

ASTON WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Aston	DATE: 26 th April 2023
VENUE: Aston Villa Football Club, Corner Stand, Villa Park, B6 8HE	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 8.10pm
COUNCILLOR Ayoub Khan Apology Councillor Mumtaz Hussain	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 25
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Pat Whyte, Community Development & Support Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	VISITING SPEAKERS: James Lamb, Head of Estate Development, Aston Villa Kevin Reilly, Transport Planner

WARD PRIORITIES:
1.
2.

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:
<p>1. Welcome & Notice of Recording Councillor Khan explained this meeting had been arranged at the request of residents following discussion at the last meeting and thanked AVFC for hosting and hospitality.</p> <p>2. Villa Park Redevelopment Overview from James Lamb, Head of Estates Development With the aid of a video presentation, James showed the wider aspiration of the Villa Park master plan and regeneration of the surrounding area, the aim was to create a destination site. The approval to host Euro 2028 had assisted in including improvements to Witton Station and link to Brookvale. The following main points were highlighted –</p>

- Existing North Stand to be demolished and replaced with new stand to increase overall stadium capacity to 50,000
- Improve connectivity within and outside stadium and enable other events
- Proposed new media stand involving conversation with Birmingham University re: education opportunities
- Villa Live to replace former academy building and to encompass community space, café, restaurant, shop, educational play space, heritage space, outreach programme, football programme
- Brookvale Academy building due for completion August 2023. River/rail line barriers being addressed with bridge over river/landscaping/riverside walk and connection of 2 sites. Also, proposals to open up access to Witton Station
- Pedestrians and vehicles separated throughout master plan via zoning
- Major part of redevelopment proposals were based around Villa Park becoming an active lifestyle destination therefore engagement with community to find out what was wanted/preferred was key. During previous consultation the closure of the leisure centre and loss of facilities had been flagged. Outdoor space use would be free and bookable.
- Traffic calming outside main entrance & Trinity Road stand welcomed by residents
- Full details available on BCC planning portal
- Community aspect of development to be discussed at future meeting. Next session to focus on Villa Live with input from Aston Villa Foundation.

Councillor Khan commented that residents felt that their views had not previously been taken into account when previous applications from Aston Villa had been submitted and as a stakeholder in the area it had not acted as part of the community. He was therefore pleased to see that the current application was not 'set in stone' and community engagement and consultation was being undertaken and this was key going forward. The north Aston area was at capacity re traffic and parking, and it was hoped that this might be a way of addressing some of the existing issues as well as challenges that the new stand might create. In response to comments Councillor Khan said it was up to Councillors and community representatives to help promote these meetings and for residents to put forward their views.

3. Transport, Parking & Related Issues – information from and discussion with Kevin Reilly, Transport Engineer

Kevin made the following main points –

- Parking recognised as having a major impact on residents on Match Days and was also an important issue for AVFC to address
- Aim of Villa Live was to encourage fans to stay longer in the ground, therefore staggering exit from Villa Park
- Survey of fans and how they travelled to matches revealed trains were an issue and therefore meant more people came by car. With the

close proximity of 2 stations to the ground this was something to be addressed.

- 2 new wardens funded by AVFC had been appointed to add to those already working on match days
- If there was an appetite for residents parking zones this could be taken forward and consultation arranged
- While long terms plans were to encourage fans to use public transport, car use was currently the main mode of transport so 3000 additional spaces had been identified in accredited car parks in industrial areas away from the ground and discussions with the landowners were progressing. Also work ongoing promoting bus link from the city centre and looking at stewarding fans through Aston Park, similar to the way match days were managed in Manchester.
- Plans were included for proper taxi bays to declutter the roads around the ground and manage traffic away from Villa Park.

Residents made the following comments-

- More cars were now parking on Victoria Road on match days
- The amount of disruption suffered by residents around the ground on match days could not be described. Residents were unable to leave their homes, get to hospital appointments etc
- Other means of transporting fans from the city centre etc were suggested eg shuttle buses
- Role of Transport Officer was welcomed
- It was not just the amount of cars parking in residential streets, but the way cars were parked eg double parking, on pavements, on corners and this also needed to be addressed
- Any road closures needed to be as short as possible so local disruption was minimised
- It was imperative that the new development benefited the local community through jobs, training, priority access to facilities etc

There was discussion around residents parking zones and Councillor Khan advised that there had been a previous consultation on residents parking zones in North Aston and residents had voted against the introduction of a scheme. The planning application provided the chance to reconsider that option and for residents to have their say. While recognising that additional capacity at the ground would add to problems, this was an opportunity to alleviate existing problems, have an input into the new plans and bring AVFC into the community.

Kevin commented, in response to questions, that there were no plans to build new car parks as this would exacerbate the situation by

encouraging more cars into the area, so the use of existing spaces was under discussion. Bad parking was also acknowledged as part of the overall problem, so enforcement, alternative parking and forms of parking needed to be part of the package. All elements of the plans would target the stadium as a whole and seek a culture change.

Councillor Khan urged residents to comment on the planning application and to make their neighbours aware of what was going on and encourage the wider community to express their views. He said this was the first of many meetings that would be held for residents to participate in the development of the football ground.

ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN
1. Next meeting in respect of the redevelopment of Villa Park to focus on the community aspect of the plans and plans for Villa Live	1. AVFC	1. September