

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**NORTHFIELD DISTRICT
COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2015**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 1400 HOURS, IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Councillor Peter Griffiths in the Chair. Councillors Andy Cartwright, Peter Douglas Osborn, Simon Jevon, Jess Phillips, Valerie Seabright, Randal Brew, Debbie Clancy and Steve Booton.

ALSO PRESENT: -

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward
Richard Burden, Member of Parliament, Northfield Constituency
Kam Hundal, Employment Manager, Economy
Paul Phillips, Senior Employment Engagement Officer, DWP
Councillor Samuel Goodwin, Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council
Errol Wilson, Committee Manager

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 223 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.

APOLOGIES

- 224 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ian Cruise, Brett O'Reilly and Eddie Freeman.

MINUTES

The following amendments were noted: -

Minute No. 212

The last paragraph on page 8 line 2 "... Plan was drawn up if they had significantly ..." should read "... Plan was drawn up they had significantly ..."

Page 9, second paragraph line 4, "... Levy y comes ..." should read "... Levy comes ..."

Minute No. 213

The title of the item should be "Birmingham Council Housing Investment Programme ..." not "Birmingham Council Hopusing Investment Programme ..."

Page 10, paragraph 5, line 3 "... Thorough Grove ..." should read "... Farrell Grove ..."

Minute No. 215

The second paragraph line 3, "... straining on the ..." should read "... training on the ..."

225

RESOLVED: -

That, subject to the inclusion of the amendments, the minutes of the meetings held on the 18 September 2015, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Seabright made reference to the first paragraph in relation to the Ward by Ward breakdown on page 14 of the minutes and advised that this had not happened. She added that no progress had been made on the speed visors. She enquired whether a letter was sent to Police Constable Marjorie Levy. The District Convention was not included on this agenda.

Councillor Brew referred to page 14 of the minutes in relation to Councillor Cartwright's request for the Youth Service to be placed as an item on a future agenda and requested that this be done for a substantive debate. The Chairman suggested that this be included as an item on the agenda for March 2016. Councillor Douglas Osborn stated that the Square Club had been destined for sale. He enquired when it would be placed on the market and whom it would be sold to.

The Chairman undertook to pass the enquiry onto the estates section for guidance. He advised that as far as he was aware the letter had not been sent to Constable Levy, but that he would speak with Richard Davies, Northfield District Head concerning the issue.

Councillor Clancy referred to the template for the community governance structure and enquired when this could be expected. The Chairman advised that Mr Davies undertook to arrange for this to be done as soon as the template.

Richard Burden, MP raised the issues of the North Worcestershire Golf Course (NWGC) and advised that he had received an email earlier this week, which had suggested that apparently, the Golf Club had written to their members confirming that the Golf Club would close in March 2016. He advised that the resident who had informed him of this had stated that if the Golf Club was closing, this could mean that

the land had been approved to be developed. Mr Burden advised that this did not mean anything of the kind as it was two separate processes. He added that it was worth the Committee logging that information and that the position as outlined in the previous minutes remained the case i.e. planning assumption was that there was still no development. The Inspector had not changed this and no planning application was submitted by Bloor Homes.

The Chairman commented that this was the position as he understood it and that he and Councillor Douglas Osborn were members of the Planning Committee and they did not receive an application for consideration.

Councillor Brew commented that his understanding was Bloor Homes was subsidising the Club by a substantial amount year-on-year and wondered whether that had now ceased.

The Chairman advised that in relation to the speed visors, he had read an email today that was sent to the District Engineer from the Northfield office, requesting that he substantiate where the expenditure from the Community Chest went. He added that he did not feel that the bill had been paid yet and that it had been held where Kings Norton was concerned as there was no evidence to suggest that it had been spent in Kings Norton.

Councillor Cartwright stated that with regard to NWGC, it was vital that they get Bloor Homes to attend a meeting in the District especially as there were a number of residents who lived in close proximity of NWGC who had concerns. This was something they could not pull the wool over, especially with the road consultations that were being undertaken. This would have an effect on the consultations concerning road, parking in the area schools, health centres etc. Councillor Cartwright added that pressure needed to be placed on Bloor Homes and for action to be taken concerning the issue.

