

## PERRY BARR WARD MEETING NOTES

<b>WARD:</b> Perry Barr	<b>DATE:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>VENUE:</b> Perry Hall Methodist Church, Rocky Lane B42 1QF	<b>START/FINISH TIMES:</b> 6.30pm – 8.35pm
<b>COUNCILLORS</b> Morriam Jan & Jon Hunt	<b>NOs OF ATTENDEES:</b> 30
<b>OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b> Carla Belle, Community Development & Support Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	<b>VISITING SPEAKER(S):</b> Simon Foster, Police & Crime Commissioner Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment Inspector Claire Jones, West Midlands Police

### MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:

#### 1. Welcome & Notice of Recording

Councillor Jan welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the press/public could record and/or take photographs of the meeting, except where there were confidential/exempt items.

#### 2. West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street invited to talk about Commonwealth Games legacy and achievements/plans for the area.

Andy Street gave the following updates –

- As a result of opinions expressed during the public consultation, Sprint Bus proposals had been changed in response to resident's voices.
- Commonwealth Games & transport plan were a success. Thanks extended to residents for patience through duration of Games.
- Games legacy included new Perry Barr Railway Station, improvements to X51 Walsall Road bus service in respect journey times to/from Birmingham.
- CWG were delivered £70m under budget, Government persuaded to keep underspend within the West Midlands and money spent on -
- Fund for community groups
- European Athletics Championships
- Working with BCC to transform former bus garage into new Transport Museum

- Housing – obligation to ensure homes used as intended.
- Further benefits to come.

Chair of the Friends of Perry Park group requested assistance in ensuring that promises & timescales made to residents regarding the return of Perry Park to pre-Games condition were honoured, the playground was reinstated and funding set aside for improvements to the park so that it was fit for the community to use again was spent appropriately. Andy Street said he was aware the CWG Board had agreed to return the transport mall in the park to how it was before the Games and undertook to follow up why this had not been done. He committed to ensuring that agreement was honoured. Other issues were the responsibility of BCC.

Councillor Hunt commented that residents had been excluded from the legacy of the CWG. The establishment of a community engagement panel had been agreed as part of the Master Plan but had not been honoured, valuations could not be obtained on the flats and the area was blighted. Andy Street advised those were BCC responsibilities, but WMCA had listened to residents in respect of transport issues and undertook to consider how that spirit could be taken forward.

Councillor Majid Mahmood said, in respect of Perry Park, he had been on 2 site visits with the Friends of group and had advised that –

- The park and playground would be re-instated.
- The playground would be enhanced, the area to be 2X bigger than originally planned.
- The funding was ring fenced.
- The transport mall would have to remain for use at the European Athletics Championships
- The enhanced playground plans would have to be submitted to Planning Committee
- He would meet with the councillors and Friends of Perry Park group before plans were submitted.
- Agreed that grassroots sport was imperative to the city and would take up the issue raised regarding use of the Alexander Stadium by Birchfield Harriers, with the Leader of the Council

There was some discussion regarding the introduction of the Sprint (bendy buses) Bus on the Walsall Road and Andy Street advised that during the works existing buses had been used and initially hydrogen buses were to replace them but the pilot had proved unsatisfactory so the new buses would now be electric. This had caused a delay. The current X51 would be streamlined to fit the sprint bus timetable which should be introduced next year. The reliability of the service since the new infrastructure was put in on Walsall Road was questioned and the need for a new bus service was felt unnecessary. The meeting was advised that the data from TfWM showed improvements to service.

### **3. Local Policing Discussion with Simon Foster, Police & Crime Commissioner & Inspector Claire Jones**

Simon Foster made the following main points.

- Outlined role, responsibilities and challenges facing West Midlands Police Force
- 1300 new officers had been recruited for the West Midlands but they were inexperienced officers, therefore the WMP would take time to gain back experience lost due to staff cuts.
- New systems had been introduced but had taken time to bed in
- New Chief Constable appointed so there had been a period of transition, during which new local policing model introduced across the West Midlands
- 999 and 101 responses transformed over past 12 months. 999 calls now answered under 10 seconds which was one of best responses in country.
- Response times had improved and arrest rates and conviction rates were up.
- Total recorded crime across the Force had reduced by 9% compared to last year.

