

Birmingham City Council

Perry Barr Ward Forum Meeting

Thursday 15 February 2018

The Alexander Stadium, Walsall Road, B42 2LR at 7pm

Meeting Notes

Present: Councillor Jon Hunt (Chair) and Councillor Morriam Jan
Councillor Ian Ward, Leader Birmingham City Council
Steve Hollingworth, Assistant Director Sports & Events
Ian MacLeod, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Elaina Cohen on behalf of Khalid Mahmood M.P.
Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager

There were approximately 150+ residents present.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and made introductions.

2. Notice of Recording

Noted.

3. Apologies – Councillor Karen Trench

4. Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022

The Chair said that he would be setting up a resident's liaison group for the Commonwealth Games that would meet regularly with planners and the Commonwealth Games team to take forward issues, matters of concern etc and join with the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group to take forward local planning. Composition of the resident's liaison group would include representatives from; The 3 B's Neighbourhood Planning Forum, Walsall Road Allotments, Perry Hall Community Association, Friends of Perry Hall Park, local businesses, residents nominated from this meeting to cover areas including Beeches Estate, Walsall Road, Cliveden Avenue, Perry Avenue/Rocky Lane, Wellhead Lane, Church Road, Booths Farm estate.

A power point presentation was then made by Steve Hollingworth & Ian MacLeod and the following main points highlighted;

- This was the start of the process which would develop over the next couple of years when there would be opportunities for further engagement with residents.
- The Commonwealth Games would accelerate delivery of Birmingham's strategy for growth, including transport links, public transport improvements & residential redevelopment
- The Alexander Stadium would be improved but there would be minimal impact on the park and there were no plans that would affect the allotments

- The athletes village would focus on the BCU site and incorporate 1000 homes with work starting immediately
- It was important that the Games left a legacy and this would include homes, green spaces and improvements to the public realm. A Perry Barr Master Plan was being prepared
- There would be further opportunities for resident engagement through regular events/meetings
- A named officer would be appointed as the main information point

Residents then made the following comments;

- Concern expressed regarding impact on Walsall Road Allotments and the effect of the build on the access to the allotments. Would there be adequate security during the build to ensure the allotment site was secure? A guarantee was sort that the allotments would not be touched.
- It was important to be clear on the legacy that the Games would leave for local people – many facilities had been lost over the years including the boathouse, tennis courts, bowling green, boating lake, ski slopes, astro turf, football pitch, park rangers – and that facilities were restored and available for community use.
- Areas for dog walkers needed to be maintained and facilities to encourage use by families with children should also be part of the legacy.
- The A34 was one of the busiest roads in Birmingham: what would be done to ensure it could cope with the additional traffic the Games would bring and prevent local roads from becoming grid locked? Incidents on the M6 affected the Walsall Road and caused major congestion. This had been exacerbated by the new warehouses and the number of lorries using the road. A relief route was required, especially during motorway closures. Improvements also needed to be considered for the Scott Arms junction in view of additional traffic coming from the motorway.
- Concern expressed that access from the canal into the park would be affected
- When events were held currently at the stadium roads such as Rocky Lane, Derrydown Road etc were used by visitors to park causing difficulties for residents. It was therefore queried how parking would be marshalled during the Games, the effect on the park and where overflow car parks would be situated.
- The Chair stressed that public access to the Park, including from the canal bank to the pond and through to the park needed addressing as did adequate signage.

Steve Hollingworth & Ian MacLeod made the following responses to the comments above;

- Walsall Road Allotments – access would be protected, maintained and secured. There were no plans to affect the allotments & current planning and national legislation also gave protection. There would be a time in the preparation for the games when the sports facilities would have to be secured and it was recognised that at this point a process for access to the allotments during Games times would have to be arranged.
- During the Games cars would not be allowed access around the stadium. When a ticket was issued for an event a free public transport ticket would

also be included. There would be a campaign to change travel behaviour and it would be made clear that there was no car parking provision at the stadium.

- The Alexander Stadium was being designed with the next 25 years in mind and would be a national sports hub. To be sustainable it would need all year round use, for example the warm up track for the Games would be kept, with an astro turf for football in the middle to be used afterwards by the community and schools. Paths around Perry Park would encourage use and a suggested trim trail was a further option. Suggestions on how to improve the Park would be welcomed.

Councillor Ian Ward commented that the Common Wealth Games was an opportunity for Birmingham and the residents of Birmingham that would not be repeated. Reductions to the council's budget had created difficulties for maintenance of parks, leisure facilities and the Games presented an opportunity to fund park and sporting facilities. A warm up track for the Commonwealth Games was a must for the athletes but an all-weather pitch would be incorporated into the middle to provide a legacy facility for schools. The Games would encourage a more active lifestyle and remove barriers to activity, especially for young people, as well as providing jobs and homes. The concerns regarding congestion were acknowledged but this was a city wide problem and investment in the metro and public transport was needed regardless. However the Games would accelerate the bus sprint system and investment in Perry Barr railway station.

Elaina Cohen spoke of her experience with the Manchester Common Wealth Games and the legacy that arose. Housing, shopping & transport links all improved as a result in Manchester. The opportunity for the residents group to engage in the process was essential for the Games to be a success.

