

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**NORTHFIELD DISTRICT  
COMMITTEE  
FRIDAY, 24 JUNE 2016**

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 24 JUNE 2016 AT 1400 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:** - Councillors Peter Griffiths, Simon Jevon, Valerie Seabright, Andy Cartwright, Carole Griffiths, Ian Cruise, Randal Brew, Debbie Clancy, Brett O'Reilly, Steve Booton, Peter Douglas Osborn and Julie Johnson.

### **ALSO PRESENT:** -

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward  
Richard Burden, Member of Parliament, Northfield Constituency  
Jayne Creswell, Director, The Sweet Project Limited  
Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead  
Councillor Bruce Pitt, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council  
Errol Wilson, Committee Manager

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## **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN - EXECUTIVE MEMBER AND VICE-CHAIRMAN – DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NORTHFIELD DISTRICT**

Following nominations it was -

### **RESOLVED:-**

- I. That Councillor Steve Booton be elected as Chairman of the Northfield District Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17; and
- II. That Councillor Andy Cartwright be elected Vice-Chairman of the Northfield District Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

Councillor P Griffiths expressed thanks to the Committee for their support to him in his role as Executive Member over the last year. Councillor Douglas Osborn congratulated Councillor P Griffiths on attaining a Cabinet role and stated that it was hoped that greater things would come. Councillor Brew expressed congratulations to Councillor O'Reilly for attaining a Cabinet role.

(Councillor Steve Booton in the Chair)

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**NOTICE OF RECORDING**

- 256 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.
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**CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- 257 The Chairman advised that he wished to change the order of the agenda slightly by inviting Mr Richard Burden, Member of Parliament for Northfield Constituency to make a brief statement concerning the Late Mrs Jo Cox, MP who was murdered recently before they proceed with any business.

Mr Burden, MP stated that there had been celebrations for the Late Jo Cox's life. He added that she had a kind of magnetism about her that if people did know her, everyone wanted to know her better as she was that kind of person. The personal bonds that they had were that they were both boat dwellers when they first were in London. She lived with her family in a boat on the Thames. For a period of time until recently, he had a flat in a boat on the Thames. When he had to move out of that boat because it was being towed to be moored somewhere else, Mrs Cox went on one of her missions. Her mission was to find him another boat to live on. She was not normally unsuccessful in her campaign.

Sadly, this was the one that she was unsuccessful on. He believed that he knew her best through her work on International Development, particularly her work on the Middle East. Her work on Israel and Palestine were areas that she had great expertise and probably even more so in terms of the work she did on Syria where her humanity shone through her commitments to human rights justice. She would have been 42 years old two days ago on Wednesday and there were celebrations across the Continent and around the world of Mrs Cox's life.

This was testament to how many people's lives she had touched. He was touched to hear that in Northfield they had set up a book of condolence last Saturday for Mrs Cox in Northfield High Street and since then it had been in Northfield Baptist Church. Just reading some of the messages by local people about Mrs Cox and what her murder represents to them, was touching. It will be of great comfort to her family and the dignity and humanity that had been shown by her family was inspirational over the last week.

As a Committee, if they could send their thoughts to her husband Brendon, to her children, parents and her sister. She was killed by the politics of hate and her husband Mr Cox had spoken for so many people last week when he stated that our best tribute to Mrs Cox would be to continue the kind of work and uphold the kind of principle she stood for all her life. To continue to speak out even when it's unpopular to do so and to never ever let the public's hate or division win through, that was as true internationally as it was locally.

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

There had been an Hashtag appearing on social media over the last week, which had been taken from Mrs Cox's maiden speech from the House of Commons "... whatever else when you bought ...there was so much more that unites people and people had much more in common than what divides them". Perhaps today of all days it was right that they endorse her.

At this juncture, the Chairman moved that the Committee had a minute silence for the Late Mrs Jo Cox.

Councillor Cartwright stated that it was nice that all parties had sent representatives; all faith groups had attended the event outside the Council House in memory of the Late Mrs Cox. He expressed thanks to all that had participated in the event.

Councillor Brew endorsed the comments made by Mr Burden, MP and stated that it was a great shock and that it had shook the nation. He added that he sometimes had a list of people he would have liked to have met, and Mrs Cox was one of those persons. They could have had some interesting discussions, they might not have agreed on everything, but they were all pointing in the same direction. She was a shining example of what she had achieved in the short time she was in Parliament at that level. It was amazing and a great sadness that she was lost, but she did leave behind a great spirit and a great sense of direction that they needed to follow.

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### **APOLOGIES/WELCOME/THANKS**

258 An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Valerie Seabright. An apology for lateness was submitted on behalf of Councillor Simon Jevon.

The Chairman welcomed back to the Committee Councillors Seabright, O'Reilly. Welcome to the newly elected councillors – Councillors Carole Griffiths and Julie Johnson.

The Committee expressed thanks to former Councillors Jess Phillips, MP and Eddie Freeman for their service over many years to the District Committee and the Longbridge and Weoley Wards respectfully.

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### **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

259 No declarations of interest were submitted.

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### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

260 The membership of the Committee was noted as follows: -

Councillors Peter Griffiths, Simon Jevon, Valerie Seabright (Kings Norton Ward).

Councillors Andy Cartwright, Ian Cruise, Carole Griffiths (Longbridge Ward).

Councillors Randal Brew, Debbie Clancy, Brett O'Reilly (Northfield Ward).

Councillors Steve Booton, Peter Douglas Osborn, Julie Johnson (Weoley Ward).

