

HARBORNE WARD FORUM MEETING NOTES**MONDAY 29 JULY 2019****6.30PM – 8.40PM****The Community Room, Harborne Pool & Fitness Centre
Lordswood Road, B17 9QS****COUNCILLORS:** Jayne Francis & Peter Fowler**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Marie Brown – District Engineer

Karen Cheney – Head of Service, Neighbourhood Development &
Support Unit

Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Team

Simon Felton – Senior Housing Development Officer, Housing
Services

Andrew Fuller – City Design Manager, Planning Dept, BCC

Sgt Khalil – Harborne Team, WMP

Chris Pengilly – Management Team, The Royalty

OBSERVER: Preet Gill, MP Edgbaston Constituency**APOLOGIES**

Cllr Jayne Francis - lateness

Attendees: Approx. 40

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:**Cllr Peter Fowler in the Chair****1. Notice of Recording**

The Chair advised that members of the press/public may record and take photographs of the meeting.

2. Notes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Noted.

3. Development of Former Garage Site adjacent to 122 Welsh House Farm Road

Following introductions, Simon Felton Senior Housing Development Officer briefly advised of the challenges faced by the City Council and partner agencies to meet the demand for housing over the next few years; over 60,000 homes were needed as currently, there were over 10,000 on the waiting list for homes, 2,000 in temporary accommodation and approx. 300 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

BMHT (Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust), the City Council's housebuilding arm was initially created when the council was faced with an increased demand for social housing but with diminishing housing stock. Since then, BMHT had taken the opportunity to create bespoke houses which specifically meet the needs of residents in Birmingham and in doing so look to utilise vacant garage sites to see how they could be used to create modular housing; these were factory made and then brought out on site, with the whole process taking approx. 12 weeks.

The former vacant garage site adjacent to 122 Welsh House Farm Road had been identified and a PowerPoint Presentation followed which gave details of the 6 x 2 bed houses proposed for the site. The Big Local had been a key partner in the consultation with local residents on Welsh House Farm and the proposals had been very well received and welcomed. A Planning Application would be formally submitted for consideration in due course and following approval, would commence on site shortly afterwards. Residents would continue to be kept informed.

Cllrs and residents thanked Simon Felton for his attendance and presentation.

4. Local updates

QE & University Parking and Traffic Management Masterplan

A full Business Case for the various TRO schemes was being prepared by officers for submission to Cabinet Committee. A number of concerns and objections had been made by residents who stressed that very little thought and consideration had been given to how the proposals would impact on the daily movement of local people. The TRO proposals included roads where there were no concerns or issues, but would impact on local residents if they were implemented. Residents also advised that where the proposals had been revised, no feedback or updates had been given by officers, which was very disappointing and frustrating given the affect the respective schemes would have on local people, and stressed that the final designs must be seen by residents prior to submission to the Cabinet Member for a decision.

Action: Cllrs Francis and Fowler agreed to pursue the matter with the relevant officers

Yewcroft/Harborne Primary Annexe – Court Oak Road

Marie Brown, District Engineer advised that a significant number of objections had been made by residents against proposals out forward for the traffic mitigation scheme. Following a joint public meeting with neighbouring Quinton Ward, the scheme was being revised given the strength of feeling from residents and Councillors in both wards.

The annex was due to be opened at the start of the new academic year in September, so finding and agreeing an appropriate scheme was essential. Residents in both wards living within 100 metres of the scheme would be consulted on the revised proposals and details would also be sent to Preet Gill, MP for Edgbaston Constituency.

Whilst welcoming the decision to re-consult, residents stressed that their views and comments must be fully taken on board and that honesty, openness and transparency from officers were paramount if trust in this and future schemes was to be restored. Several residents living in Fellows Lane also sought assurances that consideration would be given to traffic calming/restricting measures to reduce/limit the flow of traffic along their road as a result of the building of the annexe.

Residents further advised of poor behaviour including littering by the contractors (Balfour Beatty) working on the scheme, and following their request, Marie Brown, agreed to investigate/take the matter up with the site programme manager. Marie advised that a number of measures were required to be in place prior to September – these including vehicle activated signs (VAS) , appropriate signage , guard rails and zig-zag markings outside the annexe.

