

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**YARDLEY DISTRICT  
COMMITTEE  
16 JULY 2015**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE YARDLEY DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 16 JULY 2015 AT 1330 HOURS  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:** - Councillors Sue Anderson, Nawaz Ali, Zaker Choudhry, Basharat Dad, Zafar Iqbal, Carol Jones, John O'Shea, Stewart Stacey and Paul Tilsley.

**ALSO PRESENT:** -

Mushtaq Hussain	- Yardley District Head
Fazal Khan	- Finance Manager
Mr Richard Davies	- Northfield District Head
Mr Chris Robinson	- Acting Senior Service Manager, East Quadrant
Mr Dave Wagg	- Project and Client Manager, Strategic Support
Marie Reynolds	- Area Democratic Services Officer

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**ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LOCAL SERVICES FOR YARDLEY DISTRICT**

Following nomination it was -

287

**RESOLVED:-**

That Councillor Sue Anderson be elected as Chairman (EM for Local Services) of the Yardley District Committee for the Municipal Year 2015/16.

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**ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR LOCAL SERVICES FOR YARDLEY DISTRICT**

Following nomination it was -

288

**RESOLVED:-**

That Councillor Basharat Dad be elected Vice-Chairman for (EM for Local Services) of the Yardley District Committee for the Municipal Year 2015/16.

**NOTICE OF RECORDING**

- 289 The Chairman 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.

The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt information.

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**MEMBERSHIP OF YARDLEY DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

- 290 **Councillors** :- Roger Harmer, John O'Shea and Stewart Stacey (Acocks Green Ward)

**Councillors** :- Sue Anderson, Paul Tilsley and Mike Ward (Sheldon Ward)

**Councillors** :- Nawaz Ali, Zakar Choudhry and Zafar Iqbal (South Yardley Ward)

**Councillors** :- Neil Eustace, Basharat Dad and Carol Jones (Stechford and Yardley North Ward).

**Co-opted Members:**

Rob Davis, Station Commander, West Midlands Fire Service  
Superintendent Bas Javid, West Midlands Police

The membership of Yardley District Committee was noted.

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**APOLOGIES**

- 291 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Neil Eustace, Roger Harmer, Mike Ward and Jess Phillips, M.P. for their inability to attend the meeting.
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**MINUTES**

- 292 The Minutes of the meeting of the Yardley District Committee held on 26 March 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
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**MATTERS ARISING**

**Sheldon Community Centre**

- 293 The Chairman updated the District Committee on the position relating to the above premises. Following a recent meeting it had been agreed, that the decision taken was that the building continued to be used for community use and the importance of choosing the most suitable vehicle in order that it remained active and to investigate ways of increasing its usage.

**Meadway Tenants Hall**

- 294 In response to questions from Councillor Jones relating to the above premises, Mr Hussain confirmed that since 1 April 2015 the Place Directorate had taken over the ownership/responsibility of the site. He stated that there were no immediate plans to change the usage however agreed to update when the department were completely managing the site.
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**Former Stechford Neighbourhood Office**

- 295 Mr Hussain reported on the above-mentioned premises and the local charity that had taken over the site. He confirmed that the charity had leased the premises for 2 years and therefore it would not be a financial cost to the district. He stated that the charity was providing a valuable centre to support vulnerable people within the district, and city-wide, and that the service provision would include information on welfare rights and financial advice, adding that there would be fortnightly surgeries taking place.

The Chairman stated that elected members would be welcome to visit the facility highlighting that a former neighbourhood advice worker that had worked previously at the neighbourhood office would be servicing the fortnightly sessions.

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**Birmingham City Council Reviews - Services**

- 296 The Chairman referred to a number of reviews that were ongoing and suggested that for the next meeting, updates should be provided which could include street sweeping and the timescales of when the various areas would be swept. She therefore encouraged members to email her with their requests relating to prospective updates.
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**Community Safety Update**

- 297 The Chairman stated that she together with Councillor Basharat Dad (Vice-Chair) had attended the last Community Safety meeting and confirmed that they would be attending the next meeting.
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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 298 The Chairman reminded Members to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests relating to items of business to be discussed at this and all future meetings. No declarations of interest were made.
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**CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following Code of Conduct was submitted:-

(See document No. 1)

299

**RESOLVED:-**

That it be noted.

