

WARD END WARD FORUM MEETING – ACTION NOTES

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| WARD: Ward End | DATE: Tuesday 19 th March 2024 |
| VENUE: Lakeside Café, Dolphin Women’s Centre, Ward End Park, Washwood Heath Road | START/FINISH TIMES: 12:00pm – 1:00pm |
| COUNCILLOR: Bushra Bi | NOs OF ATTENDEES: 17 |
| OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Beverly Edmead, Community Governance Manager, BCC | VISITING SPEAKER(S): None |

CURRENT WARD ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES:

1. A Bold Prosperous Ward - Support Businesses and Improve prospects/opportunities for Ward End Residents
2. A Bold Inclusive Ward - Volunteering and community engagement, creating community involvement opportunities and an awareness for inclusion
3. A Bold Safe Ward - Reduce speed and road safety measures
4. A Bold Healthy Ward - Improve health inequalities in Ward End
5. A Bold Green Ward - Ensure Ward End is a greener happier place to live, for all residents

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, Cllr Bi welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Notice of Recording

Residents were advised that members of the press and/or public may record and/or take photographs of the meeting.

3. Brum Breathes (Clean Air Zone) Funding Applications Presentation

The Agenda item was deferred to a later date as the application had been withdrawn due to changes that were required to be made in order to meet the funding criteria.

4. Cllr Bushra Bi's News and Updates

Residents were advised of briefly advised of the City Council's current financial crisis faced by the City Council and the budget savings of £300M that was required to be made over the next two years. In addition, Commissioners had been sent in by Central Government to oversee the process and to ensure that unnecessary spending was reduced and that the required savings were made.

These included:-

- An increase in Council Tax by 21% over the next two years
- Waste Collection service – a move to fortnightly collections from next year
- A reduction in library services/community centres
- Changes to the delivery of local highway services – including the trimming and dimming of street lighting across the city
- A reduction in the provision of youth services/facilities.
- Job losses/reductions in targeted service areas and the redesign and delivery of council services in all areas

Responding to residents' comments and concerns regarding the budget proposals that had been voted for by Councillors from the Labour Group, Cllr Bi explained that if the budget proposals had not been approved, the process would have been overseen by the Government appointed Commissioners, and the reduction/changes to all services could have been more stringent and severe.

Cllr Bi added that all Elected Members had acknowledged and fully recognised the impact the severity of the proposals and additional increase in Council Tax would have on all residents/citizens. However, Officers and Councillors remained fully committed to ensuring that essential Statutory Services were protected and delivered as much as possible and that vulnerable residents/communities were supported through these difficult times.

Residents were particularly concerned about the possible closure of Ward End Library, as details in the proposals indicated that as many as 25 community libraries would close as a result of the cuts. The Library was a very well used facility for local people as well as residents from neighbouring wards, and every effort must be made to ensure it remained open and available for community use.

Cllr Bi explained that no decision had been made yet regarding the Library Services and that the headlines in the media should be treated read with caution as they did not always accurately reflect the full story. A transformation and review of all services delivered by the City Council was needed and would have to be carried out over time to ensure that it provided the best possible service it could within the budget provided.

Consultations regarding the proposals and reshaping of services and how they were going to be delivered would take place over time, and this would also include the proposals for Library Services. Cllr Bi stressed that no decision had been made regarding Ward End Library or any other library in the city until full consultation regarding had been carried out.

Residents would continue to be kept informed as details of the consultation process was published – residents were actively encouraged to take part in the process if they wanted to retain Ward End Library and to also encourage their family members, friends and neighbours in the ward to do the same.

Cllr Bi further advised that many of the changes proposed would not come into effect until 2025.

5. Any Other Business

None raised.

Meeting closed at 12:45pm