Mr Richard Burden, MP and Councillor Bruce Pitt, New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Councillor were also invited to attend all meetings.

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**THE SWEET PROJECT**

261

Jayne Cresswell, Director, the Sweet Project Limited along with representatives made the following statements: -

- a. They were set up in 2010 as a social enterprise (not for profit) and they wanted to provide quality family support to south Birmingham. 9 Student Social Workers were taken from the University of Birmingham and trained in the delivery of good quality service. They had grown slightly since then and they now take from 39 universities across the country. It was a workforce from an average of about 70 students at any one time.
- b. Currently they had 300 children and families cases open and about 102 adult cases. The Student Social Workers were thought about, practice and anti-discriminatory practice, assessments and relationship based social work and to date 92% of all of their final place students were employed. They offer first year and final year students – first year students come to the project for 70 days and final year students for 100 days and they each carry a case load of about 9 cases.
- c. The project was privilege that Birmingham City Council saw in them the potential and had asked them to pilot last year the completion of single assessments of which the first was child protection and family assessment. The project assessed the whole needs of the whole family which was successful. They were commissioned to do 300, but they ended up doing 400 in half the time and feedback from not only Social Workers, Team managers and the Service Managers but also Ofsted adjudged that their assessment was incredible.
- d. They gave students the time to learn what they needed to learn to go out and it was a demanding job. The testament was that 98% of all their final year students were in employment and were held at a premium, in the fact that Coventry, Birmingham, Sandwell, Gloucester and Worcester all wanted their final year students. They were hoping to retain the retention of Student Social Workers in Birmingham as they go through a thorough understanding of what the role was.
- e. Referrals to the project had grown over the last six years with the student numbers that they had and the universities also. All of the cases were complex which gives the students the overall learning and training that they needed, but equally it had given the community within south Birmingham the service delivery that they also required. The project would go out as often as they were needed to see these families and this was one of the reasons they hold so many cases as they did.
- f. Cases that came to them would start at a crisis point and these crises were vast. They could not just link one level of crises and state that was it. They

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

would take referrals from anywhere. On average, between, 50% -60% of referrals were from Birmingham City Council, but equally they took referrals from forward thinking Birmingham, from Education. The referrals to date regarding education had swum over the six years. They offer services to most of the schools in south Birmingham. Schools, General Practitioners and Mental Health Services had made referrals to the project.

- g. They also had self-referrals that had come into the project. Over the six years these referrals had grown. They had to change the referral process slightly. Until 2014, all their services were provided free of charge as they were sustainable. They now had to change that due to cuts in services and duty changes that had gone on, but they still hold a vast amount of cases on children and families and vulnerable adults.
- h. In 2010, they could see the difference they were making to children and families. It was considered that if they were making this difference just to the children and families pathway, why did they not look at vulnerable adults too. In 2011, they opened their adults division and they received equally as many cases per day for vulnerable adults as they did for children and families.
- i. The project was currently employing 9 full time members of staff with two consultants. They were growing those consultants for their busy times. The project had humble beginnings as they began with 9 Student Social Workers from the University of Birmingham. The student number had increased each year and to date they were approaching 800 student placements and they were taking from 39 universities around the UK.
- j. These placements had to be carefully managed and they had strong foundations. Until September 2014, they received £28 per day per students; this was reduced by £8 per day which had wiped £100k off their balance sheet. They had 12 weeks to act to ensure that they could continue to deliver the support and the placements.
- k. They had spoken with all their partners – the universities, Birmingham City Council, the schools they were working in and this was the point at which they went into single assessment. The schools became a lifeline for the project. They had approached them about purchasing the project's support for a small fee. They had an overwhelming response and those schools were growing in number.
- l. They had doubled the income from schools last year and they were hoping to continue doubling for the next year. They were hoping that this would become their second income stream which would make them stronger for the next obstacle they needed to overcome. They were flexible and they adapt quickly and they had some long-term plans for the future.

At this juncture, a final year student from Birmingham City University made the following statement: -

- i. When he started the Sweet Project, he was nervous as he did not know much about the project. His path educator enquired what his learning needs was as they would tailor how he wanted to be developed as an individual and as a social worker.

- ii. Throughout his 100 days placement, he had the benefit of managing his time effectively, case recordings and managing his own case load of 11 cases consisting of child protection, child in need, alcohol misuse, drugs misuse, safeguarding concerns and a mixture of other things.
- iii. As a final placement he felt that the Sweet Project tailored to the needs of each student. There were students from all over the UK from different universities with different learning needs. They work around each student individually. Social work being a stressful profession in itself, as perceived in the media, supervision was key at the project and was an open door policy. Having supervision and consistent supervision were two different things.
- iv. The supervision they received from the Sweet Project was consistent throughout. As a learning curve, the supervision helped him not just as an individual, from a person level, but on a professional level also. In his view, the Sweet Project had moulded him into a better individual and as a Social Worker he was able to practice in the real world.
- v. The project had helped in preparing him for the near future where he intends to work for another local authority following his placement. The project had allowed him and colleagues to grow in confidence, manage their own caseloads, being accountable for their work and being Social Workers in today's society. It was not where you work, but who you work with and in his opinion; the Sweet Project *practiced what they preached*.

