

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

LADYWOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE – 22 SEPTEMBER, 2015

MINUTES OF THE LADYWOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER, 2015 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Councillor Ziaul Islam in the Chair;

Councillors Tahir Ali, Mohammad Afzal, Kath Hartley, Nagina Kauser, Chaman Lal, Yvonne Mosquito, Chauhdry Rashid, Carl Rice and Sharon Thompson.

ALSO PRESENT: Nicci Collins, Community Safety Officer
Richard Cowell, Planning and Regeneration
Martin Eade, Planning and Regeneration
Lesley Poulton, Head of Ladywood District
Kate Foley, Acting Senior Service Manager
Chief Inspector Chris Mallett, West Midlands Police
Louisa Nisbett, Area Democratic Services Officer
Josie Turner, Planning and Regeneration

There was 1 member of the public in attendance.

NOTICE OF RECORDINGS

- 244 The Chair advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs. The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 245 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Sir Albert Bore and David Newman, West Midlands Fire Service for their inability to attend the meeting.

MINUTES

- 246 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July, 2015 having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

SMITHFIELD DEVELOPMENT

- 247 Richard Cowell and Josie Turner, Planning and Regeneration attended the meeting to give an update on the development. Members were given copies of the Birmingham Smithfield visioning document. During the discussion the following points were made:-

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- From a planning and regeneration point of view there were many opportunities for leisure, to reinvigorate the retail markets, opportunity for new public spaces, pedestrian routes possibly the metro. The details were in the masterplan for public consultation the following year.
 - Councillor Spence had requested the update and was excited about the plans and possible benefits for residents. She asked that the Committee be kept up to date with developments.
 - In response to questions the Committee was informed that there had been an internal and local launch with a lot of media attention including an exhibition at St Martin's Church. They would continue to engage residents. There was more detail about the type of housing in the masterplan
 - Councillor Carl Rice questioned whether the development would be sufficiently sustainable for the future. In response the officer informed that sustainability was at the top of the agenda and that the plans would be robust and longlasting. They would also consider the impact of the traffic.
 - Councillor Lal spoke about the plans being sustainable and queried the breakdown of the properties. He mentioned that some of the properties in the City centre were unoccupied owing to them being unaffordable. Councillor Lal queried whether a carbon footprint assessment had been carried out. In response the Committee were informed that there was a demand for City Centre Living. They would ensure the offer was diverse. There was the opportunity for job creation in the construction aspect of the development. Some further information could be arranged if necessary.
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CONSULTATION ON THE BIRMINGHAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION
INSPECTOR PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The following report of the Director of Planning and Regeneration was submitted:-

(See document no. 1)

Copies of the full document were available using the link below:-

<http://consult.birmingham.gov.uk/portal/ps/bp/bdpmods/>

- Martin Eade attended the meeting to give an update on the current position with the development plan. Following an examination by an independent inspector, a number of changes were required. They were currently consulting on the changes. Key points to note were there were no changes to the overall level of growth and no changes to the greenbelt. It had been accepted that Birmingham could not accommodate all the housing growth within its boundary therefore they were working with Neighbouring Authorities. Ladywood included 3 of the growth areas.
- There had been changes to the policy for gypsy and travellers resulting in the need to identify sites for their provision in line with other Local Authorities. Sites identified were Hubert Street/Aston Brook Street East, Rupert Street and Proctor Street.

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- It was hoped that the plan would be finalised and adopted by early 2016.
- The Chairman queried the modification related to the 89K houses. He commented that the gypsy site at Castle Vale was currently being used as a car park and there were a number of complicated legal issues.
- Councillor Mosquito was concerned that 2 of the proposed location of the travellers sites were in the Nechells Ward. She informed that a petition would be submitted objecting to the proposals. Councillor Mosquito further questioned what process had been used to make the decision. Martin Eade was aware there were concerns regarding the location of the sites. He explained the process used adding that 60 sites had been considered in total.
- Councillor Lal queried whether the housing needs were adequate bearing in mind the newly arrived community. In terms of the local population growth there was a robust process and the best information available was used. There was no longer a requirement for the Local Authority to make housing provision for travellers.
- Councillor Afzal referred to the homelessness policy and practice of placing refugees in inner city areas of the City. He stated that it was unacceptable to have the 2 sites in the Aston and Nechells area. Councillor Afzal objected to the proposal and asked that the decision be re-considered.
- Councillor Tahir Ali gave a commitment as a Cabinet Member to co-ordinate a meeting with the Councillors to discuss the sites and consider whether there were viable alternatives.

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RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted

PLACE DIRECTORATE QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The following report of the Service Director, Place Directorate was submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

Some amendments had been made to the report.

Lesley Poulton referred to the red performance indicators highlighted through the report and the explanation for some of those performances that had been circulated at the meeting.

