

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

HALL GREEN DISTRICT COMMITTEE TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2015

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HALL GREEN
DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 17
NOVEMBER 2015 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE
ROOMS 3 & 4, THE COUNCIL HOUSE,
BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT : - Councillor Tony Kennedy in the Chair;

Councillors Barry Bowles, Sam Burden, Claire Spencer, Martin Straker Welds, Mohammed Azim, Victoria Quinn, Jerry Evans, Mohammed Fazal, Habib Rehman.

ALSO PRESENT :-

Karen Cheney – Interim District Head (Hall Green)
Natalie Potter – Housing Manager
Sarah Stride – Committee Manager

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 191 The Chairman advised that the meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press / public may record and take photographs.

The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 192 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kerry Jenkins and Lisa Trickett for their inability to attend the meeting and Councillor Barry Bowles for lateness,

MINUTES

- 193 **RESOLVED:-**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 September 2015, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

RECEIPT OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

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No petitions were submitted.

**BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME
ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2015/16**

The following report of the Strategic Director, Place was circulated at the meeting:-

(See Document No 1)

Councillor Quinn pointed out that the Executive Member as listed on the report circulated was incorrect.

Councillor Spencer raised the issue that currently the Environmental Works Budget was allocated on a Ward basis depending upon the number of housing stock in the given Ward and suggested that maybe the allocated funding would be better utilised if it was recentralised in order to allow each of the Wards in the Hall Green District to spend the budget more strategically on larger projects that would have a noticeable impact in the chosen Ward.

Councillor Jerry Evans expressed concern in relation to the proposed amendment to the future spend of the Environmental Budget as he felt that those Wards with very little social housing will be overlooked in favour of those Wards that had large areas of social housing.

Councillor Burden made reference to Appendix 2 attached to the report and requested that the listed proposed schemes for the Hall Green Ward be deferred until he had had an opportunity to liaise and discuss the schemes with the other two Hall Green Ward Councillors.

Natalie Potter, Housing Manager agreed with comments made and suggested that the paper be submitted to the District Committee on a monthly basis in order to enable Members to comment on individual projects and track the projects implementation and completion.

Councillor Quinn made reference to the proposed Springfield Ward project allocation with regard to the flood risk assessment and stated that Environment Budget funding should not be spent on areas where the housing was owner occupied.

Natalie Potter responded and gave a brief background outline to the current situation with regard to the proposed flood defence project in the Springfield Ward. She clarified that there was an allocation of £74,000 and the Environmental Budget was match funding £14,000. The housing tenure has been fully investigated and the proposal is within the proposed criteria. In response to a follow up question she stated that the option to carry forward finance allocated to a specific Ward can be achieved but that it must be regularly reviewed and monitored as projects requiring finance could be continuously delayed.

It was -

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RESOLVED:-

That the Birmingham Council Housing Investment Programme Environmental Works Budget 2015/16_report be approved with the exception of those projects appertaining to the Hall Green Ward which will be finalised at a later date and that the proposed suggestion in relation to how future funding should be allocated be referred to the District Housing Panel for consideration and further discussion.

UPDATE ON HOUSING SERVICE REVIEWS

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Natalie Potter, Senior Service Manager presented a verbal report on Housing Service annual visits across the Hall Green District and made the following comments:

- Housing officers had attempted to visit 63,000 City Council owned properties across the District over the last twelve months commencing October 2015.
- Update in relation to Phase 1 of the service annual visits – completed 52,269 tenancy visits – 82% completed successfully where the tenant has been physically identified and interviewed.
- Trends – phase 1 has identified approximately 3,768 tenants had been identified as having a form of vulnerability such as low level of additional support needs, external additional needs support.
- Housing fraud – 634 visits identified and referred to Birmingham Audit for further investigation.
- Tenancy breaches – 2,019 identified during the visits ranging from the tenant not requesting permission to install a satellite dish to serious tenancy breaches such as where gardens had not been maintained correctly.
- Customer satisfaction – good opportunity to get an insight into what is happening in the area. A significant majority of tenants found that the customer survey satisfaction forms and annual visits were an excellent way and a valuable opportunity to engage with Landlord Services. 26,509 rated the visits as being 'good' with only 71 tenants finding them to be 'poor'. One tenant after being visited by a Housing Officer had commented 'at last – after living in the property for 46 years – it was the first time that he had been visited by an officer from Landlord Services.' Successful outcome recorded.
- Valuable opportunity to collect feedback in relation to tenants homes – where they live and the service they receive. 14,374 rated the home that they live in to be 'very good'.

FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS / HALL GREEN DISTRICT WORK PROGRAMME

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Karen Cheney, District Head Selly Oak (Interim cover for Hall Green District) provided an update on community governing arrangements. She expressed a vote of thanks to Salim Miah, Interim Lead for the Hall Green District for his support in this role which finished at the end of July 2015.

Hall Green District Committee – 17 November 2015

She stated that there was an interim structure in place from August to most probably the beginning of November 2015 which is where district heads have picked up additional districts to support, and subsequently confirmed that she would be covering Hall Green District in this instance, adding that although based at Selly Oak, she would be visiting Hall Green District office on a regular basis. She stated that the new structure was moving forward and would be with the trade unions shortly.

She confirmed that in terms of governance, training had already taken place with the chairs and vice-chairs of districts. She referred to the neighbourhood challenge believing that it had been agreed, and stated that in a complete municipal year, it was anticipated that 2 or 3 neighbourhood challenges would be undertaken by districts.

At this juncture in the meeting, members disagreed with the fact that a neighbourhood challenge had been set whereupon a discussion ensued. Members were of the opinion that although jobs and skills would be a priority for the district, it had not yet been agreed what the first neighbourhood challenge would be.

Following further discussions, the Chairman suggested that it not be referred to as the first challenge, but to continue with the work and discuss further outside this meeting.

Karen Cheney made reference to the district priority statement which would lead into the district community plan, and the date that had now been set for the district convention, which was part of the responsibility within the new district committee format.

In terms of ward committees, she confirmed that some members had already contacted her regarding meetings and that the training sessions for ward chairs had now been opened up to all members, with the new focus for wards on community engagement. She highlighted that the choice was with members on how they went forward with their ward meetings. She referred to the 2 community governance managers that were now in place covering the north and south of the city, and that Kay Thomas was the officer covering Hall Green District. She added that Kay would be happy to assist members with the writing up of an agenda, publicity and the action tracker and subsequently attend the first set of meetings if required.

She stated that once ward member training had finished, there would be other opportunities for members to get together to see how wards and their priorities linked into the district.

The Chairman concluded that it was all work in progress.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS (REPORTS BY OFFICERS)

No issues of other urgent business were submitted.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

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RESOLVED:-

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

The meeting ended at 1517 hours.

CHAIRMAN