

SMALL HEATH WARD FORUM MEETING

Thursday 8th December 2022

11:00am – 12:30pm

Khidmat Community Centre

2A Heather Road, Small Heath

B10 9TE

COUNCILLORS: Cllrs Shabina Bano and Saqib Khan	NOs OF ATTENDEES: approx. 25
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Team	GUEST SPEAKER: Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member, Environment
MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:	
<p>Cllr Saqib Khan in the Chair</p> <p>1. Welcome and Introductions Following introductions, Cllr Saqib Khan welcomed residents to their first Ward Forum Meeting for Small Heath Ward. Both Cllr Bano and Khan had been successfully elected at the Local Elections in May and would be serving as Councillors for the first time.</p> <p>2. Notice of Recording Residents were advised that members of the press/public may record and/or take photographs of the meeting.</p> <p>3. Waste Collection, Street Cleansing and Fly-Tipping Concerns Following introductions, Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member, Environment briefly advised of his role and responsibilities which included the Waste Collection Service, Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces, Bulky Waste and Fly-tipping.</p>	

Cllr Mahmood advised that:-

- Fly-tipping and dumping continued to be one of the main causes of distress to residents, communities and neighbourhoods.
- Household waste collection had significantly improved over the last few weeks, however more still needed to be done to ensure that all roads were collected – currently there were 7 roads that remained problematic due to access issues, and where possible, missed collections were collected the next day.
- Recycling collection remained low in the ward – more effort was needed to encourage residents to separate their recyclable items from the household waste. Larger wheelie bins were also available for households of 6 or more people.
- Flats above shops remained a problem – currently black bags were collected 2-3 times per week as there was little/no storage for wheelie bins; however, this was being re-assessed, and bins could be provided if there was sufficient space for storage.
- Mobile Household Recycling Centres (MHRC) had been rolled out in every ward with a visit every month – wards where flytipping was a real problem had 2 visits per month, and where hotspots had been identified, had been located in those areas – following discussions and agreement with the local Ward Cllrs.
- CCTV cameras – currently 10 mobile units in the city. Fly-tipping was and remained a criminal offence, and details/evidence from residents where possible was needed for a successful prosecution as sometimes the footage from the CCTV camera may not be sufficient
- Leaf fall clearance was currently being carried out by street cleansing crews, with high flood risk areas a priority – Ward Cllrs had been notified
- White good removals (fridges/freezers etc) – looking to secure suitable walk-in containers which would make disposal/removal much easier and added to the MHRC provision

New Initiatives to help improve the cleanliness of the streets/environments included Love Your Streets and Love Your Environment. Alleyways continued to be a problem with dumping; approx. £830,000 had been set aside to clear alleyways across the city; however the support /‘buy-in’ of the local community/residents was needed if alleyways were going remain clear of rubbish and debris in the future.

A Love Your Environment activity was carried out in the ward on 4 November - 92 graffiti tags were removed, along with 28 fridges, 3 tyres and TVs, and over 200 black bags. An additional 249 black bags were also collected by Love your Streets.

Residents advised of the following:-

- Cleaning schedule for Small Heath had been requested on 4 Nov – requests had been made for Heather Road to be cleaned. Residents needed to know when their road/area was due to be cleaned so that the service could be monitored and reported if missed.
- The same roads tended to benefit most from the MHRC - more areas in the ward should have the opportunity to use the facility as not everyone had access to a vehicle to take their items to the facility. Hugh Road/Charles Road was a particular concern and Somerville Road should be considered as a location.
- Alternative times /weekend should also be considered as not everyone was able to get to the MHRC between the hrs of 7am – 12pm
- Residents with a disability may have difficulties accessing the service if they had no one to help them.
- Insufficient notice to residents regarding when the MHRC would be in the ward
- Many missed refuse collections reported for Dora Road, Banks Road and several other roads – these had all been reported by residents and not logged by the refuse collection crews who would have known they had not collected from these roads, yet these continued to be rescheduled to the next collection day and not the next day/asap as in other areas.
- More proactive enforcement action against traders/businesses without an appropriate trade waste arrangement in place; many continue to use the street bins or dump their waste on the pavements/frontages.
- Flytipping and dirty roads continued to be a problem in the ward even with the provision of the MHRC and the Love Your Streets/Environment initiatives and complaints were not taken seriously.
- Complaints were not taken seriously, and residents were often left feeling let down/unsupported even when they have provided photographic evidence and/or vehicle registration details of the alleged perpetrators.
- Residents would like to see the collection/street cleaning crews reflective of the local community they worked in as this could go some way to addressing some of the educational issues

Responding to the comments made, Cllr Mahmood advised that:-

- All Ward Cllrs would be invited to their respective depot to meet and go through the street cleansing schedules with the Depot managers. Cllrs would also be given a copy of the schedules for sharing with residents.
- Advertising of the MHRC was done 2-3 days before its visit; details and locations were agreed with Ward Cllrs in advance and notification arranged by Cllrs. Residents should let their Ward Cllrs know if they had locations they would like considered.
- Initiatives like Love Your Streets/Environments were not publicised in advance as this would most likely encourage fly-tipping, particularly from 'cowboy' waste removal traders who do not have the appropriate licence(s). Local community/voluntary/Friends of Groups/volunteers were often involved with the all-out clean up days and were notified in advance.

