

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

ERDINGTON DISTRICT COMMITTEE TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2015
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ERDINGTON
DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 24
NOVEMBER 2015 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE
ROOM 2, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT : - Councillor Josh Jones in the Chair;

Councillors Robert Alden, Bob Beauchamp, Mick Brown, Lynda Clinton, Des Hughes, Mick Finnegan, Penny Holbrook, Gareth Moore, Gary Sambrook, Mike Sharpe and Ron Storer.

ALSO PRESENT :-

Mike Davis – District Head (Erdington)
John Mole – Ward Support Officer
Sarah Stride – Committee Manager

- 301 The Chairman welcomed all those in attendance and advised that this was the first session of District Neighbourhood Challenge and that the issue to be discussed at the meeting was 'Clean and Green' as was previously agreed at an all Members meeting.

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 302 The Chairman advised that the meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press / public may record and take photographs.

The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 303 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Superintendent Brandon Langley, West Midlands Police for his inability to attend the meeting.

Apologies for lateness were submitted on behalf of Councillors Robert Alden and Gareth Moore.

MINUTES

304

RESOLVED:-

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 October 2015, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE

305

In response to a question raised by Councillor Finnegan concerning the possible duplication of information relayed at District Committee's in relation to the discussion on Neighbourhood Challenge, the Chairman advised that the schedule for the Erdington District Neighbourhood Challenge was drawn up by himself and the Erdington District Head and it was likely that other District Committee's had replicated the same template for submission to their own District. He stated that it was unlikely that those speakers invited to attend the Erdington District Committee had also been invited to attend other District Committees as they were local partners to the Erdington District only and their presence at another District would not be beneficial.

Parks and Open Spaces

John Porter and Phil Beville gave a verbal presentation and made the following points:

- Erdington Parks covered 76 sites which equated to approximately one million seven hundred and sixteen thousand square metres of land.
- Measuring litter and issues concerning cleanliness was dependent upon the number of enquiries received from local residents. In the Erdington District eight enquiries regarding litter and cleanliness over the last three years have been recorded. The average across the City was ten enquiries. Glendales, the external provider responsible for grounds maintenance has indicated that there has been a reduction in litter volumes in the Erdington District year on year. Completion levels for the grounds maintenance contract are 99.94% satisfactory. Across the City the figure is 99.88%. All grounds maintenance contracts are monitored extensively and the work undertaken is being completed and litter is being collected on a weekly basis across the vast majority of the sites.
- Erdington District has five dedicated park keepers in Castle Vale Park, Centre Parks, Pype Hayes Park, Rookery and Brookvale Park and Witton Lakes Park. Park keepers are also responsible for cutting parkland grass twelve times a year, pick up litter, monitor fly tipping and graffiti and generally regulate cleanliness on a regular basis.
- Each District must provide environmental quality survey (EQS) information which covers part of parks and as part of a rolling programme sites can be nominated to be surveyed, and if any sites were found to be failing they are highlighted to the appropriate officers for investigation. However, the EQS has shown that the standards required have been met with regards to litter picking.

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- Partnership working with Friends of Parks groups has proven to be successful. Local residents become actively involved in litter picking on a voluntary basis. Local involvement partnership working enables a better future for all parks and public open spaces.
- It was envisaged that following recent community developments (community asset transfers and new ownerships etc) public toilets and cafes will be made available in some parks in the Erdington District turning local parks into premier parks.
- Consideration of urban Health and Wellbeing Parks – covering three out of four Wards in the Erdington District specializing in various activities for people of all ages such as sailing, bird watching etc. Parks and partnership groups were part of the community and when working together could be a solution to several other aspects and needs of the community, such as anti- social behaviour.

In response to questions raised by Members the following responses were given:

- Reporting litter build-up in parks- feedback was often received from Members, Council staff, partners and local residents. Litter is measured by the number of bags used to discard the litter. Litter hot spots are known and monitored. Complete litter spot checks and monitor the situation via the EQS.
- Across the City there are 594 park sites and Districts are different sizes.
- Look to provide cafes and toilet facilities where staff is on-site to monitor vandalism and misuse of the toilet facilities.
- Do have wildlife habitats in Erdington District – Urban Buzz. Externally funded project to create more wildlife and wild flower areas in the District.
- Do a lot of work training voluntary staff involved in the Friends groups and concentrate on working together to form a working partnership.

