

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDGBASTON DISTRICT COMMITTEE 19 JANUARY 2017

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDGBASTON
DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 19
JANUARY 2017 AT 1900 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM
6, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT: - Councillor John Alden in the Chair.

Councillors Deirdre Alden, Matt Bennett, Matthew Gregson, Bruce Lines, John Lines, James McKay and Fergus Robinson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Jonathan Antill	- Senior Service Manager, Landlord Services, Place Directorate
Keith Dugmore	- Edgbaston District Lead
Steve Rice	- West Midlands Police
Andy Middleton	- Cycling Programme Manager
Andrew Chidgey	- Principal Studies Officer
Marie Reynolds	- Committee Manager

One Member of the Public was in attendance.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

333 The Chairman confirmed that he was pleased to be back and thanked Councillor Bruce Lines for chairing the last Edgbaston District Committee meeting, and also thanked elected members and officers for their good wishes received during his illness.

NOTICE OF RECORDING

334 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

- 335 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kate Booth, John Clancy, Des Flood, Jayne Francis for their inability to attend the meeting.
-

MINUTES

- 336 **RESOLVED: -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016 having been previously circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

- 337 Inspector Steve Rice confirmed that the Community Safety Partnership was working well and they were now setting up their priorities for the next two years which would be available shortly.

Inspector Steve Rice referred to the recent restructuring of the police and confirmed that at the same time they had now moved back to ward based policing which equated to one police team per ward. He added that there were additional resources when required from the neighbourhood task force which now provided greater flexibility.

Following members' comments and questions the following points were made.

Inspector Rice confirmed that the police team would cover the area that they had gained under the new structure as well as there being the addition of 2 police community support officers, the biggest advantage was the mobility devices that all officers had been issued with which enabled them to work in a more agile and effective way with less time spent at the station. He referred to the very productive school meeting that took place once a term which they were now looking to roll out to the primary schools.

He referred to the policing priorities which were the force priorities and local priorities that would be set by the local sergeants. He confirmed that the police were in discussion regarding the changes to the ward boundaries that would be taking place in 2018.

He referred to the concerns and comments submitted regarding travellers and illegal encampments and confirmed that without doubt, there were complaints received from communities and issues had to be addressed, however, there was a duty of care in dealing with these people and the police and other partners had to work within the confines of the law and the policies drawn up with the local authority.

The Chairman confirmed that it was a very difficult issue and believed that the city council had been trying to come up with an alternative plan for many years and also trying to obtain sites for them.

Inspector Rice confirmed that Steelhouse Lane police station had closed as an operational station and that there were approximately 28 buildings that were due to close although not all had custody blocks. He stated that last year the police had constructed 2 purpose built custody stations which were located in Perry Barr and Oldbury each comprising of 50 cells which replaced the buildings that had closed. He added that there were still some additional custody stations that remained in some of the stations that remained operational.

In response to a concern raised regarding the 101 calls, Inspector Rice confirmed that the police had recently recruited into those areas and the service should now have improved.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Steve Rice for attending the meeting and providing an update.

BIRMINGHAM CYCLE REVOLUTION

338 Andy Middleton, Cycling Programme Manager and Andrew Chidgey, Principal Studies Officer, circulated the following documents illustrating the Birmingham Cycle Revolution Programme, the overview and local plan for Edgbaston District.

(See document Nos. 1, 2 & 3)

Andy Middleton provided a brief overview of the Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR) Programme highlighting that they had secured funding of £57 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 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 a package of supporting measures including the Big Birmingham Bikes Initiative which introduced 4,000 bikes in local 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.

Andy Middleton confirmed that in 2016 the BCR Programme Team had undertaken a review of the programme that had been delivered to that date and had taken on board views from stakeholders as to what they thought of the measures that had been put in place. He stated that as part of the process they had looked at revising

and realigning the cycling programme over the next 3 or 4 years, and were focusing on highway delivery on two Main Corridor schemes, one along A34 to Perry Barr from the city centre and the second scheme from city centre to Bristol Road with a proposal to link the two schemes within the city centre. The slides circulated to members illustrated the measures that had been implemented to date.