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**DISTRICT COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS AND GUIDELINES**

The following District Committee Functions and Guidelines were submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

300

**RESOLVED:-**

That it be noted.

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**YARDLEY 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)

Mr Khan provided a comprehensive presentation of the report.

In response to Councillor Stacey's question relating to the total figure written off, Mr Khan confirmed that £630,000 was the amount.

Following a comment from Councillor Tilsley regarding the deficit relating to the two leisure/sport centres (Fox Hollies and Stechford Cascades) located in the district, Mr Khan confirmed that a significant element was due to the prior years' performance of the sport and leisure facilities. The Chairman referred to the added issue of the delay in closing the Neighbourhood Advice office for various reasons, and the reviews which had also impacted financially on the district budget.

Following a question from Councillor Iqbal relating to funding allocation for St Thomas Church Hall, Mr Hussain confirmed that the funding had been allocated but had not yet been drawn. The Chairman stated that all of the funding from the Community Chest allocation had been well spent and highlighted her deep disappointment that it would no longer be available. She made reference to the difficulties faced in obtaining funding from elsewhere and supporting those organisations that relied on the funding, and subsequently sighted Sheldon

Country Festival as a prime example stating that unless funding was found for next year, this year's event could possibly be the last.

In response to Councillor Tilsley's question relating to variance balances being carried forward, Mr Khan confirmed that was the case and that an amount of £23,000 for Yardley District was being carried forward into the new financial year.

Councillor Tilsley detailed his concerns relating to the development at the Radleys whereby the 3 ward councillors had agreed that the developer could use some of the open-space in the park. He highlighted that a derisory rental sum had been negotiated by BCC officers that was totally inadequate, adding that any rental income could have been used to replicate Community Chest funding and therefore requested that this be investigated.

At this juncture the Chairman agreed that the developer had used part of the park and that the rental income could have been used for Community Chest purposes, adding that it was important that if members were aware of similar cases in the future, that they highlight these areas, as it could be a means of raising funding for Community Chest purposes.

Following a general discussion and comments from members relating to Community Chest funding the following was highlighted:-

Mr Hussain stated that although the Community Chest funding of £23,000 had been carried over into the new financial year all of the funding had been committed and if there was any under-spends left, there were a number of projects that were awaiting approval in this instance. He highlighted that there had been some late approvals for spend (January/February/March) and therefore these projects would be progressed by the end of July. Any funding not used by August/September time would be clawed back. He stated that he would only contact the relevant ward councillors if there was funding available in their respective wards.

Following a brief discussion relating to the approval of any additional Community Chest Projects, it was noted that although agreement would be sought by the respective ward councillors, formal approval would also be sought at District Committee by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman under Chair's actions.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

301

**RESOLVED :-**

That Yardley District Committee was requested to:-

Note the net overspend of £0.229m for Directly Managed and SLA Services as detailed in Appendix 1, compared to a projected overspend of £0.224m at month 10, after taking into account the write off of prior year overdrawn reserves and use of credit balances as approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2015.

Note the financial position on the Community Chest projects of an underspend of £0.023m, as detailed in Appendix 2, which would be carried forward into 2015/16 to fund approved commitments.

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## **FUTURE OF WARD COMMITTEES AND DISTRICT STRUCTURE**

Mr R Davies, District Head, Northfield District, provided an update on the future of Ward and District structure.

Reference was made to the recent BCC review of Community Governance and the changes that were agreed at AGM in May 2015 relating to District and Ward Committees. Further reference was made to the update of the proposals which would later be submitted to Cabinet for agreement regarding the revised protocol.