In response to Councillor Afzal, Lesley Poulton explained that where there were red indicators an explanation had been sought, copies of which had been distributed. Councillor Afzal referred to standards of cleansing in the Ladywood Ward mentioning Aston in particular. Councillor Lal requested and Councillor Afzal agreed that officers should be invited to attend the Committee meeting when targets were not being met. Councillor Sybil Spence stressed the need to engage with and educate residents about street cleansing and rubbish and suggested that a public meeting be held. The Chairman agreed that problems with rubbish being dumped was ongoing and Councillors regularly reported problems to Fleet and Waste.

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Councillor Tahir Ali questioned who the targets were set by and felt that the targets were unrealistic and set too low, further that the District should not accept the targets and have them re-set, however Councillor Afzal commented that the targets needed to be met first before they were raised. The Chairman undertook to discuss the issue with the Vice Chairman.

249

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1

The following report of the Service Director Place Directorate was submitted:-

(See document No. 3)

Kate Foley outlined the details of the report and highlighted the explanations for some of the areas of concern as set out in the narrative provided with the report. During the discussion the following was amongst the points made:-

- There was a review being done of the voids and lettings process. Tenancies started on a Monday resulting in the loss of days and impacting on the figures.
- The new contractors for repairs would start 1 April 2016.
- Councillor Lal suggested that a percentage figure be included next to the figures to make them more relevant. Kate Foley would work with the Head of the District and Chairman to provide a more meaningful report.
- Councillor Afzal spoke about the Council budget cuts and the effect on printing. He was concerned about repairs and the percentage of gas repairs completed within 7 days. He felt that 7 days was a long time to wait for a report especially if it was during the winter. Kate Foley was aware of issues with voids, repairs and gas. Performance was improving and the gas repairs did not include dangerous repairs. She could report back on the progress of procurement and issues were moving forward and would convey the concerns expressed to colleagues and contractors. Kate Foley undertook to let the Chairman have more information on vacant properties not owned by the Council following the meeting.

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RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

251

Chief Inspector Chris Mallett attended the meeting to give an update on the Performance Indicators relating to Community Safety that affect the Ladywood District. During the discussion the following points were made:-

- No specific crime type had been experienced however the increase in crime was owing to better recording.

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- There had been a significant reduction in crime over the last few years.
- Domestic abuse was one of three priorities for the District.
- The percentage of residents who felt safe was difficult for the police to comment on and would be discussed outside of the meeting.
- Burglaries 17% reduction
- Robberies 5% reduction
- Drugs 9% reduction
- The work with families to tackle crime had been positive.
- Action had been taken with regard to urban street gangs and organised crime.
- Councillor Sybil Spence asked about gun crime. Chief Inspector Chris Mallett informed that there had been one gun related incident in the Aston/Lozells area. The incidents had been investigated and some significant arrests had been made with some firearms and materials had been recovered.
- Councillor Rice said that the key to managing the reductions in the police personnel was community engagement. The job carried out by the police was easier if it had the support of the community and members of the public had confidence in the police acting on information given to them. Councillor Rice spoke of the need for the police to feedback the outcome of actions etc to the community.
- Chief Inspector Chris Mallett reported that the decision about PCSO numbers had not yet been made. The force was clear that Neighbourhood Policing was important and would be delivered even if it was in a different format.
- Councillor Thompson informed that there had been some issues over the summer months following which some meetings had been held. She agreed that consulting the community stopped matters from escalating.
- Councillor Lal expressed concerns regarding lack of resources and the position with regard to the PCSO's. He highlighted the need for the police to interface with the public in order to be more effective.
- Whilst Chief Inspector Chris Mallett was uncertain about the police structure and delivery of service, he was confident about Neighbourhood Policing and there would be a programme to look at how to engage with the community. There would be a more specialised function in the future and the plans would be discussed with other agencies.
- Comments were made about disproportionate cuts affecting the West Midlands and the impact of budget cuts such as staff low morale. Whilst there was concern about services it should be recognised that partnership working was

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required. Residents should be encouraged to share information with the police and a joint responsibility for the safety of the community.

- In reply to an enquiry regarding the numbers of ethnic minority police officers in the Ladywood District Councillor Mosquito agreed with Councillor Lal that it was not appropriate to ask Chief Inspector Chris Mallet questions about the recruitment of BME officers. She continued that there was a lot of work being done on diversity and some conscientious improvements had been made. The decision had not been taken on the freeze on recruiting staff.

TOPICS FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE

252 Topics had been agreed as follows :-

1. Private Rented Sector and associated issues.
2. Environment.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

253 That it be noted that the Ladywood District Committee will meet on the following dates at the Council House at 1400 hours.

Tuesday, 10 November, 2015

Thursday, 14 January, 2016

Tuesday, 8 March, **2016**

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

254 There was no other urgent business.

AUTHORITY TO ACT BETWEEN MEETINGS

255 **RESOLVED:-**

In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1548 hours.

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Chairman