Members expressed congratulations to Ms Cresswell and colleagues and made the following comments:-

- The Sweet Project deserved a wider audience and they had learnt a lot from the presentation about the work that the project did. The *Market Place* on Full City Council day would be appropriate. The work that the project did was essential from the following viewpoints – from rescuing people and helping people who were vulnerable.
- Birmingham City Council was currently short of social workers and they had within their children services in particular and the older people as well a great need for social workers. The project was providing that stream which was an additional benefit.
- A representative from the project advised that Members would be welcomed to visit the project to see what they were doing and that they were an open door to anyone. They had taken 800 students over the six years and on the back of this they had provided 2,500 families with support and nearly 600 vulnerable adults within the last six years.
- They had talked about joint working and working across agencies and joined up thinking, but the Sweet Project *really do walk the walk* and always had. The Sweet Project provided the right benefit in terms of training up the social workers that the city needed desperately and needed to retain.
- The Sweet Project provided a practical service to some of the most vulnerable families in south Birmingham and beyond, but certainly the District was the

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

epicentre of that work. If the Sweet Project was not there to do what they did, there would be families and vulnerable adults in our community that would not be getting the support that they need which could lead to problems down the line.

- The joining up of activity, practical training of social workers and then putting that money to use in terms of providing the services that they got in the early years of the Coalition Government, a Big Society Award for doing precisely that, for using money creatively, using money that was meant to be for one thing and not only achieved that object, but to achieve a number of other objects as well
- As the project was more important to Northfield District than any other, it would be good if the District Committee could keep a watching brief on this, so that if the communication started to breakdown, *or if it turns out that that rule here would get in the way of the rule over there*, and they ended up suffering and the families ended up suffering, that they have the Committee as a friend on board.
- The format the project came up with, was fantastic as it was imaginative thinking and they manage to create the service out of what monies were available. It was a real blow when they had a cut of funding and *true to form* they found another way of filling that gap.
- It was uncertain how much of the families the project had dealt with came from Northfield, but they covered all of the Northfield District and beyond and without them doing that, the city would have a lot more problems to deal with in terms of the case work etc. A lot had been done for families to the point where they were claiming the right benefits and were getting the help they needed, children were getting the right support and hopefully, the parents were learning new skills.
- As a city, they were struggling for social workers and a mechanism to support the Sweet Project should be put in place as they were helping to take the burden off the City Council. It was suggested that the Chairman speak with the Cabinet Member for Schools, Children and Families, Councillor Brigid Jones concerning the work of the project as they did a fantastic amount of work that saved the city £000's each year. The Chairman undertook to speak with someone concerning the issue.

Adult referrals came to the project the same way and it was not a problem. It was slightly different now in referring children and families as they had to make up the £100k now as they were £100k down every year. Schools were charged a nominal fee and for schools that were not buying the service it was suggesting that may be parents could make self-referrals.

The project wanted to be there for other families and if they did not stop them they would be out of business. This was completely against their mission statement and their ethos. Their ethos was that they had no criteria and anyone could refer to the Sweet Project. They did a risk assessment, but they wanted to be available in 2020, so they had stopped self-referrals to schools and children. For adults this was not a problem and they prompt the schools to make the referrals and then charge the school for the service.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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**MINUTES**

It was: -

262

**RESOLVED: -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2016 having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to matters arising from the Minutes, the following were amongst the matters raised: -

In referring to the proposed awards ceremony (Minute No.243 (c) refers) Councillor Brew suggested that this issue be pursued with their Police contacts.

With regard to the Square Club at Weoley Castle, (Minute No. 243 (e) refers) the Chairman advised that a meeting was scheduled for the 19 July 2016 to progress the issue.

Councillor Clancy referred to the Cycle Hub at Longbridge Railway Station (Minute No. 244 (e) refers) and the Big Birmingham Bikes initiative and enquired whether the information had been received in relation to the breakdown in the District. The Chairman stated that it was uncertain the information had been received, but that it was hoped that a presentation by Sustrans would be made at the District Committee meeting in September 2016 on cycling and that the issue could be picked up then.

In response to an enquiry by Councillor Pitt, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Councillor, the Chairman advised that this would be covered under item 14 on the main agenda for this meeting. He stated that one of the things they were looking for in that item was to pick up those kinds of issues for when the representatives from Sustrans attend the Committee meeting in September 2016.

Councillor Cruise advised that the projects had already been allocated and was a failure of delivery, not relating to Sustrans, but Birmingham City Council Cycle Revolution.

The Chairman suggested that the issue be looked into for the next meeting.

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**DISTRICT COMMITTEES FUNCTIONS AND GUIDELINES**

The following schedule of District Committee Functions and Guidelines were submitted:-

(See document No. 1)

263

**RESOLVED:-**



That the Functions and Guidelines be noted.

Councillor Brew advised that Cabinet had a report on Tuesday concerning the appointment of four Assistant Leaders and that they would be based on a geographical basis. He requested that whoever was appointed for the Northfield area be invited to attend the next District Committee meeting.

Councillor P Griffiths advised that nominations for the four Assistant Leaders closed at noon today.

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**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The following Code of Conduct for District Committees was submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

264

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Code of Conduct for meetings of the District Committee be noted.

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**DISTRICT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

265

**(a) West Midlands Police and West Midlands Fire Service Co-opted Members**

The Chairman requested that Inspector Dean Gordon and Station Commander Neil Johnson be invited to the next District Committee meeting in September 2016

Councillor Brew advised that when this system was set up, it was the intention to have one or possibly two people from District Housing in the form of Private or the Rented Sector and there was talk about this being done via the Housing Liaison Board (HLB). He stated that a Strategic Housing Panel was set up and he suggested that one place at least for a nominee from that panel. He added that he understood that they would be meeting shortly.

The Chairman stated that this would be a good idea in light of the work that the Committee had undertaken in the Neighbourhood Challenge Anti-Social Behaviour.