The Chairman advised that they were not in a position to take any action as no planning application was submitted. It was just hearsay at present. Councillor Brew stated that this was correct, but that like Councillor Cartwright, he had concerns and residents were entitled to have a repeat of the consultation as the last meeting with Bloor Homes was two years ago. Bloor Homes had promised to come back with the basics and they needed to be held to that promise.

CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

226 The Chairman advised that he would take agenda item 5 ahead of the remaining reports.

NORTHFIELD DISTRICT JOBS AND SKILLS PLAN

The following report was submitted:-

(See Document No. 3)

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Kam Hundal, Employment Manager and Paul Phillips, Senior Employment Engagement Manager, DWP, presented the item and drew the committee's attention to the information contained in the draft document.

Councillor Seabright stated that she welcomed the initiatives, but voiced concerns at the level of unemployment in Northfield District, particularly in Kings Norton where there was a lot of poverty, unemployment, a number of Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). She added that having looked at the report; they were not giving enough focus on these areas.

Councillor Seabright advised that some of the premises being put forward in the Plan concerning the improvements, skills, training etc. were out of touch with the real world. The Government was cutting funding to Further and Higher Education. If you look at one off these premises, you would think it was great, but if you live in Kings Norton or Longbridge, it takes 35 minutes to get to the University Hospital Birmingham (UHB) who were cutting staff and wanted skilled and higher level staff, which they did not have sufficient numbers for. This was a catch 22 situation, unless you have the training and the courses on offer for those lower skilled, you will not get the improvement in that employment.

Looking at the further education issues where Birmingham was concerned, there was going to be some drastic cuts where they were considering a reduction in the number of colleges. A large proportion of colleges cut their more substantive courses at the end of which was now leisure and tourism etc. and they had lost out on technology which was the one thing they wanted in this area.

Kings Norton Ward had a massive promise of serious investments a number of years ago which seemed to have disappeared following the New Deal. The £150m was less than half of what they were originally promised. The idea was that they would regenerate the area, reintroduce the community that was there. People who lived there could not get a place to live and it was not being built for the local people and was for anyone else who could get in. The policy of how people were allocated properties back into the area needed to be looked at.

Councillor Jevon made reference to the lack of work experience for young people and enquired how the businesses were being sought out to create these places. He further enquired whether there was anything that the Committee could do to help getting the extra places.

Mr Phillips stated that a number of ways both locally and pan-district, in March 2015, his District manager, Nigel Kinton launched a challenge together with Birmingham City Council Leader, Sir Albert Bore, to find 10,000 work experience places across Birmingham. They were currently well over that target within the 12 month period. Essentially, what the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was doing on the ground was engaging with employers not only to talk about vacancies, but to broker those relationships around work experience.

Work experience for some employers had been a scary prospect as there was paper work to complete. There was not in fact one form to complete and they support the employers with and would talk through and support by being on site for the first period of work experience to facilitate the process and to make suggestions as to what that work experience individual might benefit from for the 2 – 8 week period that they were spending on work experience.

Virtually every intervention/conversation with an employer they had, they would talk to them about work experience, how to get individuals out of a vicious circle where they were applying for a job, but they were immediately sifted out because they do not have any work experience. They had seen how valuable the experience could be. They did not have any issue on persuading people how valuable work experience could be. If somebody was taking a young person or a person of any age on, for a period of work experience, there was an investment there for the employer. There was a social responsibility aspect with that, but the benefits of the parties were explained by the DWP.

They had a database of employers that they were working with in Birmingham and Solihull and they were growing that database daily. They would shortly be working with another part of the organisation that would pass their employer leads to them that would build on the database. Every organisation they were talking to, they were underlining the merits of work experience. They presently have 600 agreements in Birmingham and Solihull from large and medium sized organisations that were following the work experience programme. Some of this was on Birmingham City Council's website and was informing them of what the individuals thought about their time of employment and were getting positive feedback from the individuals.

Mr Burden endorsed the context that Councillor Seabright mentioned and commented that the elephant in the room around all of this was a lot of what was happening around Further Education (FE) and adult skills etc., which was serious and had threatened to hit Birmingham hard. There was a review currently being done and it was important that the District kept a close eye on that as it could be serious. Looking at the report he felt schizophrenic, but the thing that was good about it was that the data confirms what they knew about skill levels in the area; educational achievement and employment profile and giving the up to date figures on all of that.