Andrew Chidgey, confirmed that the 20 mph implementation would be completed within this year and that consultation had taken place on as far as the outer circle No. 11 bus route and far north as Hagley Road. Reference was made to the completion of the towpaths on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal which included improved access at University Station. He confirmed that they were in discussion with the Canals and River Trust with regard to widening improvements on the narrow towpath that ran through the Edgbaston tunnel. He referred to the Green Routes relating to Harborne Walkway which had been completed last year and as a future programme officers were looking at links from there to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Birmingham University. Officers were also developing proposals for a new bridge over Bournbrook just off Harborne Lane, and also the Woodgate Valley Green Route through the country park. They were also considering a new footbridge and cycle-bridge over the brook towards Minton Road and that part of the strategic plan was to connect all the main routes from Selly Oak to the city centre.

Following comments and questions from elected members the following points were made.

Andy Middleton confirmed that since the original bid and after taking stock in 2016 of what had been achieved, they were not proposing to implement additional routes. He confirmed that they would concentrate on the routes identified in the revised programme report submitted to Cabinet in December 2016.

Andy Middleton referred to the Bristol Road scheme section between Selly Oak and Priory Road the section beyond Priory Road to the Ring Road and confirmed that the footways were extremely wide at that location, and therefore segregation by providing cycle lanes within footways on one side and still maintain the overall traffic capacity on that lane on the Bristol Road, adding that the same applied to the scheme from the city centre to Perry Barr. He confirmed that they were looking at not taking up significant road space at the detriment of other traffic.

With regards to junctions, he confirmed that they were looking at specific measures at Priory Road and the Ring Road to assist in getting cyclists across those junctions and subsequently referred to the slide illustrations.

He highlighted the point that taking cyclists from the central strip onto the footway just in advance of Priory Road towards Pebble Mill that they were proposing to put a crossing at that location and therefore the transfer would not actually be at the junction.

Andy Middleton confirmed that as part of the package scheme proposals and having got approval from the funding authorities for the revisions and having looked at the implementation measures to date, and the feedback from stakeholders, they were looking at realigning the programme better meet the needs of cyclists. With regard to Harborne Lane they were going to look at improvements into the Selly Oak Green

Travel District area particularly relating to Birmingham University and Queen Elizabeth Hospital as one of the routes identified and a key cyclist movement was Quinton to the university and hospital link and therefore as part of the Green Travel District work they would be looking at putting possible measures in the area.

Andrew Chidgey referred to Harborne Park Road and confirmed that they would consult with local members and stakeholders on a possible future programme and that it would have to be a cycling scheme supported by capital funding which demonstrated the benefits of cycling. With regard to Barford Road he agreed to take up the issue with the contractors if work had been missed.

Andrew Chidgey referred to the crossings on Bristol Road and Priory Road and the pedestrian crossing by the dance studio and confirmed that they were looking at several options with the intention that there would be pedestrian crossings on at least the majority of arms. He added that they would ensure that the facilities for pedestrians getting to the bus stops were improved and confirmed that when proposals had been finalised they would discuss with elected members and stakeholders.

Andy Middleton confirmed that it was intended to deliver the Bristol Road scheme by the middle of 2018. He further stated that the level of segregation between Priory Road and the Ring Road was one of the areas, where there were segregated facilities not just from cyclists to road traffic but also to pedestrians and that the width of the footpath along that section was adequate to accommodate this.

Councillor John Lines raised concerns regarding the proposed improvements to Woodgate Valley Country Park, stating that many residents were against this proposal of work. Andy Middleton referred to the consultation through the 'Be Heard' process that had been conducted which had resulted in 25 responses (20 in favour and 5 against). He stated that all of the consultations received were contained within the full business case and that it was the Cabinet Member that made the ultimate decision. Following a query as to whether Natural England had been consulted about the scheme, officers agreed to investigate, and report back to the committee.

Andy Middleton stated that he had visited the site on a bike and confirmed that there were problems regarding the pathway. He reported that the measures proposed would not involve the loss of trees and the surface used for the pathway would be sympathetic to the environment. He added that the majority of people were in favour of the proposal and although there would no additional revenue funding to help maintain the pathway, the materials that were to be used would make the scheme cheaper be cheaper and easier to maintain than what was in place at the moment.

In response to concern relating to cyclists breaching the Highway Code, Andy Middleton confirmed that there was the need to educate cyclists and subsequently referred to the complimentary Smarter Choices initiatives which the City Council were promoting alongside the infrastructure improvements, which included how to be a considerate cyclist. He confirmed that recipients of the 4,000 bikes that had been allocated under the Birmingham Big Bikes initiative had had to undertake a training programme which not just included the Highway Code but also maintenance. He added that each of the bikes allocated had a GPS unit in order that the cycle usage could be identified.