Richard Davies, Northfield District Lead advised that the Strategic Housing panel was currently under review and that when this was developed as a formal panel, they could invite someone from the panel to attend these Committee meetings. He stated that they have had some discussions concerning this locally and that they needed to continue with this and Members would also be involved.

The Chairman stated that the issue was that there had been quite a falloff in attendance and the discussion should involve the remit of the panel, what would be achieved etc. and try to get the Registered Social Landlords involved at a much greater level than they had done.

Councillor Pitt, stated that as far as he was aware there was no falloff in attendance. The Chairman stated that he stood corrected. They were trying to get a large attendance from the Housing Associations and that the idea was to have an open discussion about the panel and its direction.

**RESOLVED:-**

That Inspector Dean Gordon, West Midlands Police and Station Commander Neil Johnson, West Midlands Fire Service be co-opted to the District Committee;

266

**(b) Councillor Champions**

**(i) Corporate Parenting Champion**

Councillor Clancy made the following statements: -

- There was a Corporate Parenting Board which should not be confused with the '*Champion*'.
- On the 19 April 2016, there was an event at which a researcher spoke in depth about research projects into the experiences of children in care with Birmingham City Council and how children felt about being in the care of the local authority; the qualities of good and bad placements; working with social workers, family contact and what children wanted. The presentation was presented in a PowerPoint slide detailing what the children had stated.
- This was an eye-opener for the Corporate Parenting Champions because although she sat on the Schools, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and there had been lots of detailed reports, it was difficult to know what case studies were taking place and they saw the actual case studies. Identities were protected, but they had a better view of what the children actually felt, their comments of what worked and what did not.
- Post the presentation, there were two social workers, one senior who had shared two specific case studies (identities were not given) around the complexities involved about making the decision and the judgements that they had to make about moving the children from the parents and also about making decisions on when to return the children home. They covered topics on the judicial system, guardianship, ward and that this was useful as it gave the background.
- The papers given to the Members were children in care research papers, the case studies, discussions around the removal of children, placing young persons in the care of a parent, the corporate parenting report, corporate parenting summary definition and the strategy for corporate parenting and where they saw it going and corporate parenting and champions.

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

- A key area was the Birmingham Virtual School for Education, leaving care services. The Virtual School for Education for looked after children were a fabulous organisation and was tailored for those children in care and what was happening to them in education. Although there were children in mainstream school, this was a specific addition on how they were monitored and looked after through education.
- An event was scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016, but this did not happen as they had Full City Council. This was postponed to the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016. This was the seminar that was led by Andrew Ryan, Head teacher for the Virtual School for Looked after Children and Social and Emotional Partnerships.
- He shared with the Members as Champions the three pronged approach, provisional learning entitlement; education employment and healthy lifestyle, work being undertaken in partnership with schools, business help and the voluntary sector to support each individual learner. This gave Members the opportunity to asked questions around that in view of the aspect of work that the Virtual School did.
- To date, they had a couple of events, paperwork and PowerPoint slide presentation which was worthwhile for Champions

The Chairman thanked Councillor Clancy for the report.

### **RESOLVED:-**

That Councillors Debbie Clancy and Julie Johnson be appointed as the Councillor Champions for Corporate Parenting for the Northfield District.

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#### **(ii) Youth Champions**

Councillor O'Reilly stated that he had given a detailed report at the previous Northfield District Committee meeting and that he had also tied in the role of *Jobs and Skills Champion*. He added that he had enjoyed the roles and that from the previous report a lot of work had gone into it. Unfortunately, due to the role he had taken on in the Cabinet, it would not be appropriate for him to continue being the *Youth Champion* and the *Jobs and Skills Champion* for Northfield District, but that he would work closely with whoever was appointed.

### **RESOLVED: -**

That Councillors Carole Griffiths and Simon Jevon be appointed as Youth Champions for Northfield District.

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#### **(iii) A Cultural and Heritage Champion**

Councillor Douglas Osborn stated that the Birmingham Heritage Week would be held from the 8 – 18 September 2016. There would be 450 attractions and

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

ion the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2016, they would have the Weoley Castle Festival which everyone was invited to including Mr Burden, MP as he always made a good contribution.

The Manor Farm Park – Barn which had a great association with Dame Elizabeth Cadbury. They had now put together a scheme for spending the money that they had from Section 106 together with a donation from Bournville Village Trust to put the project together. It would officially be presented to Cabinet and it was hoped that Members would see it through. Birmingham Conservation Trust would be ready to spend that money and give them an asset. This was off-setting the fact that they had lost the Manor Farm itself, but nonetheless it will be a major attraction, not only in the park, but for people who wished to visit it.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, will be the Northfield Carnival and Members were welcome to attend.

Councillor Cartwright stated that Northfield District had a wonderful range of heritage: Kings Norton Roman Site Cemetery. He visited the cemetery with a school and the things and pictures that were shown since it was first completed including articles.

Weoley Castle host many productions – The Witches Promise and to watch his daughter sang in a play was a happy occasion.

Northfield –the well-known stone and the plaque they were trying to get for the stone. It was hoped that this would happen.

The Hollymoor Centre which was used throughout the war – there were plaques and graves of soldiers located there. This could be looked and redone so that people in the area could visit the site.

The Austin Motor Works where the heritage event took place last year. A book entitled *Austin Memories* was being produced currently.

There was a situation at the Cockhill area where a planning application was submitted for houses to be built by the Cockhill. Following a visit with local residents, they would like something to be done to save what they could even if this meant a plaque. He stated that he had spoken with some of the Frankley in Birmingham parish Councillors who had advised that that was an old coach station and that it could be a part of the plans for Cockhill. It was only by speaking with local residents about heritage that they would know how they felt about heritage.

