

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**SELLY OAK DISTRICT  
COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2017**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SELLY OAK DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD  
ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2017 AT 1030 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6,  
COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:** - Councillor Karen McCarthy in the Chair

Councillors Susan Barnett, Alex Buchanan, Timothy Huxtable, Mike  
Leddy, Mary Locke and Phil Davis.

**ALSO PRESENT:** -

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|------------------|--|
| Karen Cheney     | - Selly Oak District Head/Lead for Community |
| Darren Share     | - Assistant Director, Place                  |
| Andy Middleton   | - Birmingham Cycle Revolution                |
| Peter Howarth    | - Birmingham Cycle Revolution                |
| Mark Wright      | - Senior Service Manager                     |
| Patricia Sweeney | - Fortem                                     |
| Marie Reynolds   | - Legal and Democratic Services              |

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**NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

412 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.

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**APOLOGIES**

413 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Barry Henley, Brigid Jones, Changese Khan, Eva Phillips and Rob Sealey. An apology was also submitted on behalf of Steve McCabe, MP.

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

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**MINUTES**

- 414 The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 26 January 2017 having been previously circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
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**LIFFORD LANE/PERSHORE ROAD**

- 415 Darren Share, Assistant Director, Place, referred to the traffic issues at Lifford Lane especially during the summer months as a result of the green waste collections. He confirmed that there was a planning application for the development of the site which did include some traffic measures as a means to relieve some of the traffic congestion.

He reported that the development consisted mainly of replacing buildings and office blocks and one of the proposals was to segregate staff vehicles and vehicles returning to the depot and the public entering the site, adding that they were trying to get as many people onto the site as quickly as possible. He stated that they were opening the extension to the HRC site to accommodate the green waste disposal and for additional re-cycling and vehicles to use the facilities. He further stated that they were placing bollards down the centre of the road to control the vehicles as they came onto the site, and that they publicised through the web cams, the activity at the site in order for the public to be aware of how busy the site was before they visited.

He confirmed that they were looking for both a temporary or permanent alternative HRC site within the city highlighting that it was not a simple fix. He added that they were trying to do all that they could in addressing the congestion however due to the site being enclosed with railway bridges and canals made access to the site extremely difficult.

Following the presentation and during the discussion the following points were made:-

Members welcomed the efforts that were being made at the site for easier and quicker access. However, it was highlighted that the difficulties encountered at times in accessing the site, should not give the public the right to dispose of their rubbish on the streets.

Councillor Huxtable expressed severe disappointment of the lack of officer representation from Transportation Department. He highlighted that this was not the first time that they had failed to attend and therefore questioned why, they were refusing to engage with elected members, and that it should be taken back to the Strategic Director, of the distinct lack of respect being shown in terms of engagement when raised by residents within Selly Oak District.

Several concerns were raised by members with regard to; the significant highway management issues that were not being adequately addressed and that the planning applications should not be considered in isolation as it was necessary to look at the broader picture, and that there needed to be a road layout system that actually worked for all of the developments within Selly Oak District. It was also suggested that given the number of brownfield sites on the south side of the city that there should be at least one other HRC site to try and relieve some of the traffic congestion from the Lifford Lane site.

In response to members' comments, Darren Share apologised for the lack of officer representation from the Transportation Department and confirmed that he would feedback members' comments. He believed that the HRC was the largest cause of issues around Lifford Lane and therefore they had the biggest opportunity to improve the traffic congestion. He confirmed that they were looking at alternative sites that they were currently progressing as a temporary seasonal green waste site and also another potential HRC site located in the south west of the city. He added that they were working on a number of options that were open to the Council but were having to go through a series of processes with the Environmental Agency and with Highways to ensure the problem did not transfer from one area to another.

The Chair proposed to schedule an informal meeting before the next district meeting with Transportation regarding the planning applications and for the discussion to include looking at the trampoline development and that end of Stirchley High Street, adding that all members were welcome to attend.

