

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**NORTHFIELD DISTRICT
COMMITTEE SCRUTINY
FRIDAY, 22 JANUARY 2016**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE SCRUTINY HELD ON FRIDAY 22 JANUARY 2016 AT 1400 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Councillor Peter Griffiths in the Chair; Councillors Booton, Brew, Cartwright, Clancy, Cruise, Freeman, Jevon and Seabright.

ALSO PRESENT: -

Richard Burden, Member of Parliament, Northfield Constituency
Councillor Samuel Goodwin, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council
Ruth Cooke, Midland Heart Housing Association
Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead
Inspector Dean Gordon, West Midlands Police
Robert James, Housing, Place
Mark Rogers, Contract Team Manager, Capital Investment Team
Errol Wilson, Committee Manager

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 236 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.

APOLOGIES

- 237 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Peter Douglas Osborn, Brett O'Reilly and Jess Phillips.

NORTHFIELD DISTRICT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE

1. Terms of Reference and Workshop Feedback

- 238 Councillor Steve Booton (Lead Member, ASB Neighbourhood Challenge) stated that it was felt that by taking up the issue of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), it may help to

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

improve services, performance and peoples' lives in Northfield by doing simple and effective things. One target from the Challenge was to bring together social housing providers which include the Council and various housing associations to try and solve the problem by sharing information, resources etc. He added that he had spoken with housing associations, the police and others to *drum up* support for the Workshop that was held on Thursday 14 January 2016. The Workshop was a success as there were 28 people in attendance, a number of housing associations and the Police. The discussion was centred on ASB, but the aims of the Neighbourhood Challenge were relatively limited and were as follows:

- The purpose of the project was to improve performance in respect of dealing with ASB across all tenures, sharing information and working together.
- To use the resources of the Police, social and private landlords and the City Council more effectively and to share ideas and examples of good practice. In speaking with social housing providers, one of the things that came through before the Workshop was held, was the idea of defining what ASB was and what social landlords could and could not do concerning ASB.
- Discussions were held concerning the issues at the Workshop and a report would be submitted later.

2. Witnesses: -

a) West Midlands Police

Inspector Dean Gordon, West Midlands Police made the following statements: -

1. From the Police point of view on the south Birmingham area, ASB had been a priority for a number of years and it had been a local priority. As a result of this the Police had developed a clear strategy by the way the Police had dealt with ASB in that area which had allowed them to reduce the demand for ASB over the last four years.
2. The key message was what the Police had learnt and what they knew. Working together and sharing information together helped to address ASB. This was the only way it had effectively been dealt with. When they received report that came to the Police, the variety of these reports would entail different things from low level nuisance behaviour to those bordering on criminal behaviour. There was no *one cap fits all* approach in dealing with ASB.
3. The Neighbourhood Teams took ownership of all ASB related reports which were attended, recorded, investigated and assessed in terms of risk. Often, these would be dealt with in the first instance by using a tactical approach and gathering information to ascertain who was responsible.
4. It was at this point that they would need to work with others, ascertain which housing association was involved, what the background information was from the partner agencies concerning the individuals involved. Often, the things that were reported to the Police, they could not arrest for unless they fall within the arena of a criminal offence.

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

5. The Police could not arrest their way out and they needed to share the information that came in to the Police. Quite often it was found that they would have weeks or months of data coming from others about the same issue from other people that had contacted the City Council about the same issue, but had given different information. By putting this information together, they were able to formulate an objective as to where they were looking to go with the problem.
6. At the Workshop that was held on the 14 January 2016, it was easy to see how this could be provided as a vehicle. A case study was discussed as a typical one in relation to an address in Northfield where there were countless reports of ASB.
7. The local Neighbourhood Sergeant received 15 – 20 emails per week concerning the issue from residents. This was not just from the Police, but it was going to the Council by separate reports. It was only by contacting the local Housing and the Council and putting this together and then identifying a single point of contact for these that the Sergeant involved was able to get a clearer idea of who was responsible. Three families were involved and what they did in the pass and what they were going to do, the outcome being that some of those families were diverted into alternative employment assistance and others who were hardliners. With the Police and Councils involvement others would stop behaving in an anti-social way.
8. The key message from the Police was that there was a clear strategy for dealing with ASB and this would only start to work once it was known who were involved so they could start sharing that information and working on it.
9. In terms of best practice, where there were criminal offences, clearly, they had to be dealt with and the Police had to ensure that their partners were aware that the Police had taken the lead concerning the criminal matters and were getting those resolved. They ensure that they identify opportunities that may have incorrectly being classed as ASB and were criminal matters that needed to be dealt with.
10. Where there were no criminal matters, it was about ensuring that they had the right pathways for people involved, working closer with Offender Management regarding any programmes that they had in place that could divert people involved in that area. Anything the Police could not resolve, the Safer Communities Group meeting had been very effective in ensuring that if nothing else, the information discussed was openly available to everyone who could pick it up and say you may not be aware, but we knew about this and would be willing to contribute or offer their assistance around it. There was a clear strategy, but it was about working together.