Local Police Team Update

Sgt Khalil advised of the following:-

- A slight reduction in house burglary following a very proactive approach; however vehicle crime, particularly keyless vehicles remained a concern. Residents were reminded to remain vigilant, keep all valuables out of sight, lock all doors and windows, and to keep car keys in a secure lockable box as far away from their vehicle as possible.
- Four warrants had been successfully executed in the ward relating to drugs/modern day slavery and prostitution related offences.
- Knife crime remained a huge concern and priority across the city and a city wide Section 60 Notice remained in place
- Child sexual exploitation and modern day trafficking also remained a key concern and priority for the police.
- Locally, StreetWatch had been very proactive with their visual patrols and instrumental in providing reassurance as well as encouraging residents to report incidents along with providing crucial evidence which had led to successfully obtaining warrants which had then been successfully executed.
- The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) proposed for Harborne High Street had temporarily been put on hold whilst discussions were ongoing to resolve the issues for the PSPO for the city centre. Concerns had been expressed that homeless people would be unfairly penalised and displaced from the city centre without appropriate help and support, which in turn would have a knock on effect on local neighbourhoods/residential areas. In the meantime, a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) had been secured against three known offenders which had made a significant difference to ASB on the High Street.
- Residents were reminded not to give money/financial aid to street beggars, many of whom used the money to feed their addictive habits – drugs and/or alcohol and to continue to report all incidents to the local team, particularly as it was noted that aggressive begging increased during the evening when the Warden employed by the BID was off duty.

Members and residents thanked Sgt Khalil for his attendance and update.

The Royalty Information Update

Following introductions, Chris Pugilly confirmed that he was part of the management company that owned the building, and that after the recent fire at the premises, a significant amount of money had been spent to make the building safe as possible. The company would continue to work closely with WMFS and WMP to protect the premises as much as possible and thanked both services for their advice and support thus far.

Mr Pengilly advised that meetings had been held with the Ward Cllrs, Andrew Fuller, City Design Manager, Planning Dept. and the Harborne Royalty Trust (HRT) to discuss and explore the options in order to move forward with the plans for the building. Whilst the Trust was very keen to move forward, the offer made to purchase the building was inappropriate and unacceptable, a number of the proposals were not commercially viable and showed little evidence of financial backing for the proposals. The Trust had also been asked to provide more robust details of their plans for the premises.

Mr Pengilly further advised that a full structural report had been carried out since the fire and the findings were expected within the next few weeks. The owners were willing to listen to/ work with local residents regarding future plans for the site however the option(s) must be commercially viable.

Mr Fuller, Planning Dept. added that an appropriate balance needed to be found to retain and protect the building's historic past as well as making it commercially successful for the future. The full structural report commissioned by the owners would give a clear indication of the current state of the building and what would be realistic prior to the submission of a Planning Application.

Responding to the update, representatives from Harborne Royalty Trust advised that the responses received from residents to their consultation had been very positive and clearly indicated that community use was the preferred option. The Trust remained supportive and would continue to work with the owner to bring the building back into use.

Several residents felt that more should have been done by the owner to prevent the building from falling into the very poor state of disrepair and that the City Council should also have been more robust in using its enforcement powers against the owner to bring the premises back into use. Mr Fuller explained that the use of enforcement powers tended to be used for smaller sites, and would not be considered by the City Council at this time as it would become liable for the costs if the owner filed for bankruptcy; however it would remain an option if all efforts to bring the premises back into use had been exhausted.

Residents further advised that parking provision on the site was essential once its use had been decided.

Following a request from Cllr Fowler, it was agreed that a further meeting with Councillors and the respective parties would be arranged to discuss the matter and for a further update to be provided at the next Ward meeting to be held in October.

Harborne Business Improvement District (BID) Update

Mary McGarry advised that a security guard was currently employed by the BID on a temporary basis for 40 hours per week. All business premises were also issued with two-way radios which enabled them to share information as necessary. Both arrangements were currently working very well.

Consideration was also being given to installing CCTV cameras; however the cost of this and ongoing maintenance remained an issue. Floral enhancements/wild flower meadows and planting high pollinating plants were also being considered – volunteers were needed and interested residents encouraged to contact the BID.

37 new bins had also been installed along the High Street, and discussions were ongoing regarding this year's festive decorations following the success of the Harborne Carnival and Artsmile events. Discussions were also ongoing with the businesses to enter next year's Best High Street Competition.

5. Ward Action Plan – Identifying the Priorities

Residents were reminded that each ward was required to identify and prioritise the areas of concern to develop a Ward Action Plan to see how these could be addressed over the next 3 years (until 2022).

The Ward Priorities Ideas and Suggestions template had been circulated to residents on several occasions, however to date, only two

had been returned.

The following suggestions were made for consideration/inclusion in the Ward Plan:-

Local Bus Services – the reinstatement of the No 29 bus service

Environmental improvements – including cutting back of overgrown bushes, shrubs and trees

Development of a community hub/redevelopment of The Royalty as a focal point for the ward

A robust traffic and parking management plan – the poorly managed expansion of the Hospitals and Birmingham University had a detrimental impact on the daily lives of local residents

More involvement and facilities for children/young people

Following discussion, it was suggested and agreed that a separate meeting should be arranged to concentrate solely on the Ward Plan and residents interested in helping to contribute/develop the Plan invited to attend.

The date, time and venue for the Ward Planning Meeting would be circulated to all residents in due course.

6. Residents News/Updates/Local Concerns

None raised.

7. Petitions

None submitted.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 21st October 2019, time and venue tbc

Meeting closed at 8.40pm