Darren Share concluded by confirming that the waste disposal contract for the city council was up for renewal in 2019 which was currently operated by Veolia. He stated that they were looking at a number of sites around the city where they may be able to increase recycling opportunities as part of the contract, and be able to introduce them earlier through working with Veolia. He confirmed that they would look to do that in order to try and relieve some of the pressures not just from Lifford Lane site but also other sites.

The Chair thanked Darren Share for attending the meeting and presenting.

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### **BIRMINGHAM CYCLE REVOLUTION CONSULTATION**

- 416 Andy Middleton, Cycling Programme Manager and Peter Howarth, Project Manager, circulated the following documents illustrating the proposed new cycle routes from the City Centre to Selly Oak and Perry Barr and the A38 Bristol Road: -

(See document Nos. 1 and 2)

Andy Middleton, Cycling Programme Manager provided a brief overview of the Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR) Programme highlighting that they had secured funding of £57m to deliver a package of cycling improvements across the city. He confirmed that there was another 3 or 4 years before the programme would be completed and that there were 4 main elements to the programme.

He confirmed that following a number of successful bids, funding had been received from both the Department for Transport and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver the BCR Programme.

The largest element of the programme was a highway scheme package which comprised of the Main Corridor and Parallel Routes and associated Local Links, as well as the introduction of 20 mph Pilot Areas. The other key elements were the Green Route for cyclists in parks and public open space areas, as well as refurbishment of canal towpaths and associated access improvements to Canal Routes. The final element of BCR comprised of a package of supporting measures including the Big Birmingham Bikes Initiative which introduced 4,000 bikes in local

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communities whereby 3,400 were allocated to the most socially deprived areas which helped people to access employment and other facilities. This had also provided a series of grants to a number of schools and businesses across the city through the Top Cycle Location initiative.

The final element was introducing cycle routes along the highway which would be the A34 Birchfield Road and the A38 Bristol Road from the City Centre to Selly Oak. The process in taking forward the routes had just involved the consultation whereby they would be looking at the feedback from the consultation. The expectation was that approval would be sought within the next few months and the scheme would be delivered within 12 months' time.

Peter Howarth, Project Manager, provided a brief overview of the scheme by referring to the detailed information circulated at the meeting. He highlighted that the cycling path would be segregated from road traffic and pedestrians. He referred to the consultation and detailed the ways in which they had engaged with the public with leaflets and drop in centres. He confirmed that they were now analysing the feedback in order to establish what could be incorporated into the detailed design.

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

Andy Middleton confirmed that they were in dialogue with Transport for West Midlands on their wider proposals for public transport initiatives down the Bristol Road. He stated that the Bristol Road was one of the routes within the medium term they were looking at to bring proposals for bus rapid transit system and there had been a number of meetings with TFWM on integrating the proposals.

Andy Middleton explained how they were logging the usage of routes, and confirmed that with the proposed scheme at the Bristol Road they would have the initial figures and over 12 months,' they would be looking at identifying the levels of increase. He subsequently explained how the targets of usage had been set up to 2033.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Barnet regarding utilising space to use a cycle path, Andy Middleton confirmed that as part of the programme moving forward they were looking at setting aside funding for making cycling improvements in some travel district areas, and agreed to investigate to see whether it fitted within the wider programme. He referred to the Top Cycle initiative which was the funding provision provided to schools and businesses to provide facilities pertaining to cycling, highlighting that they were just in the process of rolling out a second phase of funding.

Peter Howarth confirmed that they were looking to save as many trees as possible as part of the design of the scheme, and that they were looking to replace every tree removed with two trees.

In response to members' comments, Peter Howarth agreed that the junctions that had been discussed were the most dangerous parts for cyclists and explained the safety measures that would be put in place especially relating to Bristol Road and Bristol Street, where cyclists turning right in those areas would not be doing so at the same time. He stated that what had been designed would be a safe and segregated way for cyclists to get across in a simple and straightforward way, and that there would be improvements made to the pedestrian crossings where they would be better aligned.

The Chair concluded by thanking Andy Middleton and Peter Howarth for attending the meeting and reporting.