Mr Burden advised that as he carried on through the Plan his heart sank as it then when on to say what do you do about this, it was sketchy. In terms of the Action Plan a number of the actions were setting targets and promoting things. You then look at ownership of those actions and this was incredibly sketchy and a number had no ownership. The progress update was not there and there was no timescale for a number of things. He remarked that this was not a Plan but a good list of problems and issues to address and some ideas of things that might need to happen in order to help address them, but was not an Action Plan. He stated that this needed to be changed in two ways – on the implementation mechanism; and what it was trying to address.

Mr Burden stated that he was pleased about the shift in the DWP away from the obsession of sanctioning, towards proactively matching people with the labour market and this was to be welcomed. However, there was a sense of what was being said i.e. how people could be matched with the opportunities to be there in the area, but the opportunities that were in the area was limited. If you look at numbers, a lot of jobs were produced in retail and whilst it was important to get local people employed, retail could not be the sum of a Jobs and Skills Plan for Northfield. They needed to look at issues of supply and demand of jobs and skills and at the moment the Plan did not do this. There was a need to look at aspiration and expectation and what it was that if there was a young person at school.

Mr Burden referred to page 7 of the document regarding a reluctance of local people to travel outside of Northfield to find work. He added that behind this were some profound issues about how people saw their life chances, how far they thought Birmingham was and how far they thought the University and Selly Oak was and how the change this around. He stated that the Project Board would be important and that it needed to be action focused and it was important that on there were people and institutions that could deliver the programme. Discussions needed to be had as to who would deliver it, ownership as to who makes things happen and how it reaches out to private sector employers and others to take things forward.

Councillor Douglas Osborn commented that he welcomed the renewed interest in unemployment and that in the last 4 years unemployment was reducing steadily. They had 14,000 directly employed people in Northfield Constituency ... in the main these were unskilled which meant high value skill for people who did not have the qualifications. They had to work their way through the conception as to why it was important to have the qualification. One of the ways it was done was by the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP).

Work experience was a way of subsidising youngsters to learn as in many cases their contribution. It was negative when they start but they need to get over that problem. Subsidising their employment every six month period was an ideal way of getting experience. All these reports were in the DWP to tell people how to do it. They were now in a position if they could access those old records to see how it was done as it was successful. What they needed was that combined with the vocational skills which they could get from Bournville College and to offer that more economically with other colleges so that they were not competing with a duplicate set of managers, lecturers, staff associated with them and they get a more directly related service from the different colleges. It was hoped that they would not lose that individual touch which a college like Bournville manage to do.

Councillor Cartwright stated that he liked the fact that local jobs were going to local people in Longbridge. He echoed Councillor Douglas Osborn's comments concerning the Longbridge Plant, but that he would like to manufacturing on the Longbridge Plant as it was next to the rail network and the motorway connections. He added that this was a prime target and that he felt that they were missing something. Councillor Cartwright questioned why they were not talking to the local schools if there was work experience. Work experience, whether it was in Sainsbury's or in manufacturing was experience for a young person to get into a job to meet people and to learn. There was a need to look at what the City need and consider places like Longbridge where there was a site to build things and putting that there so that the next generation could have a job in the future.

Councillor Clancy made reference to page 15 of the document in relation to *Priority, Action, Milestones/Targets etc.* and commented that she gets a number of complaints from parents concerning the quality of the work experience particularly for years 10 -13. Speaking with parents, the issues were that some parents were quite willing to contribute by finding the places themselves. If they get back too late or the child fails to deliver the letter, there were so many placements they could do. Some parents took it on themselves to do this. Councillor Clancy enquired how far they were with *businesses engaging with schools* she further enquired how experienced the people who offered the advice to the children were as this was sometimes a 'wishy washy area' with people in schools. This did not always joined up with that

particular individual and this was a weakness which was not taking forward the issues being discussed.

Mr Phillips stated that there were two separate issues, but they were linked as they were talking about work experience. He advised that he was talking about work experience for people who were claiming primary benefits. They did not broker a work experience placement with employers on behalf of schools. The DWP would shortly be moving some of their work coaches into schools, but they had not yet made a decision as to which schools these would be. They did not have a mandate to do this in the DWP up until recently, but they had now. The point about the quality of work experience was important and if anyone this was a box ticking exercise this was wrong. It had to be quality work experience where the individual is mentored throughout that period and they could develop their competency and skills and confidence. A lot of people who started on work experience find it difficult to make eye contact on the first day, but by day 3 or 4 they were part of the team. This was what they wanted work experience to give to people.

