

**ERDINGTON DISTRICT
COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 30 JUNE 2015**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ERDINGTON
DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 30
JUNE 2015 AT 1400 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE
ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT: - Councillors Bob Beauchamp, Mick Brown, Des Hughes, Mick Finnegan, Penny Holbrook, Josh Jones, Gareth Moore, Gary Sambrook, and Ron Storer.

ALSO PRESENT: -

Station Commander Andrew Burnham – West Midlands Fire Service
Mike Davis – District Head (Erdington)
Pete Hobbs – Service Head, Housing Transformation
Superintendent Brandon Langley – West Midlands Police
Mary Latham – Regional Representative, West Midlands National Landlords Assoc.
Pamela Powis, Safer Neighbourhood Partnership
Errol Wilson - Committee Manager

**ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR
ERDINGTON DISTRICT**

On the receipt of nominations, it was:-

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RESOLVED: -

- a) That Councillor Josh Jones be elected Chairperson (Executive Member) for Erdington District for the Municipal Year 2015/2016, ending with the first meeting of the Committee in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.
- b) That Councillor Mick Brown be appointed Committee Vice-Chairperson for the 2015/2016 Municipal Year, ending with the first meeting of the Committee in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

(Councillor Josh Jones in the Chair)

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 273 The District Committee were advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site and members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.
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APOLOGIES

- 274 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Robert Alden and Mike Sharpe for their inability to attend the meeting.
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MINUTES

- 275 **RESOLVED: -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2015 having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

- 276 The membership of the Committee was noted as follows: -
- Councillors Robert Alden, Bob Beauchamp and Gareth Moore (Erdington Ward).
- Councillors Des Hughes, Gary Sambrook and Ron Storer (Kingstanding Ward).
- Councillors Penny Holbrook, Josh Jones and Mike Finnegan (Stockland Green Ward).
- Councillors Lynda Clinton, Mick Brown and Mike Sharpe (Tyburn Ward).

Co-opted Members:-

Station Commander Andrew Burnham – West Midlands Fire Service
Superintendent Brandon Langley – West Midlands Police.

LEAD OFFICER ARRANGEMENTS

- 277 The lead officer arrangements were noted as follows: -

Lead Officer: - Mike Davis, District Head (Erdington)

Support Officers:-

District Contact Lawyer - Stuart Evans
District Finance Officer – Sukvinder Kalsi/Parmjeet Jassal
Committee Manager - Sarah Stride.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 278 Councillor Gareth Moore declared his non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Community Safety and Police Crime Board.
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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following Code of Conduct for District Committees was submitted:-

(See document No. 1)

- 279 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Code of Conduct for meetings of the District Committee be noted.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES FUNCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

The following schedule of District Committee Functions and Guidelines were submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

- 280 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Functions and Guidelines be noted.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

It was -

- 281 **RESOLVED-**

- a) That the following Members be appointed to serve as Member representatives on the following bodies/ community organisations:
- (i) Youth Champion - Councillor Josh Jones
 - (ii) Looked after Children's Champion - Councillor Mick Brown
 - (iii) Older Person's Champion - Councillor Mick Finnegan
 - (iv) District Parent Partnership Champion - Councillor Mick Brown
 - (v) Heritage Champion - Councillor Mike Sharpe
- b) To appoint Members to serve as a board representative on the following Community organisations:-

Witton Lodge Community Association

That Councillor Des Hughes be appointed as a Member representative for Witton Lodge Community Association.

Erdington Town Centre Partnership Ltd

That Councillor Robert Alden be appointed to serve as a Member representative on the Erdington Town Centre Partnership Ltd.

Councillor Gareth Moore suggested that a report be submitted by the champions at a future District Committee meeting in relation to the work they have been doing. He remarked that it was bizarre that the District Committee appointed the Community Association representative, and the Ward Committee that appointed the Member for Erdington Town Centre. A brief discussion then ensued concerning the issue.

ERDINGTON DISTRICT - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015

The following joint report of the Service Directors District Services, Housing Transformation, Sports Events and Parks and the Director of Finance was submitted:-

(See document No. 3)

Sukvinder Kalsi, Assistant Director of Finance, Place introduced the item and advised that this was the final report for the year ended 2014/15 and completes the governance cycle for the year. He drew the attention of the Committee to section 5 of the report which highlighted some of the key information contained in the report. He added that the District had received some added resources to meet the voluntary redundancy cost that had been incurred by the District. He further added that Table 5.5 summarises the year end position, the details of which were further explained in Appendix 1 to the report. He advised that the City Council had provided some extra resource as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3 of the report to write off all the prior year overdrawn balances and reserves for the District. In Erdington's case, this was £1.358m which was funded corporately. There was some commitments that was made in relation to the Community Chest in the year which would be carried forward in 2015/16 so that all the programmes would be spent.

Mr Kalsi advised that the District Committee had a Capital programme of £190k in relation to the Neighbourhoods programme. There had been some slippage to the Capital programme as a result of a late start, but that this would be carried forward. He highlighted that the Community Initiative Fund would be introduced in the financial year 2016/2017 which would be £2m across the districts. He added that when the framework was approved, it was anticipated that the District would receive a special financial report on this fund. In response to an enquiry from Councillor Moore, Mr Kalsi advised that this was the final report.

The Chairperson thanked Sukvinder for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

It was

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RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the net underspend of £0.055m for Directly Managed and SLA Services, as detailed in report Appendix 1 be noted, compared to a breakeven position at month 10, after taking into account the write off of prior year overdrawn reserves and debt balances from 2013/14 of £1.51m. The net underspend has been utilised to manage the year end and brought forward deficit position as approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2015;
- (ii) That the financial position of the Community Chest projects of an underspend of £0.047m, as detailed in report Appendix 2 be noted, which will be carried forward into 2015/16 to fund approved commitments; and
- (iii) That an appropriation to reserves of £0.040m has been made to meet commitments in 2015/16 relating to an externally funded post, be noted.

EXTENDED LICENSING FOR THE PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING SECTOR

Pete Hobbs, Service Head, Housing Transformation and Mary Latham, Regional Representative, West Midlands National Landlords Association gave the following verbal presentation:-

Mr Hobbs highlighted that the City operates a mandatory licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). He added that this did not cover all the HMO's in the City, but that to date they had licensed 1800 properties across the city, which was a 5 year licence subject to renewal. They were currently undertaking the renewal process. The Housing Act legislation allows local authorities to consider additional licensing for properties in their area under certain circumstances. A report was taken to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor John Cotton, in February and was approved to consider consultation whether the City need to use those additional powers in parts of the City to tackle specific issues. The legislation, speaks of additional licensing powers, where the ineffective management powers of the Private Rented Sector properties were having a significant impact on residents in an area. There was also selective licensing powers where there were issues of low demands and/or associated issues of anti-social behaviour.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and local Elected Members, the report identifies some key areas where there were concerns where they wanted to explore whether the City's powers were of any use in those areas one of which was Stockland Green. Another was Selly Oak Ward where there was a high concentration of student housing and the other was the hostels market. Not all hostels that had the most vulnerable people in the City was covered by the current mandatory licensing. There were issues as to whether they should be considering extending any extra powers to the hostels market. The consultation was in two phases and this was the early part. In discussion with the Cabinet Member, they

were looking to extend the period of consultation to August 2015, to be able to gather as many views as to what the issues were.

The first phase of the consultation involve statutory agencies colleagues, community safety partnerships etc. to build up a picture as to whether they had issues in relation to the private rented sector where they were and what the issues were. A report would then be submitted to Cabinet for a decision to be made if as a result of all the information an analysis of what the problems were was identified and whether the licensing approach was appropriate in those areas. If this was so, there was a full consultation process that would be undertaken with a proper Business Case. They could then be consulted for 12 weeks. A review of the feedback from the consultation period would then be undertaken before the final decision was made. He reiterated that they were in the first phase of the consultation and had set up a simple questionnaire for local residents on the Be Heard website, which was allowing people to state where they lived and whether there were issues in and around the area and whether these issues were related to the private rented sector. This process had been to the District Housing Panel and they were visiting a number of other Housing Panels where it was thought there were issues and people made representation to them.

The early stages in particularly to Stockland Green, but also in relation to the other Wards, whether there were issues and what were the issues they faced and whether they were related to the private rented sector and what the nature of the issues were. There were other powers and agencies that could be used to resolve some issues. There were exemptions within the licensing regime for certain types of properties and landlords. Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) were excluded and anyone registered through the Homes and Communities Agency and some property types were not included in the current mandatory licensing.

The Private Rented Sector had increased at a pace over the last decade and was in the region of 68,000 to 70,000 households in the City. It was a significant provider of accommodation in the City and was an important part of housing for the City.

Ms Latham stated that they recognised the problems the City was facing several years ago. She stated that they had warned the predecessor that the issue would get worse and that it had gotten worse and would spread further into other parts of the City, particularly when they close Birmingham City University in respect of Perry Barr. The problem was that there had been a downward spiral of the type of people that had been rehoused in the private rented sector. The Private Rented Sector covers a wide range of properties in the sector. When a landlord found shortage of tenants in Erdington primarily as a result of difficulties as there were already some problems in the area due to the lack of good tenants not want to live there anymore.

Good landlords struggled to get decent families in to the area that they had before. Many landlords could not sell due to negative equity or various other reasons and were tempted by 'rent to rent'. Rent to rent operated by an individual, company, RSL or any entity offers a private individual a contract i.e. I will take your property for 5 years for a certain amount each month which was less that they could get on the market. This was guaranteed, who would then manage that property and would put other people in there and maintained that property. A number of landlords took this option. The rent to rent scheme was in her opinion a 'scary' option and this was raised by the National Landlords Association at Government level. This had resulted in people living in an accommodation which was not managed by the owner and

where the local authorities did not have the power to deal with the 'middle man' as they did not exist.

Ms Latham stated that the downward spiral continued. She added that she had been approached approximately 5 years ago by an organisation that informed her that they wanted landlords as they could offer them any number of tenants that wanted to come into the area. She stated that they had reluctantly informed her that they had been to every prison in the country and had advised that when individuals leave prisons, they should contact them so that they could be provided with accommodation in Birmingham, particularly in the Erdington area. She stated that she was told that she was judgmental when she questioned why put these people in the Erdington area who had an history of breaking the law and this was probably not a good idea. These persons found landlords who had entered into a contractual arrangement with them, who then brought in the client group she had referred to into Erdington. Following this there had been a wave of people who had set up as RSLs, charitable organisations and Trusts.

An accredited landlord scheme was offered by the City Council. Concerns were expressed in relation to the number of persons that stated that they did not have to comply with the scheme as they were not HMOs but were RSLs. They were bringing people who were not only ex-offenders, but were also drug addicts etc. Freedom of Information (FOI) was obtained to ascertain how much was being paid to people who were exempt accommodation. Bill from Department for Work and Pensions was £4,676,759, in addition to the £18m the City Council paid for supporting vulnerable people. Landlords with good portfolio stated that Erdington was becoming an area where no one wanted to live. Using the extended licensing powers would not address the issue.

Mr Hobbs advised that the process for regulation was through the Homes and Communities Agency. The Cabinet Member had written to the Home and Communities Agency and had voiced concerns in relation to the introduction of the licence. Concerns were also voiced regarding the regulations.

In the course of the discussion that ensued, the following was amongst the issues raised and comments made in response to questions: -

Councillor Holbrook commented they had been working on this issue for 10 years and was in agreement with most of the comments that were made. It was noted that Erdington had a lot of people with more needs, but that there were a host of good people in Erdington. The infiltration by private landlord was not just the landlord's doing. The problem was at the other end of the scale which they had no control of. The problem was some private landlords who had set up, then sub-let. The proposal would not address the issue but would stabilise the market. Legislation meant that properties had to be at a minimum standard and there was a need for this. Private rented properties were going to be a permanent part of the offer and a number of landlords were asking for this legislation. It was not considered that this would disadvantage good landlords.

Councillor Moore commented that his submission was similar to Councillor Holbrook's. He added that he was a resident of Erdington and that it was a wonderful place. He stated that he 'cringed' when people made disparaging remarks about Erdington, particularly when it was stated that people were moving out of Erdington as it was not a nice place. This was encouraging the movement of people

out of Erdington and that there was a need to say that Erdington was a good place which would encourage people to move in. This was a long term way of encouraging people to move in and by bringing decent families to move into the area. Portraying a good image of Erdington was necessary. A number of private landlords had good properties. There was a need for the anti-social behaviour issues to be addressed; HMO's needed to be looked at and those who exploit people who were on housing benefit. A question was how this would address the issues and what would happen in terms of enforcements and those properties that did not meet the standard.

Councillor Finnegan commented that this was not a short term measure, but would take a number of years. This had to be the starting point and was a long-term project.

The Chairperson commented that a lot of good landlords were likely to be engaged with the good landlord accreditation scheme and was the reason the licensing scheme was being introduced. It was important to have a pilot of this in Stockland Green.

Mr Hobbs stated that the strategy was to encourage responsible renting and that other models were being looked at that exist across the country such as Doncaster. He added that the policy officer was interested in the models they had looked at particularly what Doncaster was doing which was a link between the Landlord Accreditation Scheme and the licensing scheme. If landlords were out of any of these they would be subject to enforcement by the local authority robustly. There were a number of opportunities within the consultation and feedback from other stakeholders and the landlords etc. identifying potential models that operates in different ways and might exist across the City. Part of the localisation approach was getting the right model for the right area. If there was no licensing, there was still the enforcement powers by the City Council where there was the ability to enforce. There was a need to look at the different ways of working around the request they get from the private rented sector along with the general disrepair items. They still had enforcement powers which they could use to take action. Licensing potentially gives the ability to ultimately exclude someone from having a licence. They have taken action against people who failed to licence their properties in the City and have given them substantial fines. These enforcement powers would continue.

The licensing approach was part of the framework approach and was not a single solution. The discussion around Stockland Green and colleagues, if that approach was seen as the right way forward and the other work around anti-social behaviour; community safety and the work done with other housing providers around homelessness was a more holistic approach with those tools was also relevant for other areas of the City. A question was what powers would be made available under licensing that did not already exist to maintain standards. There was existing power prior to the legislation being introduced to allow the City to take enforcement action on poor standards of management. Licensing gives the framework to require people to say where properties were, the City would then be able to focus its resources on an inspection problem. It was noted that a number of landlords were enquiring whether there was a register of landlords. Licensing will give some additional powers, but would still be a resource enquiry to manage a licensing scheme.

In response to an enquiry from the Chairperson, Mr Hobbs advised that the questionnaire on the Be Heard website was not the only thing they were doing, but it was set up for residents in areas to inform the Council where they live and whether

there were issues regarding the private rented sector. They have extended the opportunity for people to fill in the questionnaire. It was not for the statutory agencies to fill in the questionnaire as it was focussed around residents and residents group to tell the Council about what was happening in their area. They were working with their landlord colleagues other agencies within the Third Sector; statutory colleagues within the Police, Fire etc. The aim was to take a report back to the Cabinet Member, who has given a clear direction that this was not to be rushed as he required the consultation evidence to be put in the right way for a robust decision. The evidence will be brought together in the summer.

The Chairperson thanked Pete Hobbs and Mary Latham for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

It was

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RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the verbal report.

POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE DISTRICT

The following report of the Erdington District Head was submitted:-

(See document No. 4)

Mike Davis, District Head (Erdington) introduced the item and drew the Committee's attention to the draft Erdington District Policy statement. He added that this seeks to build on the Councillor Sir Albert Bore, Leader of the City Council's City wide Policy Statement. Each of the 10 districts were developing a policy statement for their district. He added that the document would be developed into a broader Community Plan during the course of the year for Erdington; the work programme and the timescale.

Chairperson commented that it was important to produce a policy statement for the District at its first meeting to put some context to the Leader's Policy Statement. Councillor Sambrook enquired why the Chairperson did not present the report seeing that the report had been written in the first person by the Chairperson. He added that he was pleased that mental health was mentioned in the report and that it was good to see that this was taking in a bigger picture. In terms of the clean green and safe priority, the one point was that work to ensure the wheelie bins were successfully implemented. He questioned what the clean green and safe group actually felt how this had gone as in his opinion this was a shambles and a nightmare, particularly in Kingstanding Ward. He added that he was interested to see how this priority would be monitored and reported back to the District Committee.

Councillor Sambrook made reference to paragraphs 2 and 3 in to *Erdington District – Putting People at the Heart of Everything We Do* and commented that whilst this may be true, of the 7 members of the group, 5 members were allowed to sit on the sub-groups but that they had been constantly voted out of those sub-groups. He stated that last year they went from having two members on some group to one group to deliberately take out the Conservatives Members.

Councillor Moore sought clarification on the first page of the policy statement that made reference to a *Social Innovation Zone*. He further questioned what the Social Innovation Zone, what it meant for the District and for Erdington. He added that it would be useful to have milestones and whether there were plans to include milestones in the document so that they could see the successes going forward.

The Chairperson stated that it was important to have mental health in the District Policy Statement as this was something that was constantly brought to the fore by partner organisations. He added that mental health issues had affect a number of people, but that it was never really brought in the spotlight publicly in the way that it should and that it never got the importance that it deserves. He further stated that the District was trying to work with partner agencies and the Community Care Group (CCG), the Wellbeing Board etc.

In terms of the report, it was nothing political, so he did not see the point for him to present it. He felt that it was easy for Mike Davis to present the report. With regards to the sub-groups, there were 7 Labour Councillors and 5 Conservative Councillors on the District. He added that this was a democratic process followed by the District, but that if people had any ideas they should refer these to him. A brief discussion concerning the issue then ensued. With regard to the Social Innovation Zone, this was an idea that was put into the Leader's Policy Statement for 2014/2015 and there has been some work concerning this for the last year. Recently, he and Councillor Lisa Trickett, Cabinet Member for Green Smart and Sustainable City and officers met to discuss what the Social innovation Zone would look like. It was an idea about standing up for Birmingham Campaign, concerning other ways they could to designate areas in the city to try and bring in some social innovation or try and give this some credence. He had spoken to the Leader to ascertain whether they could pilot this in the District and he had agreed that Erdington and Selly Oak would be the two districts that would pilot this. This was a 20 year vision and it was important that they put something in over the coming months as a district. This was as a result of the changes that were needed was not something that would be done overnight.

Councillor Moore commented that the 20 year vision was what they needed to do to move forward and that Sir Bob Kerslake identified that they were too short-termism. He added that he had no objection to the proposal, but felt it would be useful to have the milestones as he would like to see this happening in 20 years' time. It was worthwhile that they achieve this rather than setting the milestone and not getting there. Councillor Moore stated that it was not clear what tangible benefit the Social Innovation Zone would bring to the District. He requested that an officer be invited to attend a future District Committee to explain what it meant etc.

The Chairperson agreed to Councillor Moore's request and advised that a briefing note concerning the issue would also be circulated to the Members of the Committee. Councillor Sambrook requested that a report be submitted by the sub-groups. The Chairperson stated that the sub-groups were different to the District Champions and that they had Afzal from Witton Lodge attending to speak about what was happening in the employment sub-group and Ruth Miller speaking on health and Pete Richmond spoke on housing and Pamela Powis to speak on the Local Delivery Group. He added that he was happy to put the wheelie bins on the agenda for the next meeting. He advised that the Clean and Green sub-group will be the next group coming to report at the next District Committee meeting.

That the Committee note the report.

LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY

Pamela Powis, Safer Neighbourhood Partnership Manager introduced the item. She drew the Committee's attention to the overview plan circulated at the meeting, pertaining to the Community Safety Plan of the Partnership:-

(See document No. 5)

Ms Powis advised that the previously known Local Delivery Group (LDG) was renamed and was now known as the Local Community Safety Partnership. She added that in relation to the Chair, historically the group had been chaired by Chief inspector Paul Ditta who has since left. Chief Inspector Paul Brindley was now the Chair and will hopefully be voted in at the next meeting on the 2nd July 2015.

Councillor Moore referred to page 7 of the document and the £25k being spent in relation to the continued development of the North LDG etc. He stated that a lot of these seem to be admin functions, whereas when he looked at the other projects, particularly in terms of domestic violence, they appear to receive a lot less in comparison. He questioned why it was that seem to be admin functions took up a large chunk of the money more than the important things such as domestic violence, substance miss-use or vulnerable persons. He sought clarification on how the money was broken down and what it had been spent on.

Ms Powis advised that when the plan was first put together, during the financial year, they had no indication then of what funding they would get. They were told from the partnership that they would have access to £25k under the Mobilising Community Agenda so that they actually secure that money. There was never any guarantee for any money for any of the other items. They tried to have a guestimate of what the partnership would give them. This had since moved on and the arrangement was that they would have £50k. There was more extensive work going on with domestic abuse and she would be happy to attend a future District Committee to give the whole financial breakdown. Currently the biggest spend had gone against domestic abuse. The £25k was no longer there. The £45k had been replaced by the £45k for the small grants fund which will be used to develop those agenda items.

The Chairperson emphasises Councillor Moore's point regarding domestic abuse and domestic violence. He added that this was important and that this was something they should have real focus on as a District and as a North Quadrant. Considering the discussion concerning the District Policy Statement, about the importance of mental health, it was felt that there was going to be a spotlight or some funding would be placed in this. These were the two areas that they would be focussing funding on as a District.

Ms Powis highlighted that they were looking to set up the domestic abuse charity and that they were at the early stages. They had the constitution and the bank statements, partners signed up and the trustees. They had identified the priority and there were projects that they would lie to do that there were no statutory funding for. In relation to the vulnerable persons group, they had a launch event with 45 partners who attended to ensure they had a clear focus on what a vulnerable person looked

like in Birmingham North. The first meeting of that partnership group will be held on the 9th July 2015 and they did not doubt that there would be a priority of the funding to go forward to ensure that that group was functional and working well.

The Chairperson enquired whether the charity would be part of operating the North Domestic Abuse Hub and whether this was the main focus as a group. Ms Powis advised that the main focus as a group was around the legal package and a support package to support victims in the north. The constitution had been written in a way that they could develop that and go forward. The initial part was the biggest gap that they had identified which was that the victim needed added legal support. Even though they may have the finances, because of the restriction in the relationship, they did not move forward in any civil intervention as they did not have access to their funds. This was the priority they were leading on initially and then develop this as time goes on.

Councillor Holbrook commented that given that every single at Stockland Green domestic violence was one of the highest crimes. She questioned why this was not a priority. Ms Powis advised that when they identified and what was being looked at here was more about prevention, gaps in service and long term. The Police Tasking meets on a monthly basis and they look at the priority around violence. They did not want to duplicate something that was already being looked at. When there was an issue around any partnership approach, whether it was violence or burglary, that information comes to the Local Community Safety Partnership, they would look at project if they needed to.

Councillor Holbrook stated that given that violent crime was attributed to domestic violence or other, whether the partnership would consider contributing to the private rented sector consultation. Ms Powis advised that they had contributed to the consultation.

Councillor Brown referred to the vulnerable persons project and enquired whether the Triage Team was involved. He further questioned whether on the mental health First Aid training this was rolled out into the community. Ms Powis advised that the Street Triage Team was involved in the initial Speed Dating Event. They were more ofay dealing with the person who was at the crisis point, whereas the vulnerable person was about looking at the preventative work. They wanted to look at not getting people to that crisis point. They were not involved in the initial core membership group, but they had links with them. Mental Health First Aid training was undertaken last year but they did not have all the spaces taken up on north. There was a commissioning process being done currently for another round of training,

The Chairperson thanked Ms Powis for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

LOCAL FIRE ISSUES

Erdington District Committee - 30 June 2015

Station Commander Andrew Burnham, West Midlands Fire Service introduced the item. He drew the Committee's attention to the information in the summary report pertaining to the performance indicators for the current year circulated at the meeting.

(See document No. 6)

Station Commander Andrew Burnham advised that they had renumbered their performance indicators which were slightly different from previous year, but that the descriptions were the same. He referred the Committee to the 'green, red and black' in the right hand column of the document and advised that the figures in 'red' was where they needed to look at things further; 'green' they were performing well and 'black' was neutral. Station Commander Burnham stated that although he was tempted to state that the Committee should disregard the 100% in the red one as this was from 0 to 100%, still of concern was the 0 to 100% increase. They had looked at the Performance Indicator (PI) 2, which was the number of accidental fires in dwellings. PI 11 concerns arson and rubbish fires. PI 2 was on a Ward by Ward breakdown for the District. They were ahead of target in Tyburn Ward and slightly out in the others. The highlighted Ward was Kingstanding Ward where the numbers were slightly high. He added that they were mapping their accidental fires in dwellings and were putting in low interventions with these, which was about public education. There were programmes that they were involved with such as teaching people to avoid the number of fires they have in their dwellings as accidental dwelling fires. It was too early to give more accurate details, but will be able to provide more details at a future District Committee meeting.

In terms of PI 11, Kingstanding Ward was the worst in terms of the figures and it was believed that they were not related arson fires which they could investigate for the necessary action to be taken. They were sporadic and there was also a blip in April within the Ward. Not all the hotspot areas were monitored and every incident was logged to get an overall picture. They did look to identify any trends so that they could get an overall picture, but this early in the year they were performing well as the figures looked good and there were nothing of great concern at present.

Councillor Sambrook enquired about prevention and partnership with the Council. He gave examples of where he had reported a large mound of green waste had been dumped or a caravan. He stated that he caravan was reported in February 2015 and the Council stuck a 7 day notice on it. He added that this was reported a number of times, then two weeks ago the someone set it on fire. He further stated that although the Fire Service had put the fire out, they could not get the Council to remove the shell of the burnt out caravan. Councillor Sambrook highlighted that there were two examples of this in Kingstanding over the last 12 months. He stated that he would like to know how the Fire Service worked with the Council, in terms of when they put out a fire, how they approach the Council to get the caravans removed. Councillor Sambrook stated that the numbers in Kingstanding were quite high.

Station Commander Burnham advised that they had reported an abandoned vehicle to the City Council in the same way as any other member of the public, but that they did not have a special arrangement with the Council. In terms of the clean-up operation this was something that they would look into. With regard to the green waste, the burning of green waste was where people wanted to set fire to their own green waste which was everyone's right to do so. They did not have any powers to

deal with the burning of rubbish and that this was a matter for the City Council and not West Midlands Fire Service. They will attend incidence where fires go out of control to deal with them and give advice. In their engagement with the public, they do encourage people about more efficient ways of disposing of their green waste i.e. land fill sites, local recycling centres and composting.

Councillor Finnegan enquired about false alarm calls as it cost a lot of money to send the fire engine out to answer a false alarm call, they are not there to protect the people. He further queried what was being done to get people to ensure their fire alarm equipment was in good working order. Station Commander Burnham stated that in terms of businesses, they would come under the Regulatory Reform Order concerning the maintenance and care of their fire alarm system. They encourage good housekeeping to prevent any unwanted fire signals through their inspection programme. With regards to the domestic front, they undertake home fire safety checks and encourage people to cook responsibly which was a major cause of domestic fire alarms. This was a public education programme that they do. In relation to turning out with a fire engine now, they have a specialist, vehicle that primarily deals with fire alarm systems activating. If the call was a simple call not backed up by a call to emergency 999 systems, then one vehicle would be sent to do an initial inspection, then those officers that did that inspection, would call on the fire engine if they needed to. This was also backed up by the fire alarm system itself. If the fire alarm went off automatically, then the fire control would ensure that a fire engine was sent as well.

Councillor Hughes commented that he was curious concerning the main cause of accidental house fires – i.e. the charging of equipment and unattended washing machines were significant causes. He questioned whether there was a major significant cause that could be addressed. Station Commander Burnham advised that the two major ones were unattended cooking and the careless disposal of smoking things. In terms of the increase in the number of phone chargers, or other mobile device chargers causes house fires primarily due to the fact that people were using non-standard/non-recommended chargers from the supplier of the device itself. Cheap imports were a major cause of this issue as they were not regulated. In relation to unattended washing machines, there were some brands that were prone to this happening.

Councillor Storer enquired whether there were any businesses that were repeat offenders in terms of the false alarm calls. Station Commander Burnham stated that he did not have the statistics with him at present, but that there were companies that were prone to having more than one unwanted fire signal. The Fire Service class more than one in any six month period as a nuisance. They would then arrange for the Fire Safety Department to go out and monitor all the fire alarm systems, speak to the owners to ascertain what the issues were, which could be a faulty equipment which they would asked them to replace, renew or re-wired.

The Chairperson thanked Station Commander Burnham for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2015/2016

The Chairperson advised that an additional meeting would be scheduled as an evidence gathering session when they discuss the future arrangements to the District work programme.

Councillor Sambrook advised that the meeting that was scheduled for the 1st December 2015 clashes with Full City Council meeting on that day. The Committee agreed for the District Committee meeting on that day to be rescheduled. Councillor Sambrook made reference to the Community Investment Fund that would replace the Community Chest and stated that they were usually advised to get the Community Chest applications in for assessment early, but with the large gap until October 2015 when the new fund comes into operation, whether this would affect their funding.

The Chairperson advised that the Community Investment Fund was for 2016/2017 and would not come into operation this year.

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RESOLVED: -

That the District Committee note the schedule of meetings for 2015/16: -

2015

27 October

2016

26 January
29 March

All meetings will be held at 1400 hours in Committee Rooms 3 & 4 at the Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham.

FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS/DISTRICT WORK PROGRAMME

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The Chairperson introduced the item and advised that there had been some changes to how District Committees would operate post Sir Bob Kerslake's report which was subsequently ratified by the City Council's Annual General Meeting. The changes were that the District Committee: --

- Will no longer have the role of setting and overseeing budgets, this will be dealt with centrally
- The role of District Committees will be more of a partnership working, which was something they had already embarked on in the District
- Its role will also be around a challenging function i.e. challenging things that were not working, whether it be Housing repairs, Fleet and Waste Management.
- It was about having some neighbourhood challenges and working and about priorities which was in effect a scrutiny role and an overview role of City Council policies.
- There will be a number of consultation documents and one of the more important things would be to try and change and sway the opinion of the consultation documents. The Districts will have a lot more consultation work

Erdington District Committee - 30 June 2015

An additional meeting would be scheduled as an evidence gathering session when they discuss the future arrangements to the District work programme.

The Chairperson advised that Members could send an email stating what they feel should be the priority for the District for discussion prior to the next District Committee meeting in September 2015.

Councillor Sambrook made reference to Sir Bob Kerslake's report and stated that he had suggested that District Committees should meet in the district. He added that this would be a good move especially if they would be involved in partnership working rather than bringing them into the City Centre, where parking was an issue. In terms of the work programme, he suggested that refuse be invited to discuss the wheelie bins roll out programme and to scrutinise the work they do.

The Chairperson stated that in relation to the second point raised by Councillor Sambrook, if this was what the Committee Members wanted, he was more than happy to go ahead with the suggestion. He noted Councillor Sambrook's comment concerning where District Committees were being held and advised that he was more than happy for when they do the evidence gathering session for this to be held in the District, but the issue was having everything web-streamed from the District, the support of Democratic Services personnel in terms of the reduction in their resources and to ensure that the District Committee could meet in the way that they had some legally binding parts to it. District Committees would continue to be held in the Council House.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRPERSON AND OFFICERS

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RESOLVED: -

Chairperson to move:-

"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 1550 hours.

CHAIRMAN