

MINUTES OF THE LADYWOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JULY 2015 AT 1500 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Councillors Sir Albert Bore, Kath Hartley, Ziaul Islam, Nagina Kauser, Chaman Lal, Yvonne Mosquito, Chauhdry Rashid, Carl Rice and Sharon Thompson.

ALSO PRESENT: Lesley Poulton, Head of Ladywood District
Pete Hobbs, Service Integration Head
Fazal Khan, Finance Manager
Kate Foley, Acting Senior Service Manager
Kay Thomas, Area Democratic Services Officer

ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LADYWOOD DISTRICT

RESOLVED:-

- 227 a) That Councillor Ziaul Islam be appointed as the Executive Member for Ladywood District for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, ending with the first meeting of the Committee in 2016/17.
- b) That Councillor Sharon Thompson be elected as the Vice-Chair for Ladywood District for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, ending with the first meeting of the Committee in 2016/17
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NOTICE OF RECORDINGS

- 228 The Chair advised the meeting to note that;

This meeting would 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 were confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 229 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Tahir Ali and Muhammad Afzal.

Ladywood District Committee –
21 July 2015

MINUTES

- 230 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
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MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

- 231 The membership of the Committee was noted as follows;

Aston Ward - Councillors Muhammad Afzal, Ziaul Islam, Nagina Kauser
Ladywood Ward - Councillors Sir Albert Bore, Kath Hartley, Carl Rice
Nechells Ward - Councillors Tahir Ali, Yvonne Mosquito, Chaudhry Rashid
Soho Ward – Councillors Chaman Lal, Sybil Spence, Sharon Thompson

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 232 Members were reminded that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at this meeting. If a pecuniary interest was declared a Member must not speak or take part in that agenda item. Any declarations will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
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CODE OF CONDUCT

- 233 The Code of Conduct was submitted and noted;
- (See Document No 1)
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DISTRICT COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

- 234 The following District Committee terms of reference were submitted and noted;
- (See Document No 2)

Councillor Sir Albert Bore emphasised the need to recognise the differing roles and responsibilities that were now associated with District and Ward Committees that needed to be taken seriously to ensure that District Committees in particular fulfilled their new role. Reference was made to the training provided for Executive Members and Vice- Chairs and until training was available for all Members, Councillor Sir Albert Bore suggested it might be useful to arrange an informal Members briefing session so that the Chair could advise the Committee on the outcome of the training.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the suggestion of an informal workshop so that a wider discussion could be had in respect of the way forward for District Committees, to also include discussion regarding the involvement of active community groups and the community leadership role of councillors.

It was therefore agreed that an informal Members workshop be arranged to discuss in more detail the new role for the District Committee.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The following schedule of appointments was submitted;

(See Document No 3)

It was noted that an appointment from the Soho Ward was required to the Soho Road Business Improvement District.

The Committee was advised that Councillor Quinn had expressed an interest in the appointment to the Southside BID but after some discussion it was agreed that the appointment to the BID should come from the Ladywood District Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- 236 That the following appointments be made to the organisations listed below for the 2015/16 Municipal Year;
1. Corporate Parenting - Councillor Champion – Councillor Sharon Thompson
 2. **APPOINTMENTS REFERRED FROM CABINET**
 - a) Golden Hillock Community Care Centre – Councillor Chauhdry Rashid
 - b) St Anne's Accommodation - Councillor Chauhdry Rashid
 - c) West Side Partnership Ltd (Business Improvement District) – Councillor Carl Rice
 - d) Retail Birmingham Ltd (Business Improvement District) – Councillor Kath Hartley
 - e) Colmore Business District Ltd (Business Improvement District) – Cllr Kath Hartley
 - f) Southside Business Ltd (Business Improvement District) – Cllr Chauhdry Rashid
 - g) Soho Road (Business Improvement District) – Councillor Chaman Lal
 3. **CHAMPION/ LEAD MEMBER ROLES**
 - a) Environmental Champion – Councillor Kath Hartley
 - b) Health & Wellbeing –Councillor Sybil Spence
 - c) Local Delivery Group (Community Safety) – Cllr Kauser (Cllr Thompson as substitute member)
 - d) Youth Champion –Councillor Nagina Kauser
 - e) Employment/Life Long Learning – Councillor Yvonne Mosquito
 - f) Housing Champion – Councillor Carl Rice
 - g) Parent Partnership – Councillor Sharon Thompson
 - h) Cultural Heritage Champion – Councillor Carl Rice

CONSULTATION ON LICENSING FOR THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The following report was submitted;

(See Document No 4)

Pete Hobbs attended the meeting and outlined the details of the consultation exercise that was currently taking place in respect of the extension of the Council's Licensing Scheme for the Private Rented Sector.

