

WEOLEY & SELLY OAK WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Weoley & Selly Oak	DATE: 18 February 2020
VENUE: Weoley Community Church, Quarry Rd B29 5LE	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 7.55pm
COUNCILLORS: Julie Johnson & Tristan Chatfield	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 14
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Iyam Atiq & Aneesah Mumtaz, Clean Air Team Sgt Richard Fryer, West Midlands Police & PC Dyson & Weaver & PCSO's Karen & Luke	Gary Sambrook, M.P. was also in attendance
MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:	
<p>1. Local Police Update</p> <p>Sgt Fryer introduced the team and gave a brief update as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary across Birmingham West & Central had reduced year on year by approximately 15%. Patterns were being monitored and work undertaken with other teams - Interventions for young people continued through Youth Promise Plus, work with the Princes Trust and other specific projects - Anti-social behaviour – designated areas identified (Weoley Square & Square Park) and team had identified ring leaders and were working with housing officers and the Youth Offending Team to divert those involved. Action would however be taken if necessary. - PCSO's gave an update on Street Watch & WMNow. Two Street Watches were active in the area but it was the ambition to increase numbers. What was involved and how to set up a Street Watch was explained to the meeting. Further details would be available to anyone interested at the conclusion of the meeting. <p>In response to questions from residents Sergeant Fryer made the following comments –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PCSO's were on foot patrol in the area and dependant on the area/project patrolled in pairs or on their own to cover a wider area - In respect of the group that owned the remains of the Square Club any work that facility could offer to young people in the area would be welcomed and would have a positive impact 	

- The Team was aware of a shop on Northfield High Street openly displaying knives & guns and worked with Trading Standards in such cases

Councillor Johnson referred to issues with groups of young people on Northfield High Street. Sergeant Fryer advised they had spoken to the shop manager and the issue was being dealt with via banning orders that would be managed via CCTV. Councillor Johnson said that there were things to do in the area but awareness needed to be raised and facilities made available for young people. A local resident said that a list of things to do in the area was being compiled and would be made available to the community. Sergeant Fryer said that they were working to put some provision in place for the summer.

2. Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Update

Ilyma and Aneesah gave an overview of the CAZ and the reasons for its introduction. The Council was legally obliged to introduce clean air measures and the area to which the CAZ applied was highlighted. It was emphasised that only non-compliant vehicles would be subject to the charge of £8 per car per day. There would be exemptions to the charge, for example for those living within the CAZ (for 2 years) or working within the Zone (for one year) and there would be a scrappage scheme and contributions towards public transport.

Residents then made the following comments;

- Closure of the tunnels in the city centre did not make sense as traffic could move freely through from the north to the south of the city creating little pollution
- The Ring Road was already congested and this scheme would add further traffic and create greater problems
- Additional public transport capacity would be required before the introduction of the CAZ to cope with demand
- 'Green' living walls would be an alternative
- Query regarding the monitoring of air pollution once the CAZ was in place to compare to levels before it was introduced
- Concern regarding access to hospitals given that public transport was expensive, unreliable and buses did not provide appropriate access. People used taxi's but they might be charged for entering the CAZ and would therefore increase prices so again affecting local people. Improved public transport was needed, if only to enable better access to the hospitals.
- Selly Oak train station car park was usually full and it was suggested that some spaces be allocated for eg 3 or 4 hour stays so people could catch the train to Birmingham for shopping etc.

Gary Sambrook M.P. pointed out that the Government had mandated a CAZ but other local authorities were approaching it in a different manner eg green walls. Residents and businesses had strong opinions regarding the CAZ and therefore he urged everyone to express their views through the consultation.

Councillor Chatfield explained that extensive modelling had lead to the point where anything other than a charge on non-compliant private vehicles would not work to reduce pollution levels to those required due to hot spots within the city centre.

In response to the comments made the meeting was advised that;

- Views on the Transport Plan could be made through the consultation
- It was not intended to encourage motorists onto the Ring Road and there would be mitigations to tackle the impact on the surrounding areas
- Money received through the CAZ would be used to improve public transport and the council was working closely with TfWM. More hydrogen buses would be ready to go on the road when the CAZ was introduced.
- With regard to monitoring air levels there was an ongoing project in conjunction with Public Health to monitor inside and outside the zone. There were air quality monitors in place across the city. Information was available on the Council's website
- The CAZ was part of the Clean Air Policy which was not confined to the Ring Road, for example work was going on around schools

3. Birmingham Transport Plan Consultation

Councillor Chatfield outlined the headlines of the Plan. There was a need to look at clean air, congestion and other forms of transport than cars. The key priorities were bus priority measures, Sprint, extended Metro, remodelling urban centres, segregated cycle routes and a regional transport co-ordination centre via the WMCA to live track transport movements.

Closure of the City Centre as a through route via division into quadrants and subsequent closure of the tunnels was another proposal but Councillor Chatfield stressed that nothing had been agreed and this was a plan to transform the city centre that was currently out to consultation. Other ideas included removing free parking and introducing a work place parking levy (as seen in Nottingham) with mitigation for hospitals, shift workers etc in an effort to return the city to people rather than the car.

Details of public drop in sessions where more detailed information could be obtained and questions asked were provided and Councillor Chatfield said that the ward might want to consider creating its own transport plan.

Councillor Johnson said a local plan could look at prioritising travel around neighbourhoods, including around schools, improve pedestrian crossings etc. and she urged residents to send their views into the council via the consultation. Transport projects for the ward could be a topic for discussion at a future meeting.

Residents then made the following comments;

- Birmingham did not have a bus station and creation of such would be a good centre of information and would be good for the Commonwealth Games
- Those discussing the Plan at high level were not usually bus users and therefore it might be helpful to have a user group involved
- National Express involvement was queried
- Socially necessary bus routes needed to be a priority

Gary Sambrook M.P. said that the West Midlands Mayor was looking at regulating buses

Councillor Johnson advised that Yardley Wood bus station was preparing for new buses and was working closely with the Bus Alliance group. She acknowledged frustrations regarding timetable changes in South Birmingham but said matters now sounded more positive as changes were being sought to encourage bus use. Councillor Johnson acknowledged the points regarding socially necessary bus routes and said National Express would be held to account.

4. Residents News/Updates/Local Concerns

- a) **Ward Plan** – progress was queried and the councillors advised that the ward would look at a transport plan and join together with the existing Ward Plan
- b) **Square Club** – discussion regarding the plan to re-develop the club and use land to include housing for the homeless and a community hub. It was agreed to have as a future agenda item to discuss in more detail with the church.
- c) **Waste Collection Service** – in response to comments Councillor Johnson said missed collections had reduced recently but asked residents to report any to the councillors as well as through the contact centre
- d) **Highway Repairs**- it was agreed to invite the Kier Highway Steward to the next meeting.