Partnerships – Outside bodies

Jagwant Johal (Witton Lodge Community Association) and Lynda ????? (Friends of Witton Lakes) gave a verbal presentation and made the following points:

- The Friends of Witton Lakes was formed in 2009 to set up the 'duckling watch' which involved local residents interested in the preservation of wildlife. The membership has remained the same and has grown over time. There were currently 16 members in the Friends group. Aim to work in partnership through negotiation with the City Council.
- The Friends group wished to make the smaller lake at Witton Park into a reed lake, filtering out unwanted debris from upstream, and through partnership working the request has been actioned.
- The General Manager of Glendale has become a member and has contributed greatly to the success of the group.
- Community members give back to the community and support Council officers where necessary.
- The community orchard was installed by Velvet Toilet Tissue but maintenance of the orchard was not negotiated. The Friends of Witton Lakes undertook to carry out the maintenance of the orchard to ensure its continuation. Witton Lakes was currently undergoing a community asset transfer and a cafe a café and toilets will be provided for all park users. Midland Toilet Hire had donated two public toilets and had agreed to

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maintain them free of charge. Local developers donated top soil to develop a wild flower bed which helped in the prevention of litter spilling into the park from Perry Common Road. All this successful work was the result of partnership working.

- Witton Lodge Community Association has been established for over twenty years and was first started following a crisis in the community and the community joining together to respond to that crisis.
 - The best form of consultation is to ask local people what they want. Witton Lodge Community Association has the capacity and strength to work in partnership and achieve their goals. Negotiation was the best form of consultation.
 - The Urban and Wellbeing Park stretches across several park areas and incorporates the cycle route running from the North to the South of the City.
 - Clean and Green – previously there were resources within the Council and a lot of engagement was taking place. However, those resources are no longer available and need to work with and engage the public and community groups to take over the good work that has been established.
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At approximately 1445 hours the meeting had to adjourn following an emergency evacuation procedure.

At approximately 1545 hours the meeting reconvened.

The District as a place to live, work and shop

David Billingham (Street Scene Co-ordinator) and Patrick Canavan gave a verbal presentation and made the following points:

- Cleaner, Greener, Safer standard. Look at evidence standard of cleanliness in Erdington compared to Local Authorities to other Districts and housing land.
- Environmental Quality Survey for cleaner, greener, safer completed on a Ward basis and is graded 'a' through to 'd' under six specific headings that are:
 - Litter
 - Weeds
 - Detritus
 - Fly posting and graffiti
 - Fly tipping
 - Maintenance/landscaping condition.
- The majority of Erdington District is graded an 'a' or a 'b' standard which indicates a good/satisfactory standard of cleanliness.
- Aim to re-inspect all areas again in four months.
- Planned maintenance programme with Glendales – contracted to cut grass around housing land.
- Set up work programmes around inspection, cleaning and maintenance regime to be implemented. Once areas have been identified and rectified look at ways of engaging, enforcing and educating local residents to maintain the standard of cleanliness.