In response to questions the following responses/comments were made

- An extensive recruitment process ensured the best person was recruited to the post of Chief Constable for the West Midlands. Nationally it was quite common to recruit from within the force but in relation to the West Midlands current appointment the Chief Constable had been recruited from outside the area.
- Regarding there being a police base in the Perry Barr ward, the meeting was advised current team was based at Thornhill Road police station and that station was not being closed. It was acknowledged that the community team should be based locally and it was understood that local options including library, Alexander Stadium had been put forward. WMP Estate Management feedback had, however, been that they were not suitable buildings. The owner of the former police station offered to discuss use of the building. Simon Foster undertook to work with the councillors to look at options.

Inspector Claire Jones made the following points –

- Locations for a local base were being investigated so that the team could be as visible as possible and deal with local issues.
- In respect of requests for average speed cameras on Walsall Road she undertook to take it up with the Road Safety Partnership
- The Perry Barr and Oscott teams had merged to provide a team comprising 1 sergeant, 7 PC's and 6 PCSO's when at full compliment. Vacancies had been flagged.
- It was noted that details on the police website/Facebook page were out of date and the Inspector undertook to take that back.

#### **4. Waste Services Discussion with Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment**

Councillor Mahmood made the following comments and responses to questions –

- The number of missed collections was acknowledged and he was working with councillors to get to the root cause. Vehicles had been fitted with trackers so that the reasons could be assessed. Contaminated waste not collected was also being tracked.
- Fly tipping had reduced across the city, helped by the introduction of the MHRC's which were well used in the Perry Barr ward and consequently 2 per month were now allocated to the ward.
- Perry Barr depot was opening on 31<sup>st</sup> January. In response to request from Councillor Jan regarding a dedicated phone line to book slots at the HRC for those not able to use the website, he had asked if residents could book via the council's contact centre.
- Love Your Environment team had spent 2 days in the ward collecting rubbish, including fridges, pallets, mattresses and other dumped items.
- The budget savings would impact services.
- Residents were urged to report missed collections so that data could be collected and the errors rectified.
- Larger families of 6 or more could have more than one waste bin and additional recycling bins could be provided to anyone on request.
- Private alleyways were not cleaned by the council, but support could be offered to community groups to assist clearing. Specific details to be provided to Councillor Mahmood at the conclusion of the meeting.
- It was accepted that the information on the council's website regarding Christmas collections had not been clear and that missed collection problems had occurred. Overtime payments usually enabled crews to work over the festive period but that had not been an option this year in view of the strict rules on spending and as the Tyseley incinerator was closed Christmas/Boxing days rubbish could not be collected around that time. Lessons had been learnt and improvements would be made to ensure a better service over future bank holidays, with at least 2 months notice of changed collection days provided.
- Perry Barr shopping area was private land and therefore the council did not clean it but beat sweepers on the surrounding roads should be a priority due to high footfall. There were current negotiations with Housing department for waste management to clear fly tipping from housing owned land, so all land could be cleared.
- The increased cost of the green waste collection was also acknowledged but the service was more highly subscribed in more affluent areas with larger gardens and the service provided an income for the council.
- Thanks extended to all the litter picking groups that worked tirelessly to keep their areas clean. The importance of continued support and clearing of bags of rubbish collected by community groups had been made clear to the commissioners. Working with Veolia, it was hoped to provide more

education to schools, colleges, universities. Any specific roads where rubbish bins had been removed and it was felt should be reinstated should be notified to the councillors.

#### 5. AOB

a) Tree Planting - Councillor Hunt reported that the 3B'S Neighbourhood Forum had received a donation of 100 trees from WMCA legacy fund, matched by £5k from BCC (agreed prior to budget savings) to establish Perry Wood. A site clearance was currently underway and then volunteers would be needed to help plant the trees.

b) Gas Leak – smell of gas reported at gulley opposite Wensleydale Road and despite being reported to British Gas it had not improved. The road had been re-surfaced and consequently the drains had moved and water was not draining. Councillor Jan undertook to take up.

c) Pedestrian Crossing, Rocky Lane (by One Stop) – Councillor Jan reported she was liaising with police/parking enforcement and would monitor. Councillor Hunt said that 'no-pavement parking' via Brum Breathes was still being considered and a decision on local funding towards a pedestrian refuge on Rocky Lane was awaited.

ACTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	WHO	BY WHEN
1. Perry Park – Reinstatement of the park/playground to former CWG conditions	1. Cllr Majid Mahmood to share plans/discuss playground with Friends of Perry Park group/councillors Andy Street WM Mayor to follow up commitment to	1. Before planning application submitted