Further comments were made by residents;

- There was general support for the Games and for the opportunities it could bring although it was important to give full consideration to the people who lived in the area both during the Games and in the period of build and regeneration.
- The importance of the Games leaving a lasting legacy had already been commented upon and there had been mention of the community facilities that would be available after the Games but anything that was made available for local residents needed to be affordable and prices maintained at a reasonable level thereafter.
- New housing was welcomed but the need for social housing to be included in the development was strongly felt.
- Roads and pavements in the area were in very poor condition and would need improvement in view of the number of visitors and the spotlight that would be on Perry Barr.
- A Birmingham velodrome would be an excellent legacy from the Games and would increase interest in cycling which would link into the council's vision of making Birmingham more cycle friendly.
- The level of consultation with people living in the Perry Barr area and affected by the Games was queried.

- A definition of community engagement was requested.
- While consideration was being given to public transport and road network improvements similar consideration needed also to be given to pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority across the Walsall Road

With regard to consultation, the Chair said that there would be formal consultation during the planning application process. The local councillors had undertaken a great deal of survey work at events and with groups regarding the Commonwealth Games with returns of 25% in favour, 25% against & 50% undecided in view of cost, impact on council services, facilities in the park. Local views had been respected and the Leader had taken them on board. The resident's liaison group would be fully engaged.

Councillor Ian Ward commented that he had been an advocate for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham for many years, especially having witnessed the positive impact on Manchester and had personally promoted Birmingham spurred on more recently by citizens & businesses. He acknowledged that he had not consulted but as an elected representative for Birmingham had made a bid for the Games. During the process there had however been little dissent. With regard to spend, the Leader assured that the Games would not impact on the council's revenue budget and 75% of the funding was coming from government which was investment that would not be made in Birmingham otherwise.

With regard to comments made about the park, Councillor Ward said that visitors would be arriving from all over the world and therefore it was important that Birmingham and the park was seen at its best so resources would be spent. Part of the legacy from the Games would be removal of barriers, including cost, to activity for families. With regard to the velodrome, Birmingham would be the first city to host without one but this had been due to the facility in Derby which had lessened demand for a Birmingham velodrome, however the view of the National Cycling Association was changing. Track cycling would be held in London due to seating requirements and the road racing was taking place in Warwickshire as Warwick & Coventry LEP was helping with funding and the image of the countryside for those watching would make good viewing.

In response to residents comments the meeting was advised;

- The contractor for the construction had not yet been appointed but a key question would be how would they mitigate during the period of major construction
- Access across the A34 – some improvements had already been undertaken ie the subways filled in but before the village was completed pedestrian connectivity had to be improved
- Affordable housing – BMHT would be providing houses as part of the scheme. In phase one the policy of 35% would not be fully met but during phase 2 more housing would be built and the policy met.

Residents then made further comments as follows;

- Barford Tigers Hockey Club provided free coaching for 6-16 year olds and if given the opportunity, gave an undertaking to provide free coaching to 140 children on Sundays if they were able to be based on the new astro turf as part of the community legacy.

- Street cleaning and rubbish removal needed to be improved in the area if the right impression was to be created and for the benefit of residents.
- A point of contact needed to be nominated as not everyone would be able to have a say/receive a response to their question at this meeting.
- The police had also been affected by cuts and officer numbers reduced so how would policing/security be organised and residents kept safe?
- How would the athletes village accommodation be transformed for use by families?
- Reference had been made to 'no cars' being allowed around the stadium during the Games and there was some scepticism that this would actually be enforced but if this was to be honoured road improvements should start now, eg the junction of Rocky Lane/ Walsall Road opposite the crematorium/stadium
- Concern expressed that the right contractor was chosen given recent effect of the collapse of Carillion.
- An assurance was sought that volunteering opportunities would be open in the first instance to young people from the local area.
- New housing development was welcomed but appropriate infrastructure eg doctors surgery, schools was vital to community sustainability.
- Cost of the Games to the city was a concern.
- The opportunity afforded to Birmingham was acknowledged and any regeneration of Perry Barr as a result was welcomed however it was not a direct comparison to the Manchester Games as that had been built on brownfield sites. The Birmingham Games was centred around an existing park and stadium located within a residential area and this needed to be at the fore front of planning/construction.
- The resident's liaison group was welcomed but it was hoped that as a legacy the group be continued beyond the Games in order to give residents a voice at the stadium in the future.
- Timescale sought for the demolition around Wellhead Lane and consideration requested to widening the road and changing the timing on the traffic lights.
- Re the legacy of the Games – the large number of new homes proposed would generate income for the council and therefore it was requested that some of that income be ring fenced for local use and in the run up to the Games it be used to borrow against for regeneration projects.
- In view of potential traffic congestion it was suggested that the Toll Road be free to use during the Games.
- No action should be taken to remove the hard shoulder along the Walsall Road to accommodate sprint buses etc as residents would lose valuable parking and would be forced to back their cars onto a main road.

The following responses to the above comments were made;

- A school was planned for the BCU site
- The council could not afford to fund the Games alone therefore the Combined Authority, BSLEP, Black Country LEP & Coventry & Warwick LEP had all made a contribution. Sandwell Council was providing the pool and Sport England was also contributing.
- 12,000 volunteers would be needed and a portion would be targeted from the most deprived area of the city, especially young people to provide qualifications to help find work.

- The Doug Ellis Leisure Centre would be retained and new medical facilities would be provided.
- The Police & Crime Commissioner had been involved in discussions and the budget for policing was substantial. Should additional spend on security be required the government would meet the cost.
- A single point of contact would be appointed within BCC.
- The stadium, in the future, could be used to host events currently held in London.
- The sprint buses would not work if caught in traffic and required dedicated lanes but there needed to be a modal shift as these problems affected all main corridors across the city.
- The M.P.'s office would have dedicated line and would take up local issues on behalf of residents.

5. Authority to Chairman and Officers

Agreed.

The meeting closed at 9pm