Inspector Gordon, Mr James and Ms Cooke in response to questions from Members, made the following points:-

- (a) Neighbourhood Watch was important to the agenda of Community Safety and ASB. They had an opportunity that when they review their operations, they tried to join up the various meetings. Rather than creating meetings, and layers of walkabouts, and attempt to tackle Community Safety and ASB, they needed to join some of these things up.

- (b) There was currently a review of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and the local delivery aspect was part of this review and this would be picked up. It was not suggest that any of these meetings be stopped as they were created by residents, but they needed to find a mechanism by which they could support them. The information concerning ASB was shared with each other.
- (c) Meetings such as these were useful for Housing Association officers to attend, but they could not promise that they could send an officer to every meeting. They were a useful way to get engaged in understanding what happened and to share information.
- (d) Information was shared and was one of the standard procedures they conduct on pre-tenancy. Their experience was that this was one of the reasons evictions was only ever a last resort for ASB as so often this could result in a problem just being shifted about. It was thought that there were better ways to intervene.
- (e) In terms of the case study mentioned earlier, the Neighbourhood Watch was instrumental at the early stage to take on what was just being termed as noise and that it did not make sense to having just one single point of contact. That point of contact was the Neighbourhood Watch in that area that had proved valuable.
- (f) Neighbourhood Watch was something the Police should get involved with and that perhaps the message could be passed to officers. It may have started off with a Sergeant attending, then a Constable and then a PCSO and then there were meetings where no one had attended. A request was that this be emphasised as it was valued by Members and they would wish to continue.
- (g) Regarding the Safer Group meetings, he was invited to a number of meetings but on checking with colleagues they could not recalled being invited to a Safer Group meeting. This would be something that they would be interested in as they were interested in playing their role as partners in trying to solve the ASB problem in the area.
- (h) Sharing information was important as an ASB offender could offend in one particular tenure and then move onto another. There was a need to have open dialogue with all the partners who provide housing in the area to ensure that all the facts were known. They needed to identify those who move around. They had a duty to rehoused them, but not in a luxury property. The sharing of information was important.
- (i) As Councillors, they were conscious of the fact that people came to them and had had dealings with the Housing Association or Housing Officers of the City Council and they feel that they had been dealt with poorly or unfairly. Often, they had been dealt with fairly, but as they did not like the decision, they would contact their Elected Representative thinking that they might be a *soft touch*.
- (j) It was needed to speak with each other more to ensure they did not get drawn into that situation and that they were working in concert with partners, rather than sometimes against them.

- (k) Mr James stated that dealing with the expectations of the outcome of the report of the ASB, was important. They had dealt with ASB cases on vulnerability and the seriousness of the offence. This was the matrix being used when they could have the most impact on their neighbourhoods and communities. Partners would welcome some dialogue with Members concerning some of their responses to constituents.
- (l) The Data Protection Act was not an issue for sharing information with partner agencies. They had data sharing agreements which they had all signed and agreed to sharing that information and they did this on a daily basis. Concerns were with private landlords as they did not know what tenants were coming in or had information about them, before offering them a tenancy.
- (m) In a number of places, there was the Safer Estates Groups that worked with the Police effectively. If this was not happening locally, there was a problem, but one thing that this area had pioneered that worked, but was of a different context, the question was whether they could learn something from the Police and School's Panel in Northfield.
- (n) All the schools were involved and met on a quarterly basis. They were task focused and had picked up the trend on what was happening in schools, what the issues were that were coming out whether they be issues of difficulty that affected young people or good practice amongst schools and young people. Things that the Police was trying to get across in relation to drugs etc. The question was whether there was a lesson they could learn from something like tackling ASB on a network similar to this.