Since District Committees would no longer be responsible for directly managing services or budgets, one of their new key roles would be in leadership with regard to the provision of all public services within the district. A further key role would be in relation to partnership working with stakeholders in order to improve the social and economic environmental wellbeing within the district.

Districts would also play an important role relating to governance in the future which would also include the ward and neighbourhood levels. Districts would be expected to produce a governance framework for their individual districts whereupon a template would be provided prior to the September cycle of meetings. Consideration should also be given to the future of ward meetings and neighbourhood structures to include neighbourhood forums and residents associations.

Each district was to provide an annual community plan based on a clear set of priorities based on the evidence of local needs. Also districts were to continue delivering an annual convention to engage stakeholders and to review evidence of local needs in order to help shape future priorities within the district.

It was noted that the future Council programme included a member development programme which each chair should have already attended which would contribute in helping to define the Councillors leadership role in the district. Support materials associated with the programme were being developed and the aim was to make these available in September to members.

Although district committees were no longer responsible for services and budgets from 2016/17, there would be introduction of the Local Innovation Fund. This was a fund that could be used by the district committee strategically in relation to the priorities identified in the Community Plan

Reference was made to the officer structure which was under review and currently proposals were being developed. It was likely that there would be area teams which would cover more than one district. The new duty for the district would be the Neighbourhood Challenge. The purpose of this would be

to investigate and review the performance of public services and to make recommendations for improvements.

Within the Community Plans, it was anticipated there could possibly be 2 or 3 neighbourhood challenges per year to ensure that work was undertaken vigorously and in detail. The district committee was expected to identify a lead member or a co-opted member to lead each neighbouring challenge and challenges would take place as part of the district meeting. This could include evidence taken and witnesses called to meetings to discuss the issues.

Following the process, a report would be produced which could result in local action being taken to address the issue or maybe the committee may decide to issue a report to the Cabinet Member, in order to implement recommendations, or the committee may decide to submit the report to Overview and Scrutiny in order to propose a city-wide review of a particular issue.

With regard to Ward Committees, it was noted that the future role would be towards a forum for local engagement with residents, partners and other local interests. These meetings would also co-ordinate the work of councillors in respect of the neighbourhood governance structures such as residents associations and neighbourhood forums. They would not be formal meetings and no formal minutes would be recorded however, officers from the area teams may provide some support for these meetings.

Each Ward would have an action plan tracker which would become live from September, supporting the administration of the meetings and be able to demonstrate how action was taken as a consequence of the discussions at the meetings. Officers from the area teams would support the development of the tracker and would utilise to place on standard agenda items, identify the forward plan of items and use as a tool for tracking actions taken.

It was noted that district committees could decide to have up to 5 co-opted members which may assist in developing community plans.

Following a question from Councillor Tilsley relating to the resources being made available to develop Community Plans, Mr Davies referred to the area teams and the officer support within the teams that would provide assistance with regard to the plans and ward meetings.

Following concerns from the Chairman relating to the enormous challenge for district committee to undertake within the 12 month period; with regard to the Community Plans relating to the number of neighbourhood challenges, the setting up of quadrants and associated impacts plus the lack of support, Mr Davies agreed that there needed to be clarity on the setting up of the area teams. He referred to the neighbourhood challenges and stated that they did not necessarily have to choose more than one challenge.

Following a comment from Councillor Jones relating to support at ward meetings, Mr Davies stated that there would be officer support from the area team albeit on a more informal basis.

In response to questions from Councillor Dad relating to support for additional neighbourhood forums and the implementation of neighbourhood challenges and timescales, Mr Davies whilst highlighted the importance of neighbourhood forums was unable to provide an answer with regard to support and therefore agreed to take back for discussion and respond accordingly.

With regard to the neighbourhood challenge, he agreed that choosing one would possibly be more realistic and although they would look to support and encourage districts in this instance, if it was not possible for the district to deliver within this financial year due to time constraints, it would have to be acceptable.