For heritage to work, they needed to involve the schools and young people and to show them what it was about. He expressed thanks to Councillor Douglas Osborn for the discussions and his knowledge on heritage.

Councillor Brew commented that he had learnt a lot about what was happening. He stated that they use to have a quarterly leaflet that was circulated with events that were happening within the District. He added that he was aware that they had limited resources, but if this could be regurgitated it would be good not only for the Committee's use but for the libraries etc.

**RESOLVED:-**

That Councillors Andy Cartwright and Peter Douglas Osborn be appointed the Cultural and Heritage Champions for Northfield District.

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(iv) Jobs and Skills Champion

**RESOLVED: -**

That Councillors Valerie Seabright and Randal Brew be appointed the Jobs and Skills Champion for Northfield District.

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**SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2016/2017**

**RESOLVED: -**

267 That the Northfield District Committee meet at 1400 hours, at the Council House on the following dates:-

16 September 2016  
18 November 2016  
20 January 2017  
17 March 2017

All meetings will be held on Fridays at 2:00pm in Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B1 1BB

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**HOUSING TRANSFORMATION BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 2014-15**

268 The following performance report and performance narrative from the Service Director, Housing Transformation was submitted:-

(See Document No. 3)

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward presented the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the report. She informed the Committee of the following good news stories: -

1. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – they had success in court on a Kings Norton case with an injunction that had been breached three times. The perpetrator was given a 10 week prison sentence that had been suspended for 12 months. However, there had been a further breach and they were now applying for possession and were awaiting a court hearing date.
2. In Weoley, they had service a without notice injunction on a perpetrator and they would be in court concerning the case on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016. They were looking to exclude the perpetrator from the property. In another case in Weoley, they had a problem with the son of a tenant harassing a neighbour

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

who was in breach of his injunction. He was due in court on the 26 June 2016.

3. They were doing a charity work on the Quadrant which was alluded to at the last District Committee meeting that Jonathan Antill, Acting Senior Service Manager was absent as he was climbing up tower blocks. Councillor Brew was aware of the work that was done as they did a three block challenge for Sports Relief.
4. A Text Santa at Christmas was done which raised £97. They had done their first night campaign which was for people who were in temporary accommodation at very short notice. The Sport Relief three block challenge that they conducted in March 2016, £1332 was raised for Sports Relief.
5. In April they did a Host for Hope which was a local Brain Tumour Charity and £200 were raised by the staff following the Tea Party that they did during their lunch break. They were doing other things throughout the year for various charities and will be doing a Fish and Chips Quiz night. They were doing things to try and get the staff together and raise funds for charities.

### **Project Proposals for the Capital Environmental Budget**

(See Document No. 4)

Ms Bowles drew the attention of the Committee to the information in the document and advised that a number of these were carried forward from last year. She added that the projects submitted were for approval by the Committee. She advised that there were discrepancies in the costs of the works to the blocks which would be challenged and that a response would be submitted at a later date.

An extensive discussion took place and the following is a summary of the principal points made:-

- ✓ Reference was made to the five blocks on the Cockhill Estate and that a substantial amount of work had been carried out on these blocks. The question was whether the renewed floor covering was renewal of the floor covering works that was carried out as part of the capital work that had been done to the blocks or whether this was something separate.
- ✓ Ms Bowles undertook to take the enquiry back, but stated that her understanding was that there were no internal work, but they were looking at internal decoration. The Capital Investment Team had advised that they were to replace the Para mounds to the blocks. This would disturb any decorations that they were looking to do, but the flooring was desperate.
- ✓ The report presented had lots of good things and that Ms Bowles admitted when things were not right. It was summarised well particularly on page 9 of 77, where it stated the number of cases responded to on time in relation to ASB. They owned up when errors were made and it was nice to see that instead of putting the wool over things.
- ✓ Page 63 of 77 – Capital Works (Martin Tolley) the point had been picked up that it was as per contractor assessment, but it would be preferred if this was

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

a Housing assessment of that information rather than relying on the contractors.

- ✓ The Roundabout car parking spaces was a valuable relief. A number of casework had been received concerning damp within the homes and that it appeared that the operatives was painting over this which was not good enough and that the issue be investigated. Ms Bowles undertook to pass the issue to the Asset Management Team.
- ✓ In comparison to the statistics they had Northfield District seemed to have done well over the last quarter. There were a few questions to be asked as a survey was being done on the High Rise Blocks in the city. The question was whether there had been any outcome/progress concerning the issue.
- ✓ The performance on getting voids occupied was improving all the time, but they were still ahead of what the Registered Social Landlords (RSL) managed so they needed to keep on working this down if they could. In terms of the lighting upgrades the issue was whether this was a health and safety issue.

Ms Bowles advised that this was taken on board and that what provision there was in there was the reason it was a priority to be completed. She added that it was on the reserved list last year to be completed. She undertook to take the information back and ask the question.

Councillor Clancy referred to page 5 of the HTB report and commented that under the Birmingham Promise what the situation was with Wilmott Dixon. She requested an explanation of the issue and stated that if the situation was outstanding she would assume that it got placed on the next level and that there was a particular group that looked on this issue.

Ms Bowles advised that she could not answer the question and that it appears that Councillor Clancy was referring to Wilmott Dixon's Call Centre as this was the only direct line that the public had. She suggested that the Committee could invite a representative from Wilmott Dixon to attend a future Northfield District Committee meeting to explain the issue or someone from Housing's Capital Asset Management Team to explain how the repairs and any outstanding repairs were progressed.

- ✓ It was uncertain whether this was needed or whether a brief given to the Members would suffice. If people were attempting to place repairs with the Call Centre and the phones were ringing out, there was an issue in terms of response times etc. This needed to be looked at and then get some feedback from the relevant officers as to how that could be looked at and reviewed to ascertain what was happening.
- ✓ Some of the things were relevant where there was an issue to bring it to the District Committee meeting, but it might be better if it was an information briefing for Members so that they understand it. It might be better if a separate briefing could be set up if they could do that outside of the District Committee meeting which could allow for a more detailed presentation for Members and for Members to ask questions freely.
- ✓ It was agreed that there were issues with the Call Centre and this should be sent back through the Committee as an action to take this up with Chris

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

Gibbs, Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits that would be appreciated as the waiting times were too long at present. A suggestion was that the Cabinet Member could also be invited to attend.

The Chairman thanked Ruth Bowles for attending the meeting and presenting the information. It was

269

### **RESOLVED: -**

That the report be approved by the Committee.

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## **NORTHFIELD DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE**

### **(a) Anti-Social Behaviour Update**

270

The Chairman stated that they had hoped to have a workshop detailing where they had gotten to. People had feared that when they undertook the Neighbourhood Challenge it would be just like a talking shop. Considerable progress had been made and they found it difficult to pull together that workshop as they were trying to do this in the summer time and people were on holiday etc. The Chairman reiterated that they had made considerable progress – Restorative Justice goes live in July 2016 in Northfield. This was favoured by most of the people that had attended the Workshop, which was pioneered by Midland Heart.

Members were issued with a copy of the document detailing where they were up to. They had ticked a number of the boxes, but there were still boxes to be filled. They were looking to hold that workshop in September 2016 to enable the Restorative Justice project to be showcased i.e. to do some feedback from July 2016 - September 2016. This would give a picture of the progress being made. They will be doing that workshop with the Police, Alan Morehouse from the Bishop Project and Midland Heart who had pioneered the project. The chairman apologised for not hitting the target as planned, but that there were reasons for not doing so.

Mr Davies undertook to circulate the information on where the recommendations were in terms of implementation within the next week so that all Members were aware of what was happening. The Police will also be making a presentation at the event in September 2016, where they will talk about their anti-social behaviour system. The Registered Social Landlords and Members could also learn from it.

The Chairman stated that the information needed to be circulated to the partners, Housing Associations and everyone that took part in the initial event.

### **(b) Proposal for the next Neighbourhood Challenge**

271

The Chairman advised that Councillor Clancy would be giving a brief update on the proposal for the next Neighbourhood Challenge – Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Councillor Clancy gave the following brief outline for NEET: -

- The question was how do they start and what were the issues, what they would look at and could they decrease the figure of NEETs within the



## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

Northfield District; what pathways were there, how did education thrown in did their bit; how could they do preventative work etc.

- With NEET, the outline purpose was to improve life chances for individuals aged 16 – 19 years old and become involved in further education, training, apprentices and employment. How do they capture this particular cohort of individuals who were 16 – 19 years old. Young people with no immediate training plan in place that was in danger of becoming a part of the statistical figures shown on the chart of NEET figures.
- As a District, the issue was whether they could offer help to advance those individuals so that there was a guaranteed pathway for them. There was a need to look at how best to get the NEET figures in the District down; how the schools were contributing, particularly with work experience. What the opportunities that were in place meant and how the individuals assessed them; who was working with them to push them in the right way. Who was doing what and whether they knew what was around. To improve the life chances.
- She had attended two *Jobs Fairs* that was giving advice to the public at the Methodist Church a few months ago. The Department for Work and Pension (DWP) was involved which was useful as the Relationship Manager was in attendance. Another factor was Mental Health Illness and Learning Disabilities.
- Along with the Jobs Fairs, she had been in touch with one of the area Senior Youth Officers, to look at how they dealt with NEETs within their programme which was fruitful, as they got to know quite quickly the actual individuals, what makes them tick, what the individuals health and illnesses that they may have from Asperger's syndrome, autism and the internal psychological barriers that may be in place.
- Discussions were had about breaking down the barriers and why they could not go forward. It was often the fear and there was also the psychological barrier – a lack of confidence and self-esteem issues particularly for those young people who felt that they were not worthy.
- One of the things that came out in a discussion with Mr Davis in a discussion, was the Stepping Stones Programme which was provided by Bournville College which ties into the Senior Area Youth Worker officer she had spoken with. She received referrals from Bournville College. She was hoping to report more on the Stepping Stones Programme at the meeting on the 16 September 2016.
- They wanted to improve prevention work in schools and work experience quality and pathways. Within the last few days, she had spoken with one of the senior officers dealing with work experience within the local authority. This topic was brought to Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2015.
- Discussions around this point was whether young people were going into an office to make cups of tea, doing the odd jobs and whether they were really tailor-making what the individual may like or wanted to do.