(Councillor Cruise declared his non-pecuniary interest in HMP Birmingham in terms of releases from courts and prisons)– Resources for dealing with ASB

- (o) Ms Cooke advised that in terms of sharing best practice and information, like all Housing Associations in the City, they were members of Birmingham Social Housing Partnership which did a number of good works to bring together a number of Housing Associations and the City Council and operates at a strategic level.
- (p) Birmingham Social Housing Partnership had a number of sub-groups and working groups which operates effectively at that operational level, but involved the officers who worked on the ground. They came together to share information and best practice. The measure of success of these groups was that people keep coming back to them because they knew that they had achieved something. They were happy to learn from other sectors if there were things they could do to improve that.
- (q) Inspector Gordon stated that in terms of releases from Prisons, the local Police Neighbourhood Team was always notified of all releases onto their area. They assessed the threat risk and harm and there was information sharing depending on the type of threat or risk posed.
- (r) Regarding the Schools Panel this was an excellent vehicle as it worked well and would be good to have something similar. The only question was the practicality of how this would work and who would attend as it was simpler in

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

terms of the schools as the Panel was represented by each school in the local area. The question was whether if this was replicated who would attend as they were talking about a similar thing for all Housing Associations in the area or something different to that. It was felt that this could only exist with the Safer Community Group meetings.

- (s) Rob James advised that they had some mechanism for engaging with the Schools Panel through the local Safety Community Partnership and to learn from the information given. With regard to resources, the south of the City probably had the most Social Housing stock, closely followed by the east and then Central and west then the north. In relation to resources in dealing with ASB, it was dependent on the number of cases they had, but Northfield had more resources than the other four areas.
- (t) A member of the HLB stated that there were different issues to different people some of which were trivial and some which were important. There was also the matter of to whom they were reported, example, violence. When you got onto noise, the question was who would deal with this and bikes on footpaths.
- (u) It was decided that as a Housing Liaison Board (HLB), enough was not known and they had to clarify what those issues were, to whom they should be reported etc. They were looking to get this information and would be putting this on their websites. They were well supported by their Police Sergeant who had attended all their Neighbourhood Watch/Tasking meetings. This issue would be raised at the next District Strategic Housing Panel.
- (v) Inspector Gordon advised that in terms of mediation, the feedback was that where this was used, it worked well. This was offered early on as they knew that it works, but people did not always take the opportunity and had taken the position that they would not get involved.
- (w) What they were asking people to do was to iron out their differences by sitting them together in a room and asking them through the agencies. Whether or not they could enforce this was probably less of a question as to whether they could be effective. If people were not engaged to come forward the question would be what the point was in confronting them with each other. The result may not be effective if people were forced into mediation and would build up resentment, than if they were given the opportunity to speak with each other in a controlled environment.
- (x) In relation to Community Trigger, this was effectively a way if people had reported matters to the Police or local Council (subject to whole list of criteria) and they did not feel satisfied with the service from the Police or Council, they could request a Community Trigger. This was effectively calling the agencies together – the Police local Council and anyone else involved to review the case. This was mandatory if the Community Trigger criteria were met, they had to review the case. This was a well laid out path in terms of resolving the issue to their satisfaction. There was an appeals process that followed this.

b) Midland Heart Housing Association

Ruth Cooke, Chief Executive, Midland Heart Housing Association made the following statements: -

- i. Midland Heart was one of the larger Housing Associations working in the City and was operating across the Midlands with 35,000 properties. They had looked at the past two years at the number of cases of ASB they had reported to them and this was just over 2,000 cases.
- ii. Currently officers across the patch had just over 200 open cases encompassing a complete range of incidences from very low littering, low level noise, neighbour nuisances, neighbours who could not get on with each other through to serious criminal behaviour. They had a range of ways of dealing with those levels of behaviour.
- iii. Eviction was a last resort and of the 2,000 cases they had reported to them in the last two years, 12 of these had ended up in an eviction order due to the risk of shifting the problem elsewhere.
- iv. In their experience, the things that could help to deal with ASB were some of their Housing Management policies and procedures. They were looking at a range of processes at the first stage of how they dealt with the report of ASB. If it comes into them and they recognised that for many of their tenants and neighbourhoods, not all reports were coming to them in the first instance. Where they did, it was recognised that there were a number of things that they could do.
- v. A lot of what they did was about being clear as to what was and was not ASB. When they had looked at what was and was not ASB, if it was deemed to prove a breach of tenancy conditions and what was simply inconsiderate behaviour which was not a breach of tenancy condition.
- vi. They owe it to their customers and to those living in the neighbourhood to be clear whether this was ASB, whether this was a case where they thought they could do something to help or whether they should emphasise peoples' personal responsibility for some issues.
- vii. There were some issues that people needed to be supported to deal with themselves. There was something at being very clear and up front and there was a huge body of evidence that speaks of early intervention as being by far the best way to deal with things.
- viii. The power of having a Housing Officer point out to a customer that their behaviour was causing annoyance and stress to their neighbour and neighbourhood should not be understated. This could work effectively at some low level cases.
- ix. Where there were more entrenched problems they were now looking at two areas of work. They did not have dedicated ASB officers; they had officers working in their Tenancy Standard Team who deal with breaches of tenancy which might be justified in severing the tenancy.