Councillor Brew referred to admin and stated that across the district's border was Bournville School – he sees the document as the Jobs and Skills Plan for Northfield District, but a number of children attending Bournville School were from Northfield. He enquired whether these children would be covered by the Northfield Jobs and Skills Plan or the Selly Oak District Jobs and Skills Plan and whether they talk with each other. Councillor Brew stated that he would like to see more quality opportunities being given to people. He added that he did not want to see them all in retail and that they needed to acknowledge that there were jobs with skills to be had and they were needed in this area. He stated that he had undertaken some research recently and that he was amazed to find that within the City of Birmingham, there were 34,000 businesses and a significant material help in reducing unemployment would be with small businesses as it was small businesses that would employ 1, 2 or 5 people. He added that there was a need to devise a scheme where they engage with small businesses as they had the skills to engage young people.

Councillor Brew made reference to section 5 of the document – Jobs and Skills Action Plan and expressed disappointment as to where this was leading them to. He voiced concerns that they were not addressing the issues stated on page 15 as aggressively as they should. He added that he would like to see this as being more robust and challenging and that an action tracker be included and that a report be submitted to the Committee in 6 months' time indicating what they had done and being honest about it. It was recognised that they would not achieve everything, but they needed to be honest about this and tell the Committee what has happened who would then look at it. Councillor Brew further referred to page 16 – the milestone target and stated that he would welcomed a short report of individual cases so that they could see what was being achieved. He added that he would love to hear from young people to come and share their experience if this was possible.

Mr Phillips advised that in terms of the breakdown of employer size, approximately 45% of the employers that they engaged with had 1 – 10 employees which were micro and a similar figure for those with 11 – 250 employees. The larger employers were in the minority and it was important to them as they had a smaller medium business strategy which was important in terms of the District Jobs and Skills Plan. What the Plan meant for the DWP, particularly the Jobcentre Plus was that they needed to alter their position in the community rather than being seen as the building

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on the corner that people could come to sign on for money. They needed to get out into the community and this was the reason they were around the table with other organisations.

Ms Hundal advised that in terms of schools with pupils from neighbouring districts, this was something that as officers they would be picking up within the Project Jobs and Skills Board to ensure that children were given similar opportunity across boundaries, it was about joining up. With regard to moving forward the District Leads would also be joining up in terms of the work programme moving forward in terms of a quadrant style. This lends itself to doing some combined work across the District boundary.

The Chairman agreed for the Committee to accept the Plan with a proviso that they revisit the action plan, develop an action tracker and regularly review it on a 6 monthly basis; support the establishment of a Project Board to oversee the work; and that they work jointly with neighbouring areas particularly with jobs and skills and NEET. This meets with the points in the minutes of the previous meeting when the Committee requested that he speaks with the neighbouring Districts. Selly Oak District had agreed to work with Northfield concerning the jobs and skills as this was one of their Neighbourhood Challenge.

The Chairman thanked Kam Hundal and Paul Phillips for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

228

District Champion for Jobs and Skills

RESOLVED:-

That Councillors Brett O'Reilly and Simon Jevon be appointed as the District Champions for Jobs and Skills for the Northfield District.

CORPORATE PARENTING

229

The following corporate parenting presentation was submitted:-

(See Document No.1)

Councillor Valerie Seabright introduced the item and advised that Andy Pepper, Assistant Director, Children in Care Provider Services was at an event where the Children in Care Council had taken over the diaries of the senior people this afternoon. Councillor Seabright added that a lot of work had been done over the last 12 months in developing corporate parenting and were moving forward in terms of the improvement plan. Mr Pepper was appointed the Assistant Director and was doing a good job. The Head of a Virtual School was also appointed which deals with the additional support of education access for all children in care.

As corporate parenting champion, the City and Corporate Parenting Champion Board had asked that she chaired that Board. This was not set up with the same statutory meaning as other governing bodies, but it focuses on children in care with representatives from KPMG amongst others who were hosting some of those meetings. This links in with the discussion on the previous item in terms of employment for children in care. As Elected Members they all had the role of corporate parenting as well as the officers of the City Council who had that role also.