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

- It was about catching young people at this crucial time and encouraging them to do certain things, raise their aspirations – there should be a bigger and better programme to get them in the right direction early. This was an issue that would be tackled in improving the prevention work in schools etc. This was a work in progress and a further report will be made later.
- Examining examples of good practice and implement where appropriate - this was a work in progress for the Neighbourhood Challenge. It was needed to be established who and what the good practices were as it was a minefield as to what was being offered in terms of careers advice by other organisations particularly to those young people who were struggling.
- The national picture on NEETS was that the cohort they were dealing with at the District level was the 16 – 19 years old; but the annual figures for 16 – 18 years old NEET – in May 2016, it showed that there were some significant in NEETs in Birmingham generally.
- There had been a marked reduction nationally and records were at their lowest since consistent records began back in 1994 as a result of Government initiatives. NEETs in Birmingham still remain higher than the West Midlands average of 5.2% versus the West Midlands average of 4.2% and the highest of all the Metropolitan areas of the West Midlands.
- Focussing on Northfield District, she had a brief chart for NEETs within the District which goes back to March 2016. An upgraded view will be made available for the next meeting in September. The data for Kings Norton, Longbridge, Northfield and Weoley, one of the things that she thought of initially, was who she was working with, how many NEETs they were looking at.
- Looking at the NEET figures for March, Kings Norton 56, Longbridge 77, Northfield 53 and Weoley 76. This was a total of 262. It had to be borne in mind that this was seasonal as there were peaks and troughs in the dates and the data being collected throughout the year and the general participation of young people.
- The questions were what schools could do to improve the work experience with young people to achieve including more tailor-made working relationships for the maximum experience for that young person.
- A separate data shows work placements which was poor for the District which had been flagged up and could be one of the outcomes. What could be learnt from the views of the young people who were not in NEET. Enquiries would be made concerning this point.
- The senior youth work officer she had been speaking with dealt with Bournville College that had a large programme as part of the Youth Promise to deliver mentoring and specifically for NEETs, predominantly, Longbridge and Northfield she had had discussion with her and she wanted to explore this further for the whole of the District.

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

- In her opinion they had to encourage the aspiration of young people and ensured that they were not lost in the statistical figures. It was about overcoming the psychological barriers and not relying on a system to sustain them when there were other options available. They did not want to lose them to the benefit system particularly when they were young as most people were healthy and strong.
- Physical work must never be looked down on. There were people who may not be academic, but there were other routes. Someone from Careers would be needed to attend the workshop in September in relation to NEETs

In the discussions that followed, Members made the following comments: -

- i. Councillor Cartwright expressed congratulations to Councillor Clancy for her hard work and stated that the issue needed to be addressed and everyone had a right to some work experience. The New Longbridge Town Centre was being created with proposals for a number of stores being opened there and the building of houses.
- ii. The question was why they could not put forward through organisation like the Sweet Project Limited, the Homeless Project, Big Community and other organisations that work within their Wards to put young people forward. Sainsbury's had done this by giving mock interviews so that the young person could see what an interview was like. They showed them about stock control, how food was stocked etc.
- iii. They were impressed with Balaam Wood Academy Military personnels as they showed pictures of young people before and after. They invited the young persons to speak and the admiration they had for what they were doing was a sense of pride. Even in *their looks* they were confident, they were not pushing them towards military, but was merely giving them that experience. Mock interviews were being set up so that if the young person does go for a job, they could be confident of what they did.
- iv. Councillor O'Reilly congratulated Councillor Clancy for the detailed report and the research work and background work that had gone alongside it. He stated that from his Cabinet role for jobs and skills he would like to offer his support in anyway, by looking at how the citywide agenda could support the work at a District level. A good point was raised on the inconsistency in careers advice and the new digital application that had been rolled out last year called COG. It would be good to look at that to see whether the Northfield schools were picking up on that and running with the agenda.
- v. In relation to the NEET figures, it was important to recognise that Birmingham along with Sheffield was the highest performing with 5.2% in relation to the Core Cities.
- vi. Whilst it was accepted that there were other authorities within the region that were out performing Birmingham on NEETs, if they looked at the like for like with the demographics, Birmingham was performing well. The figure of 5.2% was still too high was the reason they were setting a 4% target this year. If they achieve this they would not just be punching their weight with the Core Cities, but start to take on some of the Shires as well. They should be tough

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

on the targets, but should be fair as well as recognising when they were doing well against their comparators.

- vii. There was the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) that runs for two years, but it was uncertain whether this would be renewed. There was some funding and some work going on in that they were targeting NEET and looking at the unknowns as this sometimes masked the actual figures for NEET. He would be happy to sit with Councillor Clancy to see if they could link the work that the officers were doing from the Centre to see if they could do some cross working with the District.
- viii. With regard to NEET and unemployment in general, where they were looking at some of the average sites, they were going to change the way they look at the targets and the way things move as one of the problems with setting a benchmark against the average, if our numbers came down the average comes down and they never actually get there because as numbers comes down the average reduces.
- ix. They were looking at using a fixed average and then set their targets against that which gives a more realistic view of how far they had moved along that which could tie in with measuring the impact of what they were doing in terms of the Neighbourhood Challenge.
- x. Reference was made to the report submitted by Councillor O'Reilly at the last District Committee meeting and that a huge amount of work was being done with Policy to raise aspiration and that it was hoped that they could bring forward a policy statement to City Council around that in autumn.
- xi. They had the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Combined Authority on board who were now looking to adopt it into their Strategic Economic Plan. Hopefully, they could tie this in together and use it for the benefit of Northfield and the work that Councillor Clancy was doing.
- xii. Councillor Cruise stated that in relation to work experience, in 2012 the report on *Closing the Skills Gap* had amongst its recommendations was that the City Council and the new cohort of schools were to work with partners and put relationships in place between schools, businesses to children not just work experience but a link with businesses.
- xiii. There were a lot of young people who wanted to do an aspirational work experience. It was disappointing that the recommendation from the report of four years ago was not taken on board until what he had just heard from Councillor O'Reilly. He urged that this be taken forward and that work experience was changed and schools had the opportunity to go out into the world of work and that their work experience would encourage them to want to go back and do that work.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Debbie Clancy for presenting the information.

