

BILLESLEY WARD FORUM MEETING – ACTION NOTES RECORDING

WARD: Billesley	DATE: Wednesday 25 th October 2023
VENUE/ VIRTUAL: Full Gospel Tabernacle, 689 Yardley Wood Road, Birmingham, B13 0PT	START/FINISH TIMES: 6:00pm – 7:30pm
COUNCILLOR/S: Katherine Iroh & Philip Davis	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 25
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Clements – Cabinet Member for Transport, Sergeant Twomey – Neighbourhood Police Team, Zed Bhatti – Neighbourhood Action Coordinator, Preety Sohpal – Community Governance Manager	VISITING SPEAKER(S):

CURRENT WARD ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES:

1. A Safe Billesley
2. A Green Billesley

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:

1. **Welcome & Notice of Recording**

Councillor Iroh & Councillor Davis welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the press/public may be present, could record and take photographs of the meeting.

2. **Local Updates and Information From:**

Local Councillors

- The council has declared a Section 114 notice, which means a Birmingham City Council has judged itself to be in financial distress and can no longer balance its budget. This does not affect statutory services. More information about this can be found at the following link >

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/27684/section_114_notice

- The S114 does not affect statutory services and will not be impacted.

Local Police Team

- The Police have been given funding from The Home Office to pilot a ASB project. 6 area's had been chosen as part of this pilot and Billesley was one of them. Operation Eternity will last 12 months and will consist of extra patrol's. The operation has been running since July 2023. As a result, a number of scooter's, quadbikes, cars have been seized and 3 people are currently locked up for possession of weapons and drugs.
- The teams current priorities are Domestic Violence and Robberies and are helping the response team.
- Operation Eternity is still ongoing with plans to extend further than the initial 12 months

Residents Questions for the police team

- I. Residents mentioned the amount of nitrus oxide cannisters on various car parks and is littering the ward and no arrests are being made – The police stated that it is currently not illegal to be in possession of nitrus oxide therefore prosecutions are hard.
- II. Residents mentioned there being less presence of PCSO's in the ward – The police team stated that people that had shown an interest in becoming PSCO's were encouraged to become Police Officers which requires further training and therefore taking longer to appear on our streets.
- III. Councillor Iroh commented that shop lifting has increased nationally by 80%. What is happening in Billesley and has this affected the ward? – The police team commented that shop lifting does not get reported often in Billesley and unless a crime is reported, there's nothing the police can do.
- IV. A resident commented that this ward and neighbouring wards have been hard hit by Traveller's settling in open spaces and parks. What is the police and council doing regarding this issue? – The police team commented that they report all Traveller related issues, including removals, to Bill Peg the senior enforcement officer and he does deal with all issues. Councillor Davies explained the council is looking to open more designated pitching sites for the Travellers however this will take some times. The clean up process is also taking longer than usual once Travellers vacate a site due to all expenditure going through the S151 spendboard.

Cabinet Member for Transport

Councillor Clements introduced herself to all present as the Cabinet Member for Transport since May 2020 and one of the local councillors of the Bournville & Cotteridge ward in Selly Oak constituency. The Councillor explained that the key objectives of the Birmingham Transport Plan are;

- **Reallocating road space** – Encouraging the residents of Birmingham to use public transport, walking and cycling. The aim is for emissions to be cut by over 70% by 2030.
- **Transforming the City Centre** – The city centre will be transformed by creating a network of pedestrianised streets and public spaces with improved bus services and cycling infrastructure. Potentially, the central section of the A38 Queensway will see a change and be re routed as currently it is the main entry and exit point in and out of the city centre and with the amounts of cars/buses passing through this everyday see's a high build up of traffic.
- **Prioritising Active Travel in Local Neighbourhoods** – The future plan is that cars will no longer dominate streets around houses and schools. The aim is to reduce the amount of cars on the roads and to encourage people to walk and/or cycle instead to promote healthy living. The Places for People schemes are currently being rolled out across neighbourhoods, such as King's Heath and Lozell's, and are starting works and schemes to implement in Bournville too. These schemes are planned to be rolled out across the city by 2030.
- **Manage Demand Through Parking Measures** – Currently there is not enough road space for parked vehicles as there is too much demand with households having multiples cars. The plan is to increase parking costs which is currently in place in Bournbrook and other parts of Birmingham. Social housing is also a priority and how we can free up land for more social housing development as there is so much space for cars already, this land and space can be freed up and put to better use.

They are also responsible for Highways Managements and are currently awaiting the renewal of the PPI contract. There is a police operation currently in place "Operation Triton" to tackle dangerous driving as the current style of driving is very hostile.

