

Perry Barr Ward Meeting Notes
24 October 2018
Perry Hall Methodist Church, Rocky Lane B42 1QT
at 6.30pm

Councillors Jon Hunt & Morriam Jan

Sergeant Uddin, West Midlands Police

Peter Parker & Jas Chahal, Transportation

Angela Hosford & Thomas Skidmore, TfWM

Keith Smith, Amey

Neil De-Costa, Senior Manager Community Development

Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager

60+ residents in attendance

Matters for Discussion

1. Police Update
2. Update on Commonwealth Games Transportation Plans
3. 3B's Neighbourhood Plan Update
4. Ward Plan Update – deferred to future meeting
5. Residents Issues

Discussion & Actions

1. Police Update

Sgt Uddin reported arrests had been made in connection with a number of recent robberies, burglaries and in connection with a stabbing. Priorities for the area were car key burglaries, hot spot areas One Stop & Witton and around Great Barr School.

Residents advised volunteers being sought for Street Watch and on-line reporting via WMP website explained.

2. Update on Commonwealth Games Transportation Plans

Road Layout

Peter Parker outlined the proposals for the Aldridge Road/Walsall Road junction – 3 options – 1. Removal of flyover & underpass 2. Removal of flyover but retention of underpass 3. Status quo

After consideration option 1 had been dropped. Modelling continuing for options 2&3, including up to Scott Arms, motorway and to the Expressway with outcomes available end of December and report to Cabinet end of January 2019. There would be public consultation on the preferred option early 2019.

Other plans – rebuild railway station & reconfigure bus interchange.

Residents made the following comments;

- a) Consultation would be undertaken on a preferred option – concerned it was a done deal – consultation should be on 2 options
- b) Cost was a concern
- c) Serious concern expressed by majority of residents in respect of removal of flyover. The current layout worked and to change it for the sake of the CWG was unacceptable. The traffic flow would be permanently disrupted and the congestion seen at the Scott Arms would then be similar in Perry Barr. This would affect the north Birmingham economy as people would be deterred from working in the area as the commute would be made unacceptable. Residents did not believe the current traffic flow could be maintained without the flyover.
- d) **Residents did not want the flyover removed**, the current layout worked well and the removal, for appearance reasons, did not warrant the disruption to local residents and effect on their lives.

Councillor Jan stressed the need for the modelling work to take account of the disruption that would be caused by the works. She sought the reason for the proposal to remove the flyover and create unnecessary disruption as the current arrangement worked well.

Councillor Hunt said he believed that it was for appearance reasons. He said the option to remove the flyover and create more lanes of traffic & additional traffic lights which would create more air pollution alongside an area where families would be encouraged to move to after the CWG, was not acceptable.

Residents suggested other ways of improving the appearance of the flyover and making it more environmentally friendly.

Residents meeting - 27 November where Andy Street would be addressing residents. Venue tbc.

Sprint Bus

Thomas Skidmore explained the Sprint bus scheme proposed for delivery along the Walsall Road. He stressed the scheme had been included in the strategic plan which had been agreed before the CWG had been approved for Birmingham. The plans included extra green light traffic light phases, by-passes, sort out pinch points. Sprint buses would increase the number of people who could travel.

Residents then made the following points;

- e) The number of people that could travel on a Sprint bus was not much greater than a double deck bus but Sprint buses took up more road space. There was more standing space on a sprint bus therefore more people would travel in less comfort than on the X51.
- f) The life of a Sprint bus was 10 years and after that time it was unlikely that an articulated bus would be sponsored.

- g) It was queried what would replace a Sprint bus when one was off the road for repairs etc?

Councillor Hunt referred to work under taken 14 years ago on Walsall Road in respect of the bus showcase and consultation had been undertaken. At the same time consultation was undertaken on the metro and residents opposed that. It was acknowledged that the aim was to put in dedicated lanes but there were numerous pinch points along the route therefore buses would have to move back into the flow of traffic at certain points but especially around the Scott Arms. The X51 was a good service but it was accepted that it needed upgrading, especially during rush hour and this would then be more acceptable than expecting people to stand for long journeys on the Sprint bus.

Councillor Hunt requested that the consultation on the Sprint and the transport plans be started again to get the community on board with the plans.

- h) The consultation was felt to have been loaded as it had not been possible to put in certain comments and therefore residents did not feel they had been properly consulted or listened to.
- i) The Sprint bus was not a better service than the X51 as people did not want to stand and was not worth the saving on time on a journey to Walsall, especially as Walsall town centre was in decline. Anyone commuting from Walsall to Birmingham would travel by train. The small improvement in journey time was not comparable to the disruption that would be caused to residents.
- j) The X51 service would be improved by improving the blockages at Scott Arms
- k) Residents were very concerned regarding the loss of parking spaces on the Walsall Road. Buses would be closer to homes creating more air pollution, noise and inconvenience to residents. It would be difficult for residents to back off their drives into a bus lane creating more danger/accidents. Queries regarding situation for visitors, bin collections, ambulances, deliveries when there was nowhere to park. The on-line consultation had not made clear the disruption that would be caused or at the drop in events therefore the information provided by a lot of residents in the consultation was false.
- l) The impact on the side roads off the Walsall Road had not been taken into account.
- m) Residents expressed the view that their goodwill was being lost. Similar bus lanes on Tyburn Road had been scrapped as they did not work. There was limited parking in the area and with major venues holding events reducing parking would create chaos. A conversation with residents needed to be started so that views could be listened to and properly incorporated.

Councillor Hunt in conclusion said that there had been no positive comments expressed with regard to the Sprint bus proposal from residents and that not all that had expressed a view lived on the Walsall Road. Reconsideration was requested.

3. 3B's Neighbourhood Plan Update

John Wall outlined the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan and that a consultant had been appointed to assist with the creation of the Plan which would be presented to BCC. Improvement options for the Tower Hill, Thornbridge Avenue & Calshot Road neighbourhood centres were being considered and residents were asked to send suggestions to councillors. Further update to be presented at next meeting.

Action: Update next meeting. Suggestions re improvements to neighbourhood centres to councillors. Membership of 3B's open to all. Website to be launched

4. Residents Issues

Amey – Keith Smith reported that potholes on the Old Walsall Road had been programmed for repair (Birmingham side).

White lines on bus lanes would be repainted when faded.

Meeting ended 8.35pm