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**HOUSING REPAIRS CONTRACT**

417 Mark Wright, Senior Service Manager, reported that there were now 4 contracts instead of 3 and as a result of these contracts there was a 20% cost saving to the city compared to the previous contracts. He confirmed that all the contractors now used the same computer technology which allowed the city to have complete visibility of the system.

He referred to the 3 main aspects that were covered by the contractors which were; gas, repairs and voids. He subsequently provided a breakdown of work Fortem had undertaken which included; gas services, installation of gas central heating systems and boilers, household testing and gas repairs. He added that since 1 April 2017 there had been the completion of 2,807 voids which had taken Fortem an average of 15 days to carry out the work.

Mark Wright detailed the number of repairs that had been carried out highlighting that the repairs when reported were prioritised by degree of emergency and vulnerability by the Call Centre which was the first point of contact. He referred to the number of capital programmes that were being carried out which included; re-roofing, guttering, replacement of windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms. He stated that the capital budget had been significantly reduced over the last few years, and therefore the asset management strategy, was to target work according to priority based condition surveys carried out by the contractors works officers across the city that were then fed into a central computer system. This produced a programme of works that was measured with Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which were now far more challenging in the new contracts and within the new contracts, there was the facility to penalise the contractors if they did not match their targets.

Mark Wright confirmed that there was a dedicated housing repairs improvement team that collated and managed the customer enquiries to ensure all were responded to within a certain timescale. He stated that plans were in place for Fortem to relocate their complete operation to Stonebrook Way and together with South Team would provide a one stop centre.

Patricia Sweeney reported on the various other aspects that Fortem were involved with included work experience for people of the city, apprenticeship schemes, supported a number of career fayres in schools, colleges, job centres and prison and carried out a number of activities with schools and colleges. Reference was made to the life training academy based in Aston where they had run a host of activities to include employability workshops. Further reference was made to the community investment figure which was nearly £400,000 which had provided a new reception area for Acorns Children's Hospital, Selly Oak and the refurbishment of the kitchens and classrooms at Sherborne Sea Cadets, Stirchley..

Patricia Sweeney referred to the various fundraising events and charities they were involved with and the residential adventure in Wales, where they took young people away for 5 days, and that they had provided Acorns with a Christmas tree and 500 selection boxes for children in care.

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

In response to Councillor Barnett's query relating to an emergency repair, Mark Wright whilst agreeing to investigate, subsequently explained how the repair process worked through the Call Centre. He added that at times where work had fallen behind due to there not being enough appointment slots for Fortem, the city worked with them in order that the books could be re-balanced and any fall out pertaining to the service level agreement would be taken on board.

Patricia Sweeny confirmed that they offered work experience to all ages of people including care leavers and that they ran tenant workshops for them to learn basic skills.

Councillor Buchanan personally thanked Mark for his efficiency and in response to concern relating to gas servicing being carried out in the same area but at different times, Mark Wright explained the difficulties that had been encountered by the contractor which included the movement of staff from the old contract to the new contract, the provision of multi-skill training and the difficulties in recruiting adequate numbers of gas engineers.

Patricia Sweeney reiterated that there had been a number of problems with the service and acknowledged mistakes had been made during the winter period relating to the service. However, lessons had been learnt from those mistakes, and that they would have a plan in place for the next winter period in order to ensure a better standard of service was provided.

Mark Wright confirmed that when calls were made to the Call Centre, operatives would follow the scripted mechanism where it should be identified any vulnerability that the resident had which would include hearing difficulties. This would be flagged on the system and to Fortem in order for operatives to make every effort to gain access and not walk away from an address.

Patricia Sweeney confirmed that the operatives were now working up to 8 pm on weekdays and if the city council was unable to provide the timeslot the tenant requested, as part of the Service Level Agreement (SLA), they would have to be contacted by the end of the day to schedule an appropriate appointment, adding that they tried to be as flexible as possible in order to suit the tenant which meant that sometimes the repair could fall outside the SLA. She stated that they were in discussion with the Call Centre with regard to improving the scripts in order to obtain better information from tenants when reporting a repair.