The new Brum Breathes fund has been introduced which is using the money raised from the Clean Air Zone charges. The fund is to implement projects/strategies to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. This fund is running for 2023 until 2025 and the next fund raised from Clean Air Zone charges will be used to invest in public transport, railway station and school road closures with potentially some air quality monitors in some schools.

The full transport plan can be found on the following link > https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/14861/birmingham_transport_strategy

Neighbourhood Action Coordinator

Zed Bhatti, who is part of the NAC programme for the ward from Our Scene CIC, is currently working on promoting Better Streets for Brum and Lungs of mum which promote and educate on less car usage, using public transport more, walking and cycling where possible and educating on how air pollution affects children and adults. Beautifying Billesley is another project being funded by the NAC programme where all graffiti is being removed and replaced with some lovely artwork where the local youth has also been involved.

3. Ward Plan & Ward Funding

- Beyond Birmingham Celebrating Communities – All of the approved applications for Billesley were honoured.
- There is a delay in the CCTV that was discussed at the previous ward meeting
- With the use of the minor highways budget, the bottom of Priory Road and Slade Lane will see bollards being put in to prevent parking on Swanshurst Park verges and pavements.

4. Future Ward Forum Meeting Date

- The next ward forum date is Thursday 15th January – Full Gospel Tabernacle, 689 Yardley Wood Road, Birmingham, B13 0PT – 6:00 pm

Appendices One

S114 FAQs

On 5 September 2023, Birmingham City Council issued a section 114 (s.114) notice.

What is a section 114 (s.114) notice?

Councils are required by law to have balanced budgets.

If a council cannot find a way to finance its budget then a Section 114 (s.114) must be issued.

The issuing of a s.114 notice bans all new spending with the exception of protecting:

- vulnerable people
- statutory services
- pre-existing commitments

Our reason for issuing the notice

The council's 151 (finance) officer has filed a section 114 notice because the council already knows it will not be able to balance its budget in the next financial year (2024/25), which councils are required to do by law.

A section 114 will stop all but essential spending, making sure the council can continue to provide vital services to its most vulnerable residents.

What the notice means for Birmingham

It means the council has to stop spending; it cannot enter into new agreements which will incur a cost.

The council can still spend money on:

- existing staff and payroll costs
- expenditure on goods and services which have already been received
- expenditure required to deliver the council's statutory services at a minimum possible level
- urgent expenditure to safeguard vulnerable residents contractually committed expenditure
- expenditure through ring-fenced grants
- expenditure that will improve the council's financial situation, that is necessary to reduce overall costs

How this will affect council services

There will be no disruption to essential services.

The council has issued the section 114 now to ensure that we take action to balance our budget and protect essential services.

I am paid by the council - will I still be paid and will my salary and deductions be processed as normal?

Yes, all salaries and wages will be paid as normal and at the normal time.

Pensions are paid by pension funds external to the council and will not be affected.

I have a contract with the council or I am owed money for goods and services - will I be paid?

Contractual commitments will be honoured and all invoices for work delivered will be paid.

I receive a grant from the council - will I still receive it?

All existing grant agreements will be honoured.

Future grant agreements will be reviewed under the prevailing essential spend criteria that the council is now temporarily operating under.

I receive direct payments – will these be affected?

Agreements and care packages will continue to be paid.

We have given the council money for a particular purpose or to act as an accountable body – how will this be affected?

Examples of the above include:

- NHS pooled budgets
- grants for specific reasons
- deposited money with the council

All monies held by the council on behalf of other bodies, on Trust, or deposited under treasury arrangements to the council, or where BCC acts under an accountable body agreement, will be unaffected.

Will my council tax will go up?

Council tax is set in the annual council budget which is finalised next year and no decisions have yet been made.

What was the result of the extraordinary general meeting on 25 September?

Councillors voted to:

- accept the section 114 notice
- agree to continue spending control measures under the direction of the Section 151 Officer
- endorse the financial recovery plan
- receive a further report and emergency budget

Did the council respond to Michael Gove?

Yes. The Leader and Chief Executive wrote back to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, accepting the government's analysis of the current challenges and welcoming the appointment of commissioners.

When did the commissioners start?

The commissioners started on Monday 9 October 2023.

Why was there another extraordinary general meeting on 12 October?

A second section 114 notice was triggered by the issuing of a section 5 report on 21 September 2023.

These notices have been issued because we have not been able to agree on a new process for job evaluations.

An emergency council meeting took place within 21 days of these notices being issued.