Councillor Seabright then drew the Committee's attention to the information in the document. She highlighted that part of the role was to get Member colleagues from the other Districts to be involved in the Regulation 44 visits and training events were being planned concerning what the visits were about and what needed to be done. They had a new strategy which meant they could start getting data that could be looked at closely. She advised that she had requested that the data be broken down on a Ward by Ward basis and that it was agreed that this would be done. They needed to know what was happening and the number of children in the area and monitoring the children in the schools in the area to ensure that they were getting a good deal and were progressing.

There were a number of people who were working on different areas of interest for children in care. There were two issues that the children in care were working on – pocket money and overnight stay. Pocket money was a big issue and in Birmingham they were not as good as in some other areas. There were issues particularly for girls who had to purchase intimate things that the pocket money may not cover. There were serious issues and proposals were put forward for the next agenda. In terms of overnight stay, a sleep over for a child in care was more bureaucratic due to the area of safeguarding and duty of care etc. This was something the children had looked at. One of the things they were trying to involve was scrutiny. It was noted that corporate parenting was on the next scrutiny agenda.

Councillor Clancy committed that they all had to be committed with regard to children in care. She added that all Elected Members had to be involved as this was the way forward. She stated that she echoed Councillor Seabright's comments and looked forward to the training.

The Chairman suggested that perhaps they could have District training as in theory they could attend the Regulation 44 visits in pairs. Councillor Cartwright commented that he had worked in a number of Care Homes and that he could remember that when they had spoken with a number of vulnerable children it was amazing what they came up with. He added that a number of them had suggested what the Council could do for them. He enquired whether this could be done at the district level as there were a number of care homes in the area or on the boundary, what they expect them to be doing as corporate parents.

Councillor Booton enquired what Regulation 44 was. Councillor Seabright advised that this was visits to establishments who had children in care. She added that they could get access to residential care where they had children in care. There was some children's home in the City where the children were from other places and they did not have the same right to visit these homes. This was something that needed to be sorted out nationally as those children were still vulnerable and it was know what the resources were like across the big cities.

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Councillor Seabright voiced concerns about how many of the Council's social workers had time to visit these children in Cornwall and other areas of the country. This was a national issue as children were at risk. In relation to Councillor Cartwright's question, the first Corporate Parenting Board she attended everyone was asked and the answers were incredibly different. Even the Committee as Elected Members were not necessarily doing what they wanted. A district level training would be useful. Originally they had arranged for the training to be done before Full Council meeting, but the Future Council Programme took over those times and this had dropped off the agenda.

The Chairman commented that they did not know where all the children's homes were in the Wards. If there was district focused training this could focus on Members and the work that needed to be done in the area.

Councillor Seabright undertook to get the data of how many children were in care in the area including the number of fostered children. She added that there were a lot of fostered children in the City and it would be useful to support those who were fostering children. Foster parents did not get the recognition they deserved and it would be nice if they did something for the Foster parents living in Northfield. She suggested that a rewards event could be held liked the one held for children in care who had achieved good GCSE results, organised by Andrew Wright, the new Virtual School Head.

In response to Councillor Booton's query, Councillor Douglas Osborn advised that the 1989 Children's Act gave the protection order to children. Councillor Brew endorsed Councillor Seabright's suggestion concerning an awards ceremony and commented that it would be excellent. He added that when he had the privilege of being Lord Mayor, he had 5 -6 'Stars Shining Party' in the Chamberlain Room and they had young people who were either adopted or being Fostered; they had natural parents; Foster and Care parents and he could still see the faces of some of the children he had presented with awards – one because she smiled every day and another who had received an award for not running away from home for three months.

The Chairman commented that it was an excellent idea that they could develop some award that could be given by the District. He suggested that Richard Davies along with the Corporate Parenting Champions could work on the awards programme.

Councillor Cartwright advised that there was a plaque that would be erected in the Youth Centre in recognition of the work undertaken by the Late Darren Brettle. He added that if any award was made that his name be put forward as the Darren Brettle Award. The Committee agreed for this to be done.

BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2015/16

Ruth Bowles, Place Manager, Northfield Ward introduced the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the Northfield District Capital Environmental Budget Position Statement 2015/16.