Mark Wright highlighted that Fortem offered Saturday appointments but not Sundays as he believed this would have a cost implication.

Mark Wright referred to the winter period and confirmed that it had been an extremely busy time of the year and that if Fortem had been unable to repair the fault then they would leave temporary heaters whilst they were waiting to obtain the part. He stated that generally they should be able to obtain the part for any boiler within 24 hours of it being issued. He referred to the problems that had been encountered by Fortem last winter which had included issues with the supplier in providing parts and mishaps with the computer system regarding follow-up jobs. He confirmed that they were working

with Fortem in resolving these issues and ensuring that vulnerable customers' repairs were carried out as soon as possible.

He concluded that there was a programme to replace boilers and central heating systems however the priority last year was to replace all the warm air systems due to their inefficiency. He added that they were replacing some boilers however it was based on the age of the boiler. He stated that if a boiler proved to be regularly troublesome then contractors would be sent out to investigate and in some cases the boiler would be replaced.

The Chair concluded by thanking Mark Wright and Patricia Sweeney for attending the meeting and reporting.

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### **DISTRICT WORK PROGRAMME**

418 The Chair referred to the work that was being done with regard to looking beyond 2018, and the services that needed to be looked at on a wider basis, and whether it might include Jobs and Skills and was based around Job Centres. She suggested that if members had any thoughts around this that they please feed them back.

She reported that district committees were to become transition teams from district working to wards working, but also the transition to the new wards for 2018 which will require new ways of working together. She stated that at present the district committee meeting dates had been scheduled for the forthcoming municipal year and that there was the need to look at the issues the Assistant Leaders had identified.

Following members' comments, the Chair referred to parish councils and highlighted the additional resources attached to these and suggested that some local communities may find very difficult to support. The Chair referred to the street cleaning plan that each ward was to provide in order to address local street cleansing and for the service to be more responsive in tackling these issues, which as yet, the plan had not been tested. With regard to parks the Chair highlighted that there were some award winning Friends of the Parks Groups within the district and to ensure that whatever the new structure was that the work continued.

Karen Cheney, Selly Oak District Head confirmed that the information presented at the meeting was a working paper. She stated that although there were references within the information relating to the transition to new working arrangements, there had been no formal changes to the Constitution and at the moment, formal decisions would continue to be taken at District Committee and Cabinet Committee. She added that they were expecting a paper to be submitted in May to Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership which may set out changes to the Constitution.

The Chair referred to the informal meeting scheduled for June and proposed that the items discussed should be the road safety issue and Lifford Lane. She highlighted that the road safety issue would involve homework whereby information would be required from each ward and would need to be taken forward. She added that once these tasks had been taken forward there would be a clearer view of what the meetings would look like during the next year.

Karen agreed to update the work programme and circulate to members.

**FEEDBACK FROM SELLY OAK WARDS: BILLESLEY, BOURNVILLE, BRANDWOOD AND SELLY OAK**

419 Karen Cheney reported on the Partners Investing in Neighbourhoods and Communities (PINCh) Event held at Stirchley Baths earlier this week for community organisations, partners as well as the Police and Health Service and many major fundraising organisations for the South Districts. She highlighted that there were organisations present from each of the wards represented at the meeting. She reported that the day had been split into a number of areas and subsequently provided a brief overview of the day's events which included a lunch time grants workshop for those organisations applying for grants.

Karen Cheney confirmed that the Neighbourhood Forums across the south of the city were still working well and meeting on a regular basis. Reference was made to the strong neighbourhoods that were across the district and the many fundraising events that they were involved with.

She concluded by referring to Stirchley Baths appearing on BCC Breakfast TV and Mike Bushell with a piece on Barn Dance Fitness

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**PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

420 The following schedule of meetings was noted.

All Meetings will be held at 10:30 am at the Council House.

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| 1 June 2017      | 27 July 2017     |
| 7 September 2017 | 16 November 2017 |
| 25 January 2018  | 8 March 2018     |

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**AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

421 **RESOLVED: -**

Chairman to move:-

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

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The meeting ended at 1230 hours.

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CHAIRMAN