By the invitation of the Chairman, a member of public made known his support for the proposed improvements to the pathway located at the south side of Woodgate Valley Country Park.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Andy Middleton and Andrew Chidgey for attending the meeting and updating the district committee.

HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2016/17

339

The following report of the Housing Transformation Board Performance Report Quarter 2016/17 and Performance Narrative was submitted:-

(See document No. 4)

Jonathan Antill, Senior Service Manager, Landlord Services, Place Directorate introduced the report. He drew the Committee's attention to the information especially detailed within the performance narrative.

In response to a concern raised relating to page 7 of the report regarding targets that were not being met within the timescales, Jonathan Antill confirmed that he would review this area.

In response to a suggestion, that it would be more helpful if the department produced an ongoing picture of the challenges the team had to address and the progress made thus providing more effective scrutiny from the committee, Jonathan Antill stated that some of the KPI performance measures were not fit for purpose and confirmed that they were trying to make improvements for the next financial year, adding that it was a piece of work that was ongoing.

In response to a question relating to the turnaround times not being met for empty properties given the temporary homeless crisis that existed and how this was being addressed, Jonathan Antill agreed to discuss with the relevant colleagues and subsequently invite them to the next district meeting.

He stated that he had spoken to Mark Wright, Senior Manager for repairs and that the contractor was now addressing all of the red KPI's, adding that there had been issues with the appointment system which had affected the KPI's. He stated that the new contractor at the beginning of the contract did not have enough gas engineers however they now had a full complement of staff. He added that there were financial penalties within the contract if compliance was not met and subsequently agreed to invite Mark Wright to the next meeting to respond in more detail.

In response to questions relating to securing tenancies, Jonathan Antill highlighted the reasons for them not being made secure which related to anti-social behaviour issues and not payment of rent. He stated that if they were seeking possession through notice of possession proceedings it ceased and they continued to be an introductory tenant whilst it progressed through the court.

In terms of successful outcomes for the closed cases, there was an exit survey for each time a case was closed and it gave the individual an opportunity to raise concerns on how the case was dealt with. The surveys go to the Performance Monitoring Group led by the city housing liaison board for scrutiny whereby officers were held to account and if necessary the cases could be revisited and re-opened. He stated that at the earliest opportunity when someone first contacts the department, they tried to manage their expectations, adding that people often led complex lives and therefore there was often the necessity to work with various partners in seeking the best possible resolutions.

In response to questions as to why they were increasing the rent arrears target and why there was no target set for temporary accommodation, Jonathan Antill agreed to provide an appropriate response.

In response to concern relating to elderly tenants that were willing to downsize in accommodation and not being provided with the necessary support in progressing the matter, Jonathan Antill agreed to investigate. He confirmed that in the future there would be capacity for visits to be conducted by officers in order to assist people that required support with the re-registration for the new Allocation scheme.

In response to a request for feedback information from victims of anti-social behaviour on how the city council had dealt with the case and how it was measured, Jonathan Antill reiterated that they were looking at all KPI's which included on how they could best report on anti-social behaviour and to put some context to indicate that all measures had been put in place to try and resolve the issues, although not all issues could be resolved. He added that they had workshops set up on the agenda to address this area of work, and that part of the overall service improvements was looking at the suite of KPI's and making sure they reflected the work undertaken and was communicated to the appropriate people.

He concluded by stating that the consultation with the staff regarding changes that were to be imposed would take place in the next couple of months and that improvements were part of the changes over the next 4 years. He added that they were not only changing the policies and procedures but also implementing a proper training package for staff and ongoing professional training development.

In response to the Chairman and Councillor John Lines, Jonathan Antill agreed to circulate the requested information to them both.

The Chairman thanked Jonathan Antill for attending the meeting and presenting the report.

BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME
ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2016/17

Tarmacking of the Pathway at Metchley Park from Cross Farm Road to the Fishing Pod

amount of £1,705.67. Jonathan agreed to circulate the rest of the updates via e-mail due to time restraints.

EDGBASTON DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN

- 341 The above item was deferred until the next meeting.
-

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Bartley Green Library

- 342 In response to concern raised by Councillor John Lines regarding the loss of the above-mentioned facilities, the Chairman agreed to make enquiries and respond accordingly.
-

DATE OF NEXT EDGBASTON DISTRICT COMMITTEE

- 343 The next Edgbaston District Committee Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 14 March 2017 at 1900 hours in Committee Room 6, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB.
-

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

- 344 **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."

The meeting ended at 2100 hours.

CHAIRMAN