(See document No. 4)

Councillor Seabright enquired about Bentmead Grove. She added that as part of the regeneration there, they did not want to spend too much, but the state of the properties was in a diabolical condition. She stated that this was the third time at the District Committee she had asked that someone looked at those properties in the interim as they were taking rent. Ms Bowles undertook to arrange with the Place Based Manager to investigate the issue.

Councillor Douglas Osborn stated that only 3% had been spent in Weoley Castle and that it was hoped that this would be rectified. The Chairman advised that he had discussed this previously and that they need more equanimity in terms of the bids coming forward, but it was for the Housing Liaison Board (HLB) and officers in those areas to make recommendations. This will be considered for next year's budget.

Councillor Phillips stated that all the numbers seem arbitrary and that in her opinion she could get some lights cheaper. She added that this was public money of which they had very little and that she would like to see the workings behind what it was that in internal decoration the Block cost £6k. She further stated that this seemed a lot of money and appeared to be standardised. Councillor Phillips stated that 3% for Weoley was good seeing that Longbridge had even less.

Councillor Clancy made reference item 31 - the upgrading of the communal lighting to Block 95a 107 Coney Green Drive and stated that anything to do with lighting internally was a safeguarding issue and they did not want anything bad to happen.

Councillor Cartwright expressed disappointment that no one had put forward things for Longbridge than he had done, especially in Frankley. He questioned whether it was because the residents in Frankley did things for themselves why they did not get any help. He advised that he had put forward things particularly the car park on the Roundabout, lighting within Farmdale Grove in Rednal, a car park that was covered with trees and was dark.

Councillor Jevon enquired what a *Maxi Pizza ASD Light Fitting* (item 28) was

Mr Burden enquired how the report got to this stage and how the bids came in and how it was that there were gaps in particular Longbridge and whether there had been any strategy for the approval process i.e. what was approved, how it was approved, whether there was any assessment and what the impact of a particular thing was going to be and the relationship to the project in terms of the point raised by Councillor Phillips, how the projects worked and where were the areas this was not working either in terms of things not coming in, or bids coming in but not being judged to be sufficient.

Councillor Goodwin enquired whether it was possible to get a wider approved contractor list as this would bring the price down.

Ms Bowles advised that regarding the contractors, they used the Housing Service repairs contractors and these were the costs that were previously agreed. Tenders were being taken for the new repairs contract for the coming years. This would be announced shortly, so whether or not those prices would change as these were 'bucket like' prices. Ms Bowles advised that quotes were had from the Contract Works Officer. She undertook to submit a report on the process at the next District Committee meeting.

Councillor Brew commented that in terms of equality amongst the Wards he would like to see it closer and that it needed to be based on need and the number of properties. He questioned whether they were funding things with the Housing Investment Fund programme that should be paid for from the Housing Revenue Account budget. He added that the HRA was underspent for the year ending 31 March 2015 by £699k in Northfield District. Councillor Brew echoed Mr Burdens' comment regarding having a report as to how this was generated and some explanation on each scheme and why it was not being done by the normal repairs budget within the HRA.

The Chairman requested that the report identifies which category the repairs fall into i.e. the Housing Investment Fund programme or the Housing Revenue Account budget. Councillor Seabright suggested that the City representative on the City HLB could be asked to progress this to the City HLB as this was for environmental improvement. She added that there was money elsewhere that could also be spent on this. Councillor Brew stated that when they were assessing, going forward, how the 'cake was cut', but would also like to look at where the spending was over the last four years as it obscures the previous year for Kings Norton. A brief discussion concerning the issue then ensued.

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

It was

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RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approved the report.

UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE

231

Councillor Steve Booton presented the item and advised that when they discussed the Neighbourhood Challenge at the last District Committee meeting, there were concerns raised about raising expectations that they could not deliver. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) was a huge issue. They looked at setting the target and the purpose of the project was simple. He highlighted the following: -

The purpose of the project was to improve performance
Dealing with ASB across all tenure by sharing information and working together.
Use the resources of the Police, social landlords, private landlords and the City Council effectively and to share ideas.

In order to do this he had met with the Chief Officers of the four major Housing Associations that work in the area. (He had not yet met with the 5th housing Association). The idea was to meet with the Housing Associations to discuss the problem they were facing and the potential solutions. It was agreed for a Workshop to be held on the 14th January 2016, at Northfield Library, from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. The four Housing Associations with the City had bought into the process and had offered to deliver some of the workshop events etc.

Councillor Booton advised that having spoken with the Housing Associations, the following points were raised that it was felt should be improved upon: -The Police –

he had spoken with the Police at length about the situation who advised that one of the problem was that if they were working on a particular case and were making good progress, and someone goes on holiday or leaves their post etc., the process then 'hits a brick wall'. The Police suggested that if someone went on holiday or leaves the post, that someone automatically steps in to follow the process through.

Councillor Booton stated that he had spoken with Midland Heart regarding the question of getting new tenants into properties. It transpired that they had been in situations where they had rehoused tenants with little or no knowledge as to what happened to that tenant before. Often it was not that they would not house the tenant, but they would be housing the tenant elsewhere and under a different type of tenancy agreement etc. Midland Heart had used mediation in terms of ASB by getting the tenants to sit and talk through the issues with the mediator. This had proved successful. He highlighted that he had spoken with Bournville Village Trust (BVT) who had a specialist team working in and around the area of ASB. BVT had also agreed to attend the event on the 14th January 2016.

The Workshop event organised for the 14th would look at sharing information. Another point that was raised was to discuss the nature of ASB itself. ASB was a catch all phrase and could mean anything from someone annoying a resident by the way they park to something more serious that involve violence. The general feeling amongst the social landlords that he had spoken with was that there was a need for a general idea about what was accepted as far as ASB was concerned. The idea was to have some witnesses from the meeting on the 14th January 2016 attend the District Committee meeting on the 22nd January 2016 and then to produce a report. The Registered Social Landlords were keen to be involved with the proposal. They were meeting on Monday 23 November 2015, to put together a draft programme for the Workshop and the Workshop would feed directly into the District Committee meeting on Friday 22nd January 2016.

The Chairman advised that he and Councillor Brew had attended a Housing Health Workshop Organised by the Primary Care Team (PCT) which was useful and they had provided them with some links and feedback from service users and had raised some issues that could be fed into the meeting on the 22nd January 2016. This meant that they had some contact with the PCT and was charged with contacting the Primary Care Commissioner, Dr Coward as a result of the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Steve Booton for presenting the information and requested that the Committee keep the dates in their diaries. He added that the questioning for the next scrutiny committee, Members needed to think about what they wanted to ask.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

District Convention

232

The Chairman advised that a mini-convention was scheduled for Tuesday 22 December 2015, from 1:00pm to 3:15pm, at the Factory. The launch of the Place Plans for each of the four Wards would take place. All Members were welcome to attend. The full convention would be held in the New Year.

The Square Club/Youth Provision in Weoley Ward

233 Councillor Douglas Osborn referred to the reduction of youth provision in Weoley resulting from the problems with the Square Club in that the City's evaluation of the repair to the heating system amounts to £125k. There were also problems as it deteriorates with the wooden floor, they would start to rise in this weather which was an expensive process and was getting worse. Councillor Douglas Osborn advised that his understanding was that the City Council had taken the decision that the club was to be placed on the open market for sale. He requested through the Chairman that an absolute necessity must be the retention of youth provision within that area as they would not go to the Factory

Councillor Booton stated that his understanding was that the youth provision would be met by the Community Church and the Youth Service was providing the staff to take this on. His concern was that if the Square Club was to be sold, that the Ward be given some of the money from the sale for youth provision within the Ward

Councillor Douglas Osborn stated that the concerns the Ward Members had was that the Estate Department would not see it that way and this was where the help of the Chairman was needed

The Chairman commented that there was a provision with the sale of any property for some of the funds to be given to the locality by negotiation and agreement, but this had been a diminishing amount. He undertook to discuss the issue with Councillor Ian Ward, Deputy Leader of the City Council to ascertain whether the appropriate agreement was had. He added that this was the same situation in Kings Norton and that these were two areas where they needed to keep youth provision going.

Councillor Cartwright commented that young people lived on postcode barriers and would not go past them. He added that they go where they live and love.

Richard Davies – Northfield District Head

234 Councillor Brew expressed best wishes to Richard Davies, Northfield District Head for a speedy recovery on behalf of the District Committee. The Chairman undertook to convey the Committee's good wishes to Mr Richard Davies.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

235 **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 1540 hours.

CHAIRMAN