

**PERRY BARR WARD MEETING
NOTES**

WARD: Perry Barr	DATE: 24 July 2019
VENUE: Perry Hall Methodist Church, Rocky Lane	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 8.45pm
COUNCILLORS Jon Hunt & Morriam Jan	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 50+
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Iftekhar Ahmed, West Midlands Police Jaswant Chahal & Peter Parker, Transport & Connectivity Neil De-Costa, Senior Manager, Neighbourhood Development & Support Unit Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

1. Police Update

Inspector Ahmed gave a brief overview of the crime statistics for the ward, advising that crime figures were generally similar to those for the same period last year. Operations were ongoing in relation to speeding and ASB and the team had obtained funding for the purchase of cones to go outside all schools in the ward to prevent parking.

Residents commented regarding speeding on Tower Hill, Old Walsall Road & Walsall Road and queried whether police patrols could concentrate on these areas. Also the possibility of having speed cameras. Inspector Ahmed undertook to take the request back to Sgt Uddin. Cameras were the responsibility of the council but funding was not currently available. Councillor Hunt said that the council had agreed that Walsall Road needed speed cameras but no funding had been identified but he would continue to pursue. Councillor Jan referred to community Speed Watch that had started on Rocky Lane but with more volunteers it could be taken across the ward.

Inspector Ahmed undertook to take a request for a speed watch on Walsall Road back to Sgt Uddin.

With regard to parking issues Inspector Ahmed explained about using Operation Park Safe to report inconsiderate parking.

2. A34 Project Team Presentation

Peter Parker gave an update on the current situation with the A34 Project. A leaflet with consultation details and map were circulated. It was noted that the consultation now ended on 2 August. An extended leaflet drop had taken place along the Walsall Road up to Scott Arms and along Aldridge Road. Once the consultation had ended the responses would be considered and the outcome form part of the business case which would be presented to the Leader for a decision to be made. Responsibility for decision making on the project rested with the Leader. A design and build contractor would be appointed in January with a view to the work being completed by end of 2021. In response to residents considerable concerns that it appeared from the timeline presented that a decision had already been made to demolish the fly over, Peter Parker stressed that no decision had yet been made, that the consultation responses would form part of the business case and that the time line provided was in the event of demolition being agreed.

Residents then made the following comments;

- Doubt expressed that notice would be taken of residents views as demolition of the A34 flyover was considered a 'done deal'.
- That the Leader of the Council being solely responsible for making such a major decision that would affect so many people was totally undemocratic and there were queries regarding the legality of the process. Reference was made to the petition calling for the flyover to be retained.
- With regard to the consultation, it was felt to be flawed and biased given there was only one option provided to comment upon.
- Concern regarding the future of the Police Memorial and that there had been no contact with the family concerned. Meeting advised that the Police Federation was making enquiries.
- With regard to the alternative to the flyover of a traffic signal controlled junction, residents objected on the grounds of pollution, air quality, congestion and the effect on the residents of the new homes at the Athletes Village location.
- Considerable concern regarding the diversion routes that would be put into place during the works around Perry Barr and that if left to the contractors there would be limited time for residents, commuters etc to get used to new routes and change driver behaviour. Given the limited time that would be available to plan the diversions there would be no time for a feasibility study to take into account traffic that used the Walsall Road every time there was an accident/hold up on the M6/ Aston Expressway or football matches.