Following comments from the Chairman relating to Neighbourhood Forums regarding financial support and whether there were any restrictions as to how many could be set up, Mr Davies reiterated that he would follow up the issue on Neighbourhood Forums and take back in order to look at ways on how this could be supported.

Mr Hussain highlighted the need for capacity building in order for groups to be formalised which he highlighted was an issue within Yardley District. Mr Davies agreed that it could be a key issue and also the long term sustainability of these groups. He stated that he would be questioning the opportunities that were available to develop these groups and also what were the opportunities to ensure that they were sustainable and supported.

The Chairman requested that Mr Davies email elected members with the responses accordingly. She then subsequently thanked him for attending the meeting and reporting.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

302

**RESOLVED:-**

That the information and comments be noted.

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**HOUSING TRANSFORMATION PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 & YARDLEY DISTRICT NARRATIVE**

The following report of the Service Director, Housing Transformation was submitted:-

(See document No. 6)

Mr C Robinson, Action Senior Housing Manager presented the report and the narrative.

In response to a question from Councillor Iqbal relating to homelessness prevention, Mr Robinson explained that it was very much concentrating on trying to prevent people becoming homeless and detailed the various ways of intervention highlighting that it was not just involving housing association issues, adding that homeless was a very significant issue for the city and that a



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great deal of effort and energy went into trying to prevent homelessness occurring.

In response to a question from Councillor Choudhry relating to homelessness and timescales, Mr Robinson stated that once a person was deemed homeless the City Council had 30 days in order to make a decision as to whether they had a duty to house them.

Following concern from Councillor Choudhry relating to properties that had been re-let twice, Mr Robinson agreed to take details after the meeting and investigate.

In response to a question from Councillor Tilsley relating to what the City were doing in actively promoting long term flats, Mr Robinson explained the various ways in which they were promoting the properties which included; advertising locally and the organising of 'open days'. He reported on a local exercise that had been undertaken in Washwood Heath which had successfully resulted in letting 4 long term voids within the area.

In response to an enquiry from the Chairman relating to the neighbourhood challenge and the concerns in Yardley that were felt high priorities, Mr Robinson referred to various issues which included; quad bikes, speeding, fly-tipping and general rubbish disposal. He highlighted the importance of neighbourhood forums which encouraged local residents to become more involved within their community.

Councillor Dad referred to the criteria process whereby families had multiple issues and in this instance the need for a more holistic approach in order that all the relevant organisations could be brought together to address all of the needs. He stated that although applications often highlighted the needs they were not always picked up by officers.

Mr Robinson referred to the several reviews that were now being undertaken which included the allocation system whereby they were looking to make improvements. He detailed the difficulties in picking up various issues which at times could be somewhat subjective however agreed that it required everybody working together in order to achieve a better outcome.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mr Robinson for attending the meeting and reporting.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

303

### **RESOLVED:-**

That the report and comments be noted.

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## **YARDLEY DISTRICT PLACE MANAGERS – UPDATE**

The following information was submitted from the Place Managers, Acocks Green Ward and Sheldon Wards:-

(See document No. 7)

The Chairman referred to the information and highlighted that the work undertaken had been extremely good. Councillor Dad made reference to Mr D Prosser, South Yardley Ward who had also achieved some excellent work and that they were currently working together on the Community Plan.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

304

**RESOLVED:-**

That the information be noted.

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**FOX HOLLIES LEISURE CENTRE AND STECHFORD CASCADES UPDATE**

Mr D Wagg provided an update by stating that in March 2015 the City Council had awarded 2 contracts for North and South of the city to Circo Operating Limited. These contracts commenced on 1 June 2015 whereupon the 15 year partnership included the transfer of 8 existing sport and leisure facilities. These included; Fox Hollies Leisure Centre, Stechford Cascades, Wyndley, Erdington and Beeches Pools.

It was noted that there would be a substantial investment in all of the facilities including 3 replacement builds which were; Erdington, Northfield and Stechford and a brand new build in Ladywood.