The Chairman expressed his concern regarding Birmingham City University in Perry Barr and also the plight of newcomers to the City and asked that these areas be included in the consultation.

Councillor Rice referred to the District Convention where there had been considerable discussion at the housing workshop on the rapid growth of the private rented sector across the District and the issues that a transient population brought to the area. While there was no issue with the private rented sector as a housing provider the management of properties by inexperienced landlords and where properties were considered merely as an investment caused difficulties to arise. Councillor Rice requested that the Be Heard link be forwarded to Councillors so that it could be shared with the community.

Councillor Lal welcomed further licensing of the private rented sector and urged a wider scheme be introduced in view of the number of landlords who did not care for their tenants or properties resulting in other residents suffering anti-social behaviour and rundown properties. The replication of licensing schemes undertaken by the London boroughs should be introduced in Birmingham.

Councillor Thompson thanked Pete Hobbs for attending the Soho Ward Committee to report on the consultation but said that a number of residents had not made comments at that meeting and queried whether comments from those who had already contacted the Private Rented Sector Team would form part of the consultation. She was aware that many residents in Soho would not use the website.

Councillor Hartley referred to large areas of concentrated private rented sector housing such as Summerfield where there would be resident and Member support for an extended licensing pilot scheme. The area suffered from a high turn-over of tenants leading to a lack of community cohesion, environmental issues and poor property maintenance which detracted from the area. There was also an issue where family homes were being purchased by landlords and converted to HMO's and the growth of the private rented sector not only in areas with older properties but also in the Jewellery Centre and core City Centre was disturbing the lives of those who had purchased their properties or had longer leases.

Lesley Poulton advised that the private rented sector was an issue across the District and that the impact on the wider area and the challenge of ensuring there was a neighbourhood management function in areas with little or no council housing needed careful consideration. The private rented sector could have been a topic for the Districts Community Challenge function but a scrutiny review was already planned therefore this Committee could have an input into that review. Councillor Rice as the Housing

Ladywood District Committee –
21 July 2015

Champion for the District said that he would put together a submission for inclusion in the review but said that he would need evidence from Ward Councillors.

In response to the points raised Pete Hobbs made the following points;

- With regard to the changes at Birmingham City University, they were key stakeholders and would therefore be involved in the process.
- Work was ongoing with the National Landlords Association to promote standards and longer tenancies.
- He undertook to re-send the Be Heard link to Members together with other ways to consult the community.
- It was not practical to license all landlords but the legislation had changed and the number of pilots would be determined by the findings of the consultation.
- With regard to people who had contacted the private rented sector already, incorporating their feedback in the consultation would be taken on board.
- The use of an Article 4 directive could be relevant to the Summerfield area and a briefing on this could be arranged.
- Licensing the private rented sector would not affect tenancy lengths or anti-social behaviour as landlords did not control tenants but it would sit alongside other powers available to the City Council. The National Landlords Association wanted to see schemes that incorporated 'wrap around' services in a licensed area.
- Councillors could contact him to discuss the matter further outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:-

237

That the report be noted.

PLACE DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/15 Q4

The following report was submitted:-

(See document No. 5)

Lesley Poulton referred to the red performance indicators highlighted through the report and the explanation for some of those performances that had been circulated at the meeting. She suggested that the community safety matters be discussed in more detail at the next meeting and that Superintendent Beard be invited to attend.

Councillor Rice referred to violence against the person which was constantly above target in Ladywood but that at NTG meetings this was explained as being as a consequence of domestic violence. He queried the need for the police to require corroborative evidence from the victim before taking a case forward and felt more political resources needed to be devoted to the issue. Lesley Poulton stated that reduction in violence with injury was a police priority and that resources had been moved to deal with crime against the most vulnerable and this included domestic abuse.

Councillor Lal expressed his concern at the increase in recorded crime and queried the correlation between the increase and the cuts being made across the Force. Any improvements to the figures required additional policing and the impact of the cuts was not only having an effect on crime figures but also the confidence of the

Ladywood District Committee –
21 July 2015

Community in the local police and therefore this message needed to be sent back to the Chief Constable.

Councillor Mosquito said that an increased confidence in reporting domestic abuse, the investigation of crimes such as child sexual exploitation and the way crimes were recorded had an impact on the figures. There was less tolerance of domestic abuse and lower level crime in this area was also being reported. The reasons behind the increase of violent crimes in Ladywood needed to be investigated as there were other driving factors than the loss of police officers.

Councillor Lal said that police officers were themselves advising of the impact of the cuts and this was affecting confidence. Councillor Mosquito said that she was concerned that officers were feeling that way and undertook to raise the matter with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.

Councillor Sir Albert Bore suggested that the Lead Officers for all service areas connected to a red indicator be advised that the Committee had noted the performance targets and would be examining the Quarter 1 report and would wish to have an understanding of what was being done to change those red RAG ratings. This would be undertaken as part of the Committee's new scrutiny role and officers held to account where improvements were not made.

RESOLVED:-

- 238
- a) That the report be noted.
 - b) That further consideration be given to the Community Safety performance indicators at the September meeting and that the Superintendent for West and Central LPU be invited to attend.

HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2014/15

The following report was submitted:-

(See document No. 6)

Kate Foley outlined the details of the report and highlighted the explanations for some of the areas of concern as set out in the narrative provided with the report.

The Chairman made reference to housing repairs and whilst this was not highlighted as an area of concern he was being made aware by tenants that jobs were not being completed in the allotted timescales and therefore he asked that this be investigated.

Councillor Rice paid tribute to the work undertaken by Phil Terry, Contract Team Manager for housing and asked that his gratitude be forwarded to Phil. In respect of the report, Councillor Rice referred to void properties and the number of empty properties that were being let to tenants within a specified time frame requiring the properties to be taken in whatever condition they were left in. He therefore requested that the repairs were undertaken to properties that were accepted quickly as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Rice referred to the choice based letting system which on occasion allowed tenants into designated blocks where they were incompatible with the designation and

Ladywood District Committee –
21 July 2015

created anti-social behaviour issues. He queried whether there was a system for flagging up this type of situation so that it could be dealt with appropriately.

Councillor Rashid commented on the number of cases he had been alerted to last winter regarding boiler breakdowns that had taken unacceptably long periods of time to repair and he requested that care be taken that the situation was not repeated this year.

RESOLVED:-

239 That the report be noted.

LADYWOOD DISTRICT – INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015

The following report of the Service Directors (District Services & Housing Transformation) & the Director of Finance was submitted;

(See Document No 7)

Fazal Khan outlined the main points of the report and in response to a comment made by the Chairman regarding the underspend figure confirmed that the sum in the report was correct.

Councillor Rice stated that the District Team had managed its budget well to achieve the under spend that it had. Other Districts had not managed an under spend but had their overspends written off. He therefore queried the incentive for Districts to manage their budgets effectively.

Fazal Khan stated that historically the Ladywood District budget had been well managed and was one of the few Districts that managed a surplus. However in light of the Kerslake recommendations, Cabinet had agreed to write-off the surpluses, a decision ratified by Council.

Councillor Sir Albert Bore advised that the budget allocated to the Districts in 2014/15 was no longer available and that funding now sat at the Centre as Cabinet Members responsibility therefore as there were no District budgets for 2015/16 any District debt had to be written-off. He acknowledged that Ladywood District had not had a debt.

Councillor Rice suggested that in view of those comments Cabinet consider a District innovation fund and that past financial performance be taken into account when allocating funding as recognition of good management.