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- Street Scene Co-Ordinator and Place Managers working together with the local community to bring the housing land up to a 'b' standard or more.
- Once standard 'b' (or higher) has been reached need to sustain the standard and move forward.
- Looking at using video and photographs to evidence the before and after clean up scenes.
- Work in conjunction with the four E's which are education, enforcement, engagement and employment. Engage and educate local residents on what they should do with their bulky waste, refuse etc. Involved in community action days – litter picks and community clean up campaigns. If engagement and education fails then will look at enforcement – look through the discarded bags and try and identify the perpetrator. Issue a fixed penalty charge. If the perpetrator is unknown officers will carry out a door knocking exercise and investigate further.
- Employment/ Training plan – recruiting up to ten, 16 - 24 year olds on a ten week City Council training programme getting them involved in street scene cleaning and also engaging with the local community. Linked to mentors so will gain valuable experience and support in finding future employment.
- What resources (financial and human) are expected on Erdington and how does this compare to the City average and other Local Authorities – in terms of available resources have four District Neighbourhood Caretakers on Area North alongside Neighbourhood Cleaners and Neighbourhood Caretakers – resources available dependent upon the number of housing stock in the area/ properties per District. Neighbourhood caretakers spend 65% of their time in the wider area.
- One environmental estate cleaning crew in Erdington District and provide a service on the following days: Monday – Abbeyfields, Jarvis Road and Wryley Birch, Tuesday – Topcroft, Jarvis Road and Wryley Birch, Wednesday – Sutton Coldfield, Thursday – Kingstanding and Friday – Erdington/Stockland Green. Crews target where the public have identified that there is a litter problem or concern.
- Compared to the City average the approximate cost for the Erdington Constituency crew is £87,273 based on the number of properties in the area. City wide there are nine cleaning crews and they each spend a total of forty four days per year outside street cleaning and cleaning housing land.
- Tenants/partners/stakeholders sharing e.g. Housing Associations – look at the stakeholders in the area and look to see if they can offer assistance either financial or manpower.
- Will shortly be having, for one time only and per quadrant, for twelve weeks three crew members and a wagon to target litter hotspots in accordance with the Environmental Quality Survey. Concentrate on rear access ways and adoptive/derelict and housing land.
- Despite limited resources how can standards be improved and how can the perceptions of Erdington residents be improved with regard to service provision – the 4 E's – engagement, enforcement, education and employment and reinforcing the message of community ownership. Encourage local residents to take ownership and responsibility of their area/road/block in which they live.
- Create good neighbourhood agreements – get people to sign the agreement and support/own their environment.

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- Target approach – door knocking and investigating who is creating the problems and dumping rubbish. Good intelligence and liaise with local residents.
- Depending upon the level of the problem set up monthly, quarterly or bi-annual performance visits for a particular location. Monitor the situation regularly.
- Neighbourhood plans are key – clean, green, safe agenda at the Erdington District Convention. Discuss and liaise with local residents and partners to form a Place plan of action.
- Voluntary resident litter picks – providing local residents with the necessary equipment to go out onto the streets and pick up litter and clean up their area.
- Review Service Level Agreements between Departments. Work with and get support from other Council Departments.
- Walkabouts – Members and residents to carry out estate assessments – two walkabouts per year with local residents. Engage with local residents by door knocking and asking questions.
- Complaints analysis/trends to use resources correctly to tackle problem hot spots.
- The Street Scene Co-Ordinator will be play a key role in all of the above activities and co-ordinate plans in order to move forward.

In response to questions raised by Members the officers gave the following responses:

- The employment/training scheme has proven to be a success. Promoting the scheme via posters and in agencies to get youngsters involved. Currently have five trainees on the scheme and three have successfully found full time employment. After ten weeks they can show that they can turn up on time and be reliable, have skills to work so when they go for a job interview they already hold the necessary skills and training.
- Overgrown gardens are a problem. Discuss face to face with the resident. An ASB Community Protection Notice can be served - have powers and can enforce resident to clean up their garden.
- Working with local schools in the area, secondary and primary, to educate the future generation in all environmental issues and educating them in the importance of keeping streets clean and free from litter. The four E's.
- Agreed to electronically forward Environmental Quality Survey's – per Ward to appropriate Ward Members.

The Chairman thanked officers and invited partners for their input in what had been a very informative discussion.

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RESOLVED:-

That the discussion on Neighbourhood Challenge be noted.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS (REPORTS BY OFFICERS)

Cleanliness in Local Car Parks

Mike Davis, District Head, Erdington gave a verbal report and made the following comments:

- There were four public car parks in the Erdington District.
- The level of cleanliness compared to other areas in the City was that they were no better or no worse than most of the car parks City wide. Across the City the cleaning of local car parks was a very Ad-Hoc process. No fixed cleaning maintenance programme was in action – it was a reactive rather than proactive cleaning regime.
- Often wait until receive complaints from residents and then put processes into place to clean the car park. Town Centre Manager monitors cleanliness and informs the Council when a clean-up campaign should take place.

Councillor Lynda Clinton expressed concern that the public car park to the rear of Iceland was a consