

STIRCHLEY WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Stirchley	DATE: 25 th April 2023
VENUE: Stirchley Community Church, Hazelwell Street B30 2JX	START/FINISH TIMES: 7pm – 8.20pm
COUNCILLOR Mary Locke	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 17
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Justin Varney, Director of Public Health Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager Melvin Powell, Housing Manager	VISITING SPEAKER Councillor Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Housing & Homelessness

WARD PRIORITIES:
1. A Bold Prosperous Stirchley 2. A Bold Inclusive Stirchley 3. A Bold Safe Stirchley 4. A Bold Healthy Stirchley 5. A Bold Green Stirchley 6. A Bold Local Stirchley

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:
1. Welcome & Introductions from the Chair Councillor Locke welcomed all and introduced Justin Varney, Director of Public Health who explained he was attending as part of the council's CLT to listen and learn about ward meetings. In response to questions about the covid virus, Dr Varney explained that covid had become similar to an all-round flu virus and spring boosters would be available to those 65+ and those with health conditions as a way boosting anti-bodies for those in need. Residents were advised to speak to their G.P. if they were concerned. In response to a question the meeting was advised that the Bolder Healthier programme would be seeking champions to cover topics other than covid and anyone interested in becoming a volunteer could use the email for Covid Champions or contact Dr Varney via Councillor Locke

FINAL DRAFT

2. Notice of Recording

The Chair advised the meeting that press/public may record/take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items

3. Housing, Exempt Accommodation & HMO's

Councillor Sharon Thompson outlined her portfolio and responsibilities. She understood that the main focus for the ward was exempt accommodation and HMO's.

HMO accommodation – due to high and increasing numbers a mechanism had been sought to ensure certain sized properties were subject to planning approval, so Article 4 Directive was established, followed by Selective Licensing as a pilot for 25 wards across the city but was governed by strict Government criteria. With data collected additional licencing had been pursued for remainder of wards so additional properties and landlords would be subject to licensing.

Supported/Exempt Accommodation – dealt with under different government legislation where there were a number of loopholes. Landlords of this type of accommodation had to provide support/care but some failed to do so but still benefited financially due to allocation of enhanced housing benefit. Birmingham had been chosen by government as a pilot to work to find solutions to the issues around this type of accommodation via a multi-disciplinary team. Since the work began several providers had been removed from the system and working with the Housing Regulator for Social Housing a Birmingham Standards Charter had been created for providers to sign up to and a Charter of Rights for Tenants. Probation and other referral routes had been contacted and requested not to use providers that had not signed up to the Charter.

Residents could email the team via – prs@birmingham.gov.uk – to report any issues so that a property could be investigated. Through information received property repairs, drug issues, trafficking and care had been investigated.

Work was continuing with other Local Authorities to push Government for further legislative changes including changes to minimal care and ability to trace landlords around the U.K.

Residents referred to property on Newlands Road and the issues that neighbour had been experiencing, including fires in the garden needing assistance from the Fire Service and other problems resulting in police and ambulance attendance. Councillor Thompson said she was aware of the property and would raise with the Community Safety Team and seek a thorough investigation through the Children's Trust, reporting back to Councillor Locke. Councillor Locke said she had reported this to the Children's Trust and investigations were being made. Councillor Thompson explained that properties housing young people were governed under different legislation. Residents undertook to send diary of events to Councillor Locke. Residents expressed concern regarding the type of care that was being provided to the young people living in the property and how the Children's Trust ensured the care

package was appropriate.

Residents expressed concern about the lack of consultation with residents when properties were converted from family homes to HMO's and that affordable accommodation was also an issue.

With regard to council properties, Councillor Thompson said there was a commitment to invest in fire safety for tower blocks, to work on a tenant engagement strategy and think in a more localised way. She undertook to send Councillor Locke a short video on advice around damp and mould, for circulation to the ward mailing list.

4. Councillor Updates

- Jobs Fair Stirchley Baths involving NHS, Police, National Express, Selco and other local employers held recently. 200 attended. Further Jobs Fair to be held 25th October
- MHRC – 1 May, Pineapple Road, 7-12am
- Next meeting 20th June, Stirchley Baths, 6.30pm

ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN
<p>1. Exempt Accommodation property Newlands Road - safety issues to be raised with Community Safety Team and investigation to be sought via Children's Trust</p> <p>2. Advice video – damp/mould in properties to be circulated to ward mailing list</p>	<p>1.Councillor Thompson</p> <p>2.Councillor Thompson to provide to Cllr Locke/Kay Thomas</p>	<p>1. ASAP – report back via Councillor Locke</p> <p>2.</p>