The capital development in Yardley would be the replacement of Stechford Cascades and the significant refurbishment of Fox Hollies Leisure Centre. It was noted that the replacement of Stechford would remain on the existing site and at present, fortnightly meetings were ongoing with BCC planning officers and sporting design consultants in order to agree the final design for that particular facility, before going out to public consultation and then for onward submission to Planning Committee.

The facility was due to open in April 2017 and was on target for that date with the existing facility remaining open up until the new facility opened. Fox Hollies Leisure Centre refurbishment would be completed by March 2016 which would include the replacement of the current external gym and all of the changing and reception areas. Options were being explored with Property Services and discussions taking place with Nine Stiles Academy regarding the corridor and office space that would be part of the refurbishment of the development. For both schemes, when designs were available, they would be on public display in order to provide an opportunity for all customers to comment.

In response to the Chairman's comment that elected members should have an earlier involvement in the schemes, Mr Wagg wholeheartedly agreed and stated that they were currently developing a consultation and communication plan alongside Circo Leisure that would involve councillors before plans were submitted into the public arena. Once discussions had taken place with the councillors the plans would then be submitted for public display.

In response to Councillor Dad's comments relating to a women's only swimming pool, play area provision and community room, Mr Wagg confirmed that within all the new designs, one of the requirements was to look at the ethnicity of the local community and where there was a requirement to "curtain off" certain sections of the pool in order that they could be used by particular user groups, highlighting that this would be available in all of the new builds. He further confirmed that the current play area would be removed and replaced in the future which was a BCC requirement rather than through the new contract. With regard to the provision of a community room he confirmed that this was already incorporated within the design.

In response to Councillor Jones concerns regarding the park, Mr Wagg stated that in most cases when parks were being replaced they often required a significant amount of new equipment and agreed that the park should remain in a position where it could be easily seen.

Following comments from the Chairman to consider providing a library provision within the building and the necessity to meet with local councillors before the plans were agreed, Mr Wagg agreed to discuss and set up meetings with councillors as soon as possible. He confirmed that at present although there was no provision for a library, the developers were still in the very early stages of working through the design.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mr Wagg for his update.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

305

**RESOLVED:-**

That the update and comments be noted.

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE**

306

Upon suggestions from the Chairman regarding the above-mentioned item, following a discussion with members they were of the opinion that the challenge should address education, skills, employment and training.

Mr Hussain referred to the district convention and the feedback relating to skills, employment and training. In addressing these areas he referred to the discussion that had taken place in looking to set up a working group and inviting large employers, local authority officers and representatives from local schools on board. One of the issues discussed was that with any housing developments the local planning officers could possibly identify opportunities for training and apprenticeships for local people. Reference was made to the local directory in the district that identified local training providers.

Mr Hussain made reference to the short/medium and long term challenges that could be achieved and the "quick wins" within the employment, skills and training. The Chairman made reference to the ideas that had been discussed and recorded previously which included the setting up of local opportunity fairs

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and the suggestion of a Yardley job fair held in a local school hall whereupon local employers and young people could meet possibly meet.

She concluded that at least there were ideas and information already formulated that could be built on in order to address the district neighbourhood challenge.

Councillor Tilsley made reference to district committees being held at the Council House which lacked any community engagement and expressed his disappointment as he had had a tacit understanding that they would again be held out in the district, which the Chairman believed was also the case.

In response to the above, Councillor Stacey confirmed that if district meetings continued to be formally clerked then the most efficient and cost effective way for them to be held would be in the Council House.

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### **NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM GRANTS APPROVAL – 2014/15**

The following grants were submitted for formal approval:-

#### **ACOCKS GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM GRANT 2014-15**

The following report of Yardley District Lead was submitted:-

(See document No. 8

Upon further consideration it was:-

307

#### **RESOLVED:-**

That the District Committee recognised Acocks Green Neighbourhood Forum and notes their annual report and accounts and requested the Neighbourhood Forum to continue to provide representation to Acocks Green Ward Committee and partnerships as appropriate.