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

- x. They were in the process of introducing two teams – A People Team and a Place Team. Each of these teams would look at different aspect of ASB. The People Team would look at the complex people issues that could manifest themselves into ASB that may be caused by a range of underlying factors. They would look at neighbour nuisance, disputes and the most serious manifestation of ASB.
- xi. Their role was to work with statutory agencies where this was appropriate to deal with the underlying issues that were causing ASB. It was this team that had been doing the work around the *Restorative Justice Pilot* Midland Heart was involved in that was discussed at the Workshop on the 14 January 2016.
- xii. What Restorative Justice did in appropriate cases was to look to rebuild relationships with those who had been harmed by ASB and those who had caused the harm and to seek to resolve the matter in that way. It was not a panacea and was not suitable in all cases of ASB, but where appropriate, it could deliver some remarkable result. They were looking at having run a pilot how they mainstreamed this into their service which was the people aspect of ASB.
- xiii. The Place Team was designed to deal with some of the issues on the neighbourhood such as littering, graffiti etc. This team was looking at how they could manage a neighbourhood effectively that people wanted to live in and one that people take pride in and did not contribute to some of the problems that could arise.
- xiv. They were looking at a range of things including whether it was appropriate for Midland Heart as a Housing Association to have Community Protection Notice Powers to deal with such things as the Take-Away whose customers caused littering problems in the area amongst a range of interventions as ASB was such a broad topic.
- xv. They were willing to train staff in helping and developing Restorative Justice in Northfield District if funding was available.

c) Housing

Robert James, Service Director, Housing Transformation, Place gave the following context: -

- a) ASB means different things to different people. They had to deal with ASB and categorise it. The City Council's Customer Contact Centre received on average around 40,000 calls relating to ASB every year. The Police probably received similar amounts of calls. This was the context around what people considered to be ASB. These range from simple low level environmental type issues to serious criminal activities that go on within our communities.
- b) From a Housing perspective in Birmingham City Council Housing, they probably dealt with 6,000 of the 40,000 calls per year. The rest was around noise issues, environmental type issues dealt with by Fleet and Waste Management, littering etc. At any one time staffs in Housing were dealing with 900 – 1,200 cases.

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

- c) In Northfield District there were currently 131 live cases. They work on the basis of case management per ASB and they try to identify and assess at the earliest possible stage the risk to individuals and the impact of ASB on the wider community and neighbourhood. They had developed an ASB risk matrix jointly with West Midlands Police that they were both using to determine how they should deal with a case.
- d) They had integrated the handling of ASB into the Housing Officer remit. They no longer had a separate team that deals with just ASB, but they had subject matter experts within each of the four areas within the City and more serious cases could be escalated to the subject matter experts.
- e) Key to dealing with this problem was working together and in partnership. There were good examples of where they work in partnership with Birmingham Social Housing Partnership and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership. Locally the Safer Communities Groups had the most effective partnership arrangements when dealing with specific cases of ASB. These groups were chaired by Peter Henrick, West Midlands Police. West Midlands Fire Service was a good attendee at the Safer Communities Group and they deal with individual cases at that group.
- f) One of the good things that came out of these partnership arrangements across the City was that they also used the shared IT database for case management. The Police, Fire Service, Birmingham Housing and Social Housing Partnership providers had access to the IT database so that they knew who was dealing with an individual or family when they came to any issues.
- g) Safer Communities were the multi-agency route for dealing with cases in terms of improving things. How they determine which agency would deal with what first was something that would come out of the Neighbourhood Challenge. The publishing of who would deal with what in the first instance which was important.
- h) There were various levels of ASB, Neighbourhood Tasking meetings where there were particular issues in neighbourhoods, whether this was from the low level littering to serious ASB or criminal activity. This was the opportunity for Elected Members and members of the community to get involved and to report things through to the neighbourhood tasking group. On a wider community safety delivery aspect, the local community safety partnership i.e. Local Delivery Groups were supported by housing officers.
- i) At the higher end of ASB and criminal activity, they operate jointly with West Midlands Police an initiative called Tackling Families Undermining Neighbourhoods (TFUN) which was a mechanism for getting together to deal with more serious criminal activity. This had been successful in dealing with a number of injunctions at a citywide level and organised criminal activities that operates within the neighbourhoods. Early interventions were important before the ASB became a problem.
- j) From a City Council Housing perspective, they had signed up to deliver part of the City Council's Think Family programme and were engaged with over 500 families currently and were putting in early intervention mechanisms for those