- The 10 CCTV mobile cameras were in demand across all 69 wards , so were not fixed in any one location for longer than 6 weeks. Changes to the legislations regarding fixed/permanent CCTV cameras meant these cameras could not be permanently based in one particular location/ward. Discussions were currently ongoing with the Legal Services section to see how these issues could be resolved. In the meantime, residents should continue to report fly-tipping so that the cameras could be brought to the area for the period of time stated.
- Discussions were ongoing to see if free bulky waste collections could be offered to residents who had assisted household and recycling waste collections
- The introduction of the MRHC did not have a negative impact or diminish the use of the normal Household Recycling Centres – as the latter continued to be available 7 days per week and were well used – the mobile MHRC offered residents an alternative if they have no access to transport.
- Vehicle access remained a major issue for missed household collections with double parking on many of the roads in the ward was a common practice. Visits had been made on several occasions to the roads where collections had been missed and double parking was evident; Dora and Somerville Roads were visited on Sunday and again the junctions of both roads were blocked due to double parking.
- Complaints were always taken seriously and acknowledged that more needed to be done to respond to residents’ concerns as well as publicise successful prosecutions that had occurred in the ward. More proactive action was needed to tackle trade waste and traders without an appropriate trade waste contract. Additional Enforcement Officers had been taken on to do this.
- Complaints regarding the current state of St. Oswalds Road were being addressed via Love Your Streets
- Cllr Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities was currently looking at diversity within the workforce and how these targets could be addressed.

4. Small Heath Park and Small Heath Lodge Updates

Small Heath Park

Cllr Mahmood advised that funding had been secured for the potential landscape improvement plans for Small Heath Park – copies of the proposals were circulated at the meeting. Officers had been working with Friends of Small Heath Park to draw up the plans, which would be going out for consultation.

Proposals included an outdoor gym, new seating area; additional litter bins; climbing play equipment and the restoration of the cricket pitch. All of the potential improvements proposed had been costed and would be included in the consultation.

Responding to residents’ questions, Cllr Mahmood explained that funding of approx. £160k had been secured from past Planning

Financial agreements (S106 agreements) and Friends of Small Heath Park had secured an additional £40k which was fantastic. Future maintenance of the equipment also had to be built into the costs. Work was expected to start in early 2023 if there were no objections to the proposals.

Details of the consultation would be the City Council Be Heard Consultation page – residents were actively encouraged to take part in the process. Mohammed Jameel, Chair of Friends of Small Heath Park added that a Working Group would also be set up to discuss the proposals – interested residents should contact Mr Jameel to find out more.

Small Heath Lodge

A meeting of the Trust and Charities Committee was due to take place on Tuesday following complaints against the City Council regarding the management of Small Heath Lodge.

The Committee would decide how the issue should move forward - Ward Councillors would be kept informed.

Cllrs and residents thanked Cllr Mahmood for his attendance and updates.

5. Cllrs News and Updates

The following updates were given:-

- Malmsbury Road/Coventry Road – bollards to be installed
- St. Oswalds Road – bollards to be reinstated
- Marlborough Road – walkabout with local police teams following complaints about parking; a number of vehicles were ticketed for obstructive/dangerous parking and/or parking on double yellow lines, leading to confrontation and aggressive behaviour from some motorists. Residents had also requested that the bushes were removed, which they felt would reduce fly-tipping and also create much need parking space.
- Dora Road – Love Your Streets activity carried out; businesses/traders were also visited, and warnings issued to those without an appropriate trade waste arrangement. Follow up visits would also be made to check if arrangements were now in place.
- Encouraging the local schools to become more involved in community activities, including litter picking, ambassadors for recycling awareness/climate change issues etc.
- E-Scooters/Voi Scooters concerns had been raised with the Cabinet Member for Transport following the recent tragic death of a young teenager. Concerns had also been submitted to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) who had commissioned the pilot scheme for the scooters.

- Blocked gullies in Bankes/St. Benedicts/Malmsbury and Mansell Roads would be reported to Kier Highways
- Digby Park – new swings were due to be installed.

6. Dates of Future Meetings

To be agreed – Simon Foster, Police and Crime Commissioner, and Sgts from the Local Police Teams would be invited to attend.
Residents would be notified of the meeting details as soon as they have been confirmed.

Cllr Khan and Bano thanked residents for their attendance and participation.

The meeting closed at 12:55pm