**BIRMINGHAM CYCLE REVOLUTION**

The following is a summary of the principal points suggested for discussion with Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR) at a future Northfield District Committee meeting:-

- That BCR address the cycling infrastructure. Part of the problem with BCR was that they did not invest in the infrastructure first before they went forward and put the Brompton bikes in the City Centre. The infrastructure needed to be in place so that people and families could cycle safely before the free bikes were given away so that if they wish to cycle safely from the south of Birmingham into the City Centre they could do so.
- Presently, they had cycle lanes that had been painted nicely, but there were cars parked in them along the Orthopaedic Hospital on Bristol Road South which had resulted in cyclist coming out in traffic going at 30mph. This was something that needed to be addressed urgently.
- It was alright putting signs up about shared space, but if they did not have the surface to cycle on there was a problem. Sustrans do work with schools in the area and had some local knowledge of what was happening in the area. The sooner the infrastructure was sorted, the more chance they had of getting more people onto bikes.
- A question was what BCR did in the other Districts. They did not have to reinvent the wheel and could learn from examples of what they were doing. Two areas that needed to be addressed was links with schools as they needed to take the youngsters along with them and educate them as they go through. At a meeting of the *Friends of Victoria Common* at the Northfield Echo Centre there was a group of people that was learning to repair bikes. Maintenance was important as well and perhaps they could have a look at that.
- The minutes of the previous District Committee meeting stated that BCR (Sustrans) would be attending the next Committee meeting and other groups that might have some local knowledge like Cycle South Birmingham was specifically mentioned. Partly picking up the points that had been made about how the decisions and discussions around various cycling schemes linked with decisions that had been made on infrastructure, linked what cycling groups in other areas were doing. It might be useful for the Committee to have a range of those voices at the same time.

Councillor P Griffiths stated that one of the things that strike him was that they were not good in incorporating or thinking about cycling in the planning applications for the new estates. He added that he was yet to see anything in terms of a picture of a new estate being designed with cyclist or pedestrians at the forefront. This was one issue that they could be pushing to the various organisations they speak with. In Manor Park, they had put a cycle way through and this was a second thing that they could be thinking about in terms of some of the Section 106 monies that they had not spent (if there was any) that they could be incorporating on swings on various play equipment.

## **Northfield District Committee – 24 June 2016**

The Chairman stated that Cycle South Birmingham could also be invited to attend the meeting in September. Councillor Cruise suggested that the Cabinet Member who was delivering BCR could be invited to the meeting in September as it was important that if they were joining up, then the *purse holder* of the funds should attend to respond to questions.

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### **UPDATE ON COLMERS FARM LEISURE CENTRE**

273 The Chairman drew the attention of the Committee to the briefing note in relation to Colmers Farm Leisure Centre.

(See Document No. 5)

Councillor O'Reilly stated that it would be useful to have Paul Walls, Leisure Project and Client Manager attending the meeting to talk about the leisure centre so that they were able to ask questions and seek reassurances in terms of staffing arrangements and access for the local community.

Councillor O'Reilly stated that Members would have seen the planning application for Northfield Leisure Centre and that it would be useful to get an update at the next District Committee on Northfield Leisure Centre and the plans for it.

(Councillor Cruise declared his non-pecuniary interest in Balaam Wood School)  
Councillor Cruise stated that in relation to the lettings side of things, what they had done was to get an organisation in to operate the lettings and to promote that school within the Frankley area. To reinstate some leisure provision there, but it was not known whether discussions had been had concern the school and whether this was something that could be explored.

Mr Davies advised that his understanding was that the schools themselves would sort out the lettings in the future. He added that he further understand that the user groups had been consulted concerning the issue and that everyone was happy with the proposal going forward.

(Councillor Brew declared his non-pecuniary interest as a Governor of the school).

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### **NORTHFIELD DISTRICT CULTURAL AND HERITAGE CHAMPIONS REPORT**

274 The Chairman stated that as this item had been briefly discussed earlier and that there will be an update at the next meeting in September.

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### **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

#### **District Committee Meetings**

275 Councillor Douglas Osborn stated that he had a question from Mr Martin Sullivan one of his constituents who were unable to attend the Committee meeting today who would like the Committee to consider whether it was possible to hold District Committee meetings in the District again as this would be more convenient for people who lived there.

The Chairman advised that they were looking into the issue including cost for web-streaming. The Committee Manager advised that his superiors had advised that they had no funding to web-stream District Committees in the Districts as the funding was for them to web-stream the Committee meetings during the day at the Council House.

Councillor O'Reilly advised that the four Assistant Leaders when appointed would be looking into devolution and that it was presumed that arrangements for District Committees would be looked at including where meetings should take place. He added that the Assistant Leaders would be consulting with District Committees. This was a valid point, but it would be premature to make any decisions until they had those discussions with the Assistant Leaders and look into the review.

Councillor O'Reilly stated that he heard a comment some time ago that democracy cost money and that if it turns out that this was the will he was sure that there would be a way of finding funding. He did not think that they should jump the gun at this stage until that review and discussion had taken place.

### **Fundraising for Charity**

The Chairman stated that Councillor Brew had raised the question of putting together a team to raise funding with Housing. He enquired whether there was a team from the Labour bench. Councillor O'Reilly advised that they would put a team together.

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

276

#### **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."

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The meeting ended at 1610 hours.

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CHAIRMAN