That the District Committee authorised the award of a grant of £800 to be paid from the 2015/16 Neighbourhood Forum Grant budget to Acocks Green Neighbourhood Forum for the financial year ending 2014-2015, to help with running costs. The award of grant was subject to Acocks Green Neighbourhood Forum meeting the Council's Condition of Grant Aid terms and conditions. This grant comes from the Neighbourhood Forum Mainstream Grants allocation and not Ward Committee allocations.

That the District Committee requests that the Neighbourhood Forum provides advance notification of its next Annual General Meeting to the Neighbourhood Forums' Link Officer so that assistance can be given in advertising the meeting to all residents

That the District Committee authorise the Neighbourhood Forum Link Officer to process the grant in accordance with Conditions of Grant Aid procedures and the City Council's Financial Regulations, as appropriate.

**EAST YARDLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM GRANT**

The following report of Yardley District Lead was submitted:-

(See document No. 9)

Upon further consideration it was:-

308

**RESOLVED:-**

That the District Committee recognised East Yardley Neighbourhood Forum and notes their annual report and accounts and request the Neighbourhood Forum to continue to provide representation to Stechford and Yardley North Ward Committee and partnerships as appropriate.

That the District Committee authorise the award of a grant of £1000 to be paid from the 2015/16 Neighbourhood Forum Grant budget to East Yardley Neighbourhood Forum for the financial year ending 2014-15, to help with running costs. The award of grant is subject to East Yardley Neighbourhood Forum meeting the Council's Condition of Grant Aid terms and conditions. This grant comes from the Neighbourhood Forum Mainstream Grants allocation and not Ward Committee allocations.

That the District Committee requests that the Neighbourhood Forum provides advance notification of its next Annual General Meeting to the Neighbourhood Forums' Link Officer so that assistance can be given in advertising the meeting to all residents.

That the District Committee authorise the Neighbourhood Forum Link Officer to process the grant in accordance with Conditions of Grant Aid procedures and the City Council's Financial Regulations, as appropriate.

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**FOX HOLLIES NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM GRANT**

The following report of Yardley District Lead was submitted:-

(See document No. 10)

Upon further consideration it was:-

309

**RESOLVED:-**

That the District Committee recognises Fox Hollies Neighbourhood Forum and notes their annual report and accounts and request the Neighbourhood Forum to continue to provide representation to Acocks Green Ward Committee and partnerships as appropriate.

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That the District Committee authorised the award of a grant of £1200 to be paid from the 2015/16 Neighbourhood Forum Grant budget to Fox Hollies Neighbourhood Forum for the financial year ending 2014-15, to help with running costs. The award of grant is subject to Fox Hollies Neighbourhood Forum meeting the Council's Condition of Grant Aid terms and conditions. This grant comes from the Neighbourhood Forum Mainstream Grants allocation and not Ward Committee allocations.

That the District Committee requests that the Neighbourhood Forum provides advance notification of its next Annual General Meeting to the Neighbourhood Forums' Link Officer so that assistance can be given in advertising the meeting to all residents.

That the District Committee authorise the Neighbourhood Forum Link Officer to process the grant in accordance with Conditions of Grant Aid procedures and the City Council's Financial Regulations, as appropriate.

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### **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

310 The following schedule of meetings was noted:-

All meetings will be held on the following **Thursdays at 1330 hours in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham:**

**1 October 2015 (Room 6)**

**28 January (Room 2)**

**19 November (Room 2)**

**24 March (Room 2)**

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### **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

#### **FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

311 Mr Hussain reported that the District Chairman and Vice-Chairman had had some training on future governance. He stated that before he left his present role, he would be meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to discuss the potential governance structures with regard to Wards.

He confirmed that he should like to meet members individually to discuss how they would like to continue with the ward arrangements in order that they could be included within the plans and suggested to meet next week to also discuss training needs.

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### **AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

312 **RESOLVED:-**

In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 15:30 hours.

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CHAIRMAN