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

families in an attempt to ensure that they did not escalate into serious ASB or criminal activities.

- k) In relation to Community Trigger, this was developed in October 2013 with Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, West Midlands Police and Birmingham City Council Housing. From this meeting they would ensure that Elected Members were reminded of the Community Trigger process. The process allows members of the public or local Councillors to alert them to activity or where they feel ASB had been reported, but was not dealt with.
- l) There were criteria that activate a Community Trigger and the first Community Trigger that was activated was in Northfield. If the constituent or the Elected Member was not happy with the outcome of that, there was an appeal mechanism which goes in the first instance to the South Communities Group for a review and if the outcome was not satisfactory, it would be escalated to the Birmingham Communities Safety Partnership.
- m) They could always improve, they did not always get things right, but they do on a number of occasions picked up a lot of things that they did to the benefit of communities.
- n) In Northfield District, they were successful in getting 4 injunctions against young males who were consistently causing nuisance and annoyance to a large part of the community. Any enforcement action of this kind always rely on witness statements and if they needed to do more was probably getting confidence in the community that when they report these serious ASB incidence, that they would be supported in providing that witness statement and giving evidence to Housing or to the courts.
- o) They had an incidence with a tenant who had substance misuse and they had provided a raft of support for that individual, which unfortunately did not prevent a reoccurrence of his ASB. As a last resort, the individual was evicted and Housing had repossessed the property.
- p) A private tenant had caused ASB over a number of years to various tenants of Birmingham City Council and was subject to an injunction and committal proceedings. This took a lot of perseverance, but it was discovered at the end of the support process that the individual did not had the mental capacity to live independently. The result was that through support workers, they were able to rehouse the individual into supported accommodation.
- q) One of the new initiatives they did in Northfield was on a new estate under a new development by Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT). There was no real community spirit there and it could be seen that if that community was left alone, they could get some tensions in there as nobody knew each other. They developed a good neighbourhood agreement with the tenants in that area which worked well in bringing the community together to understand where people had come from and to determine what it was to be a good neighbour.
- r) There were 63,000 Council houses in Birmingham. There were 68,000 houses in the private sector which was a growing market. There were 40,000 Housing Association properties within the City. If they wanted to tackle key

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

priority issues such as ASB, they could only do this together. It was known that in the main the private rented sector landlords, they also knew who their colleagues were from the Housing Associations and they worked well together as housing providers.

- s) They worked well with West Midlands Police in tackling some of the issues and they were pleased to say that they had submitted a bid to the Government to assist with dealing with some of the not so good landlords – private or otherwise – and they were given a share of the £5m that had been made available nationally to tackle some of these rogue landlords. There was a limit of £90k plus to local authorities, but Birmingham had £110k as they thought that Birmingham's bid was worthy of pursuing. They had the funds today and would be pursuing the rogue landlords and the ASB their tenants were causing.