- Having studied the plans, reference was made to the location of the pedestrian crossing and cycle path when driving under the underpass and that this would be unexpected by drivers, especially when coming over the brow of the hill and concerns were expressed regarding safety.
- Comments also made regarding the cycle path that did not have an adequate starting or finishing point and that the junctions in Newtown/Lozells needed cycle priority as they were unsafe.
- Delays to the Sprint bus were noted and the location of the turning point at the Scott Arms was queried.
- Query regarding compensation to businesses involved in CPO's and for loss of income over the next 2 years.
- General concern regarding the plans for the lorry park. A residential apartment block that had not been part of the original plans. It was suggested that as the land had been cleared it be incorporated into the road plans and the flyover retained.
- Recent report had unveiled repairs were needed to the Aston Expressway and that during works to that roadway additional traffic would ultimately find its way onto the A34.
- Perry Barr expressway, including the flyover, when built had been commended to the National Association of Fine Arts and it was suggested that a preservation order be sought.
- A resident commented that to move on things needed to change and could not remain the same for ever. Constant improvement was the way forward and the area was benefitting from new houses. If such improvements were not made Birmingham was in danger of being 'left behind'.
- There was considerable discussion regarding the chaos that would be caused if the fly over was demolished not only to the local community but to the north of Birmingham and there was a strength of feeling that the council was not listening to and did not care about the views of people, not just local residents but those from outside the immediate area who were opposed to the removal of the fly over. The flyover worked as it was, there were other measures that could be taken to improve the environment and the proposal to remove it was unnecessary and costly. Local residents had originally been supportive of the Commonwealth Games and had welcomed them into the area, however this goodwill had now been lost and it was felt by some that residents would boycott the Games such was the strength of local feeling at this point. Reference was made to the attendance by the Leader to meetings and his comments regarding local legacy but as he did not seem to be listening to local views this was unlikely to be achieved. Residents asked how they could ensure the Leader took account of local views and that all

the needs of the community were met?

In response to the comments made above Peter Parker responded;

- He was aware of the police memorial
- To clarify - it was proposed to remove Birchfield roundabout and have traffic signals at the junction. The underpass would remain for cars and the subways and footbridge removed.
- There needed to be a change in the way people travelled to reduce the number of cars on the road and Sprint buses, cycle routes etc were being put in across the city as a way forward. It was acknowledged that not all people would find public transport a suitable form of travel.
- There would be a travel plan, approved by the council, during the works and the plan would be co-ordinated with TfWM in view of the Sprint, bus interchange and station works but the diversions would be the responsibility of the contractors and when appointed work on these would begin. At least 2 months' notice of the diversions would be given.
- Residents were urged to complete the consultation as the best way of expressing their views.

Councillor Hunt confirmed that the Leader would be making the decision regarding the demolition of the flyover but that he felt this should be challenged given the projects importance and issues around the consultation. The decision should instead, he felt, be made at a public meeting such as full City Council. He added that future use of the lorry park had not been included in the consultation or mentioned in the original reports. Responses to the consultation were coming from across north Birmingham and not just from the Perry Barr area. With regard to disruption during the works, Councillor Hunt said the bus companies had received no information regarding diversions and traffic management and that there was no plan to cope but it was being left to the contractor who would not know the local area. Side roads were already congested and he suggested that the lorry park be used for access to the flyover, cycle path, tree planting etc.

In response to questions Councillor Hunt said that the M.P.'s comments regarding legal action referred to a judicial review.

Councillor Jan said that she felt responses to the consultation needed to be taken into account at a public meeting and not just by the

Leader and officers were asked to report back to Council Ward that a debate on the A34 should be held at a full City Council meeting.

In conclusion the meeting opposed the demolition of the A34 flyover and asked that their views be taken into account to retain it as it worked well and would not adversely affect the new properties being built. Residents acknowledged that there would be disruption caused by the building works necessary to accommodate the CWG but were totally opposed to unnecessary chaos that would be caused by the proposed A34 project. Residents felt they were no longer being listened to and while they had hoped to gain a good experience from having the CWG in their community now did not feel they could join in the celebrations. It was requested that the Leader be made aware of the comments made and invited to a meeting to address concerns.

3. Neighbourhood Plan Update

Councillor Hunt explained neighbourhood planning and the development of the 3B's Neighbourhood Plan. The plan was currently in draft form and given the amount of consultation currently ongoing would start a full consultation in the new year. Key areas of the plan were – flood prevention, development of the area as a garden suburb & recognising local centres. Documents were publicly available. As a result of this work Perry Barr had been given Pioneer Ward status. The next step would be to investigate Parish Council status.

4. Residents Issues

- a) Shop Rocky Lane – resident reported that a former premises on Rocky Lane (Dorrington Road) previously used for retail (car parts shop) was being operated as a garage and cars were being stripped and leaving oil on the pavement, rubbish was dumped and it was causing a nuisance to local residents. Councillor Hunt undertook to take up with the police and planning officer.

Councillors (s) Signed:

Councillor(s) Name(s) (please print):