RESOLVED:-

- 240 a) That the net overspend of £0.350m for Directly Managed and SLA services as detailed in appendix 1 to the report submitted, compared to a breakeven position at month 10, be noted. This is prior to taking into account the write off of prior year overdrawn reserves and use of credit balances of £0.360m. The net overspend has been written off corporately as approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2015

Ladywood District Committee –
21 July 2015

- b) That the financial position on the Community Chest of an under spend of £0.115m, as detailed in appendix 2 to the report submitted, which will be carried forward into 2015/16 to fund approved commitments, be noted.
 - c) That an appropriation to reserves of £0.100m that has been made to meet commitments in 2015/16 relating to the transition of a Community Asset within the District to ensure its sustainable future be noted.
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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

241 That it be noted that the Ladywood District Committee will meet on the following dates at the Council House at 2.00pm

2015

22 September
10 November

2016

Thursday 14 January
8 March

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

PLANNING APPLICATION NO 2015/02982/PA – DEVELOPMENT OF (MITCHELLS & BUTLERS CITY ROAD SPORTS GROUND) LAND FRONTING CITY ROAD/CITY PARK ROAD, SOHO B16 9PU

Councillor Rice submitted a petition signed by 615 local residents opposed to the application by Persimmon Homes to develop the green field at the Mitchells & Butlers City Road sports ground in Soho for a residential development of 116 properties.

Councillor Rice, reading from the supporting letter to the petition, said that residents were objecting to the application due to the density of the proposed development, especially given that the Deers Leap estate situated opposite the site where 900 homes had been built on woodland had unsold and vacant properties still available. Ladywood was a densely populated district that had a shortage of football pitches and open spaces, a situation that would worsen as the population grew as projected. Persimmon Homes intended to use the Section 106 money from the development to reinstate the Avery Sports Ground situated in Harborne. However the reinstatement of one sports ground outside the area at the expense of another was unacceptable. Brownfield sites suitable for housing development were available in the area and would be more acceptable to the local community than the loss of a green open space.

Councillor Rice said the petition, that had in excess of 600 signatures, had a covering letter which explained in detail the reasons for the local opposition to the planning application. He had agreed to accept the petition as there was no Ward Committee meeting or full City Council meeting due to be held before the application would be considered by the Planning Committee. Councillor Rice sought the Committees support for and agreement to the petition be forwarded to the Planning Department as an objection for inclusion in the report for determination by the Planning Committee.

Councillor Lal expressed his support for the petition and said that the developer had failed to deliver a promised play area as part of a previous development in the area and

Ladywood District Committee –

21 July 2015

was therefore concerned that consideration was being given to allowing a further development by the same developer. He also stated in the strongest possible terms his opposition to the intention to use the Section 106 funding to reinstate the Avery Sports Ground located in Harborne. The suggestion of taking funding from one of the poorest parts of the City to fund facilities in a much more affluent area could not be condoned.

Councillor Hartley also expressed her support for the petition but commented that the land in question was an eyesore as it had been left to become derelict and therefore although she opposed the density of the proposed application a more appropriately sized development suitable for the area and the size of the land might be acceptable. However, notwithstanding that comment, Councillor Hartley said she could not support the intention to use any Section 106 funding from a development in the Ladywood District where the need for open green spaces was far greater than that in Edgbaston District.

Councillor Rice commented that care should be taken where land owned by developers was allowed to become an eyesore with the intention that development of the site would then be welcomed as an improvement. Approval for the development of land should only be granted if the development was right for the area.

Councillor Kauser concurred with the comments made and also expressed her objection to the application.

The Committee unanimously;

RESOLVED:-

242 That the Planning Committee be advised of the Ladywood District Committee's objection, in the strongest possible terms, to planning application 2015/02982/PA from Persimmon Homes to develop the land fronting City Road and Rotton Park Road, Soho B16 9PU for the following reasons;

- a) The density of the proposed development to build 116 dwellings was too great especially as the site was directly opposite the 900 home Deers Leap Estate where properties remain vacant, unsold and to let.
- b) The proposed site was a 100year old green field sports ground designated as a site of Local Interest and Nature Conservation.
- c) Nearby brown field sites remain undeveloped.
- d) The loss of open space in an area with a shortage of open spaces and playing pitches.
- e) The intention by Persimmon Homes to use Section 106 monies from the development to reinstate the Avery Sports ground located in Harborne thereby taking funding from one of the poorest parts of the City to fund facilities in a more affluent area.

AUTHORITY TO ACT BETWEEN MEETINGS

RESOLVED:-

243 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 1655 hours.

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Chairman