In response to questions from Members, Mr James made the following statements: -

- i. In relation to the Community Trigger, he was disappointed that this was not in the public domain as much as it should be. He undertook to ensure that this information was sent to all Elected Members. He noted Councillor Brew's comment concerning the Market Place event prior to City Council and that this would be used to alert Members in March 2016 around the new Repairs and Maintenance Contract. If they could schedule something in for April 2016 for this he would try and get this done.
- ii. When newly Elected Members come on board, they always do a New Members Induction programme to ensure that new Members would be made aware who was dealing with what.
- iii. In terms of noise nuisance, this would go to Environmental Health in the first instance. The Environmental Health officers would normally deal with noise issues, but the suggestion would be taken on board to look at the one point of contact. The reason Environmental Health could be dealing with this was that it could be industrial noise nuisance etc. and they were the experts with dealing with noise nuisance.
- iv. In relation to case management and what got dealt with, cases were dealt with both on vulnerability and risk. The vulnerability of individuals was taken into account when dealing with cases. Example was where someone with a health issue and they had to find another route to deal with that individual.
- v. TFUN and Think Family were two separate initiatives. TFUN was funded through the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and was an initiative between West Midlands Police and Birmingham Housing. What TFUN did was to disrupt organised crime and high level criminal activity in the community by working with a number of agencies that include HMRC, Benefit Services, Border Agency Control in some instances and was operation that was Police led, but utilising City Council resource and the system and knowledge as to who lived in the City Council properties who was claiming benefits, Council Tax etc.
- vi. Think Family was part of a Government funded initiative for troubled family. This was to create early intervention to help families before they get into

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

difficulties and before they get as far as enforcement and sanctions being applied. This was very effective for families that wanted to sign up for support and assistance. Where the City Council had identified families who had difficulties and did not sign up to the support and help being offered, the City Council would take it down to the enforcement route and had done so.

- vii. With regard to unannounced visits, a series of annual visits were undertaken throughout all their neighbourhood programmes. They were trying to get to the 63,000 properties at least once per year. Through Housing's contractors, they had visited all their properties for gas servicing as they had to do this by law every year, but they also wanted to do an annual visit to all their Council tenants to assist where they could to ensure that the right amount of support was given and to pick up issues around rent arrears and any vulnerable or safeguarding issues; assist with benefit claims where necessary.
- viii. They were successful in identifying other issues with tenants and on this agenda they had discovered through the annual visiting programme a number of cannabis factories in Northfield which they had had some success with the Police in closing these down.
- ix. They would take account of any previous behaviour in case management of any tenant. What they could do in case management was to look at not only the property and the events at the property, but also the events that surround an individual. They had a lot of success working in partnership, but there was always more that they could do and learn.
- x. Inspector Morgan stated that the Neighbourhood Tasking meetings had not stopped in terms of cart Blanche. He advised that he was aware that in some areas there was some organisation change and it was uncertain whether this was the reason behind it. He stated that what he was aware of was that in some areas there was zero attendance whilst in others, the Tasking meetings were well attended and this was what had dictated whether they carried on or not. He could not say that these meetings would be reinstated. When it came to ASB as a matter of course they visit people if they had a report of ASB in a particular road in a particular area.
- xi. They would target and canvas that area and would go to people and say that they had report of ASB in that area and all the local residents would be given the opportunity to say whether or not they concur or not on what their impression of this was. They were getting the same, but better information as they were effectively taking the meeting to them.
- xii. Where the Tasking meetings still exist there was still an appetite and he was happy to keep the meetings in place if there was an appetite. He had heard some great things about the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators in the first week and it would be disappointing to think that was being missed somewhere as a result of those going. This would be taken back to ensure there was some where for people to contact and ensuring continuity.
- xiii. Bruce Pitt, Housing Liaison Board (HLB) representative stated that there were things which the voluntary sector could do which the Council could not do. The local HLB, Neighbourhood Watch, Police and Street Champions had on a

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

project they were working on currently, whereby using HLB money they were hoping to put up bollards, trip rails etc. to stop a particular problem.

- xiv. Another thing they were looking at was the refuse bins. If they could persuade Housing, they would put some waste bins on their walkways and would empty them. They would use HLB money to buy these bins. This was the sort of thinking they were considering. They were aware that there were rules and regulations but they would do this from the voluntary sector. Voluntary mediation for some of the low level stuff was another idea that they could perhaps develop.
- xv. Inspector Morgan noted Councillor Goodwin, Frankley in Birmingham Councillor's concerns regarding the rogue motor cyclist and advised that the Police was aware that this was an issue in Frankley concerning these off road motor cycle in a number of parks in south Birmingham. He stated that this was a difficult thing to Police and that there were rules. In short they could turn up at the location and where they were was not always the best way to deal with the issue as it becomes a sport for these rogue cyclists. What works was finding out through community information who they were, where they live so that they could go to their home addresses and deal with the issue. They needed a better way to say who was responsible for this and would take it back to work out what they could do.
- xvi. In terms of the travellers there were some processes in place which worked well when travellers go onto land that they should not be on. This was a hybrid response and if there were any crime reported in the area that falls under the Police who would deal with the issue. The City Council was effective in dealing with the land issue side of things.
- xvii. Mr James advised that they had legal processes to follow concerning the eviction of illegal encampments. The officer responsible liaises with the travelling community and was effective in moving them on within the period stipulated in the legislation.
- xviii. In terms of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) as Director of Housing, he did not just have the responsibility for Council houses for the City Council, but also the responsibility for PRS and the local delivery of ASB and Community Safety. He valued the contribution they received from the voluntary sector.
- xix. In terms of putting the information out to the wider community concerning the rogue bikes, this was what they did i.e. finding them and crushing them. They will not be seen scrambling around on the fields. They did not get the rogue bikes at the scene, it was going back. It was about getting the publicity out to the public that if they were going to use the rogue bikes they were going to lose them. Social media was one of the strands that they were looking at in terms of putting the message out around discouragement of their use.
- xx. With regard to ASB on Northfield high Street, the issue was what constitutes ASB and what did not. The issues picked up on the High Street were usually a criminal offence or a public order offence or some drunken related activity which had led to a criminal offence. This would not automatically go back to Housing as the Police would deal with this issue immediately. What would come under the greater ASB was if there were on-going issues on Northfield

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

High Street with particular people. The Police would then look at taking this back to look at who they were, where they live, the problems they were causing in the local area. This was what they would take back and starts working with Housing etc., to look at why they were causing issues in the local area.

- xxi. There had been reports of people drinking in Northfield High Street and whether there was the appetite to deal with these individuals were the cases the Police picked up and took back to the businesses which the Police would deal with. Equally a request was made to provide some support and that support was not there. There was no appetite to give any statement as they did not wish to get involved, which had led to the question as to whether they were causing issues. The Police tied to deal with this as an ASB issue.

3. Summing Up and Next Step: -

Richard Davies, Northfield District Head stated that the Neighbourhood Challenge was an important piece of work and was a new piece of work following the constitutional changes that were instituted in May 2015. It was about reviewing and improving the delivery of services and this role was linked to the new role of District Committees in terms of providing leadership and facilitating improved partnership working at a local level.

Councillor Booton advised that there was a fantastic amount of good work that was going on in Northfield in terms of ASB. The Workshop event that was held on the 14 January 2016 had 28 people in attendance from a number of organisations – to discuss one issue and new outcomes together and try to find the way forward. These organisations include:- Birmingham City Council, Midland Heart, Sanctuary Housing Association, Circle Housing, Bournville Village Trust, Bromford Housing, Northfield Community Partnership, West Midlands Police and voluntary groups.

A number of ideas came out of the Workshop and some of the things that had been mentioned this afternoon about what were ASB, dealing with expectations from residents etc. was one of the first points that were raised at the Workshop. There needed to be a move across social landlords, Police etc. to have a more standard approach towards things, not that things were not being done and shared, but it needed to be shared in a more thoughtful and better way.

There were organisations that did not always take references for housing and it was felt strongly by a number of participants at the Workshop that references for new tenants and background checks were essential as to whether people were involved in ASB. This information needed to be shared. If they had background information they may still have housed these tenants but in different areas with a lot more thoughts.

Training and information was also one of the things that was being discussed for Members of Parliament and Councillors as they needed to be keyed into what was and was not possible, what was a reality and not a reality.

A mapping exercise was also discussed and that particularly the Police and Housing Associations and the Council knows who owns what property and in what areas. If there was something that was taking place, that information would be on the spot. It

Northfield District Committee - 22 January 2016

should be up to date and shared. It would be valuable to share new initiatives whether they were successful or unsuccessful. The *Restorative Justice Initiative* from Midland Heart was one of the things that came to mind.

An interim report would be drawn up as it was important having done all this work with partners that those partners were asked what should happen next. The interim report would be presented to the District Committee and it was hope to have some input from partners. One of the recommendations discussed at the Workshop, was to have follow up workshops to ensure that some of the issues discussed was acted upon and seen to a conclusion.

The Chairman commented that it had been a useful afternoon and that they had explored the topic in great depth, adding to the Workshop that they had. He expressed thanks to Inspector Dean Morgan, Ruth Cooke and Robert James on behalf of the Committee and for the commitment they had made to work together in the future.

BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2015/16

Mark Roger, Contract Team Manager, Capital Investment Team introduced the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the Northfield District Capital Environmental Budget Position Statement 2015/16 and the appendices attached to the report.

