployment and skills in Northfield District was concerned. He stated that the figures came out this week and Northfield was the 18th worst constituency in the country. The unemployment rate was 6.1% of the economically active population. The UK equivalent was 2.5% and most of the indicators looked at showed that the figures were getting worst over this time last year.
5. Northfield had a particular problem, but the figures for Birmingham were 38 out of 40 and were showing increases in the jobless total over last year. There was something happening/not happening in our area that was persistently giving this kind of problem and could be inter-generational and a lack of expectation. The question was whether it would be worthwhile given the fact that they had this problem, whether it would be worthwhile to make commissioning some kind of detailed work involving the Jobs and Skills Board to try and look at what was happening to employment and skills and what was happening here; how they could start to identify some of the particular causes that makes the area perform so badly and what could be done about it.
6. With regard to apprenticeships, the Skills Funding Agency had recently published their register of apprenticeship providers nationally – a list of places with training providers that were allowed to offer apprenticeships from when the Apprenticeship Levy comes in and the news on this was that no Birmingham Further Education college featured on the list. None of them technically would be allowed to offer apprenticeship from April 2017. If this was true, it was quite serious. Councillor Douglas Osborn echoed Councillor Seabright's comment concerning basic reading writing and maths.
7. Councillor Pitt, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Councillor commented that one of the things they were doing in the library at Frankley was that they were running some maths and English classes for young adults. The initiative came through the local child care centre where they had parents who had little in the way of qualifications.
8. Councillor O'Reilly made reference to Mr Burden MP's comment and stated that it was important that it was important that they find out what the causes were relating to skills, unemployment, insecure work and low pay in Northfield were. He added that he was in discussion with a number of stakeholders launching a Jobs and Skills Commission in Birmingham and specifically to look at different communities.

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9. The jobs and skills in Northfield for example, would be different to the eastern corridor. Each area would need its own unique perspective on what the jobs perspectives were. He had not heard from the Further Education (FE) colleges that they had been excluded from the Apprenticeship Levy and being a provider, but he would take this away from the meeting and investigate the issue. It was hoped that this was an oversight rather than a deliberate attempt to cut the FE sector out in the delivery of apprenticeship training.
10. In terms of unemployment figures across Birmingham, it was important to note that there was a rise in unemployment in Birmingham in 38 of the 40 Wards, but there were a number of factors at play. They were probably starting to see the effects of Brexit and moving forward they were probably starting to see the effects of austerity that was expected. They were watching the figures closely to see how they move.

The Chairman commented that they needed this item finished by the next Committee meeting on the 9th June 2017. There were plans to hold a workshop event between then and now. He invited Councillor Clancy to give a summary of the next steps. Councillor Clancy commented that in the previous agenda item with Fortem they advised that they had 13 apprentices, but more was needed. The question was what Birmingham City Council was doing to get apprenticeship on this local authority. They did need other business across the City, but the Council needed to be doing more and setting the example. She was interested in following more on the jobs and skills as it was all linked. Councillor Seabright was correct as reading and writing was down and there was a lot of work to be done.

SOAP BOX

The Chairman introduced the item and advised that the idea was to have a speaker at future District Committee meetings to speak on particular issues they would want to bring forward; local community activist who wanted to put their point of view to the District Committee. It was agreed that this would happen in the future.

Councillor Brew advised that they had *Soap Box* for some time on the District and Wards agendas and the concept of the *Soap Box* was an opportunity for members of the public to bring forward a substantive item. The old rule were that they had up to 3 minutes to speak on the subject and there was a commitment for the officers and the Council to report back at the next District or Ward meeting.

418 **RESOLVED: -**

The Committee agreed for *Soap Box* to be a standing item on the agenda for future District Committee meetings.

DATE OF NEXT NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE

- 419 It was noted that the next Northfield District Committee meeting will be held on Friday 9 June 2017, at 1400 hours, in Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

420 **Northfield Leisure Centre Competition**

Councillor Carole Griffiths enquired on behalf of Councillor Andy Cartwright whether the competition could be opened up to the entire District as all the schools in the Wards would be using the swimming pool. A brief discussion concerning the issue ensued and it was agreed to pick up the issue outside the meeting.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

421 **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."

The meeting ended at 1600 hours.

CHAIRMAN