(See document No. 1)

Councillor Cruise referred to the New Frankley Parish Council in Birmingham the Frankley Centre; approximately £1m worth of funding was spent on refurbishing the Centre in 2010/11. It was currently Housing land and there had been a spate of ram raids on that site. He enquired whether it was possible to spend some of the Environmental Works Budget funds on putting in security bollards to protect the properties and businesses that were currently in occupation at Frankley Centre.

Councillor Brew thanked Mr Rogers for the report and stated that he shared his concerns regarding the slow way in which the money was being dispensed. He was used to seeing report with Appendix 1 having totals on it. He had done a quick calculation, but could not get the figure of £355k that was on Appendix 4. Regarding whether they had a split on a Ward basis, he was not particularly championing subdividing the money down to Wards, but it was necessary to see the Wards where they were spending the money.

Northfield Ward in 2014/15 was the main beneficiary. In the previous year Northfield Ward was down the list and Councillor Seabright stated that they were quite low in 2015/16. Councillor Brew stated that he would personally like to see that they look where they were spending the funds on a year by year basis. He added that it was recognised that there were schemes in Wards that needed more money in one particular year, but they needed to look at the total picture.

Richard Burden, MP referred to the figures in the report and stated that the figures appeared not to have been correct. In terms of distribution of the funding, in his opinion he was not sure that devolving the funds to Wards would be a good idea, but

that he think that there was an issue about double check on the communities. A quick look through the information showed that there may be areas where he could not be expected to spend, but it could be because it had funds the previous year, or it could be that something was coming. There appeared to be concentration in particular areas. This may be the right prioritised scheme, but the issue was whether maybe there was an argument, or may be at each year end to have a review of what had happened, whether there were gaps and then to check if something had been missed. The level of community infrastructure in an area could mean that a neighbourhood needs was not being picked up as they were not sufficiently being plugged into the network that was available.

The Chairman stated that it was recognised that this year the figures had been *skewed* due to the applications that had been submitted and areas that did not submit an application.

In response to a comment by Councillor Freeman, the Chairman stated that the issue in Weoley Ward was whether the Members had liaise with Ruth Bowles, Place Manager and the HLB to get a programme put through. With regard to whether they devolved funds down to the Wards, this could be discussed at the next Committee meeting, but if this was done it would cut the option of investing the money into two or three schemes that was seen as important.

Councillor Clancy stated that when they look at where the money was being spent, the decisions would have been made at the HLBs and some people would link in to where they wanted the work to be done.

The Chairman stated that a lot of the proposals emanated from the HLBs but also from officers and the walkabouts in the areas. It was clear that some areas had missed out in this process and this needed to be rectified.

Mr Davies advised that the key contact was the Place Managers for the Wards. Members needed to speak with their Place Managers and then go from there in considering what might be a relevant scheme and what was already on the list of options of things that might take place.

Bruce stated that as an HLB member, they had to be a bit sharper on what they were doing in terms of the projects. If this was put to the HLB members they needed to be much sharper on what was happening.

The Chairman stated that the critical thing was that it was not decisions being made by the HLB members except for the proposals. The decisions were made by the District Committee. If the Committee was not happy with the decisions they were making, they needed to be doing earlier in the process to ensure that what was presented to the Committee was balanced in the right way.

Councillor Freeman advised that the HLB in Weoley Ward had spent £1000 which would be transferred over to next year's. They had a bigger project for next year that would cost more than what they would receive.

The Chairman advised that the Capital budget had been brought forward in the past when they had an underspend. They had told the officers that they wanted to spend it and they had come up with a proposal which had led to the Committee to be the first District to have actually spent the money within the appropriate time.

Mr Rogers advised that the Frankley Centre project proposal could be considered for next year. He undertook to recalculate the figures and circulate them to Members. In terms of the Capital budget, any work that was in progress, he could request that his finance colleagues accrue this to be carried forward to the next year. The Chairman thanked Mark Rogers for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

It was

239

RESOLVED: -

1. That progress in connection with the projects initiated in 2014/15 and 2015/16 (Appendix 1) be noted.
 2. The process for carrying out improvements using the Environmental Works budget (Appendix 2) be noted.
 3. The criteria for carrying out work via the Environmental Works budget (Appendix 3) be noted.
 4. The budget position statement provided at Appendix 4 be noted.
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AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

240

RESOLVED: -

Chairman to move:-

"That 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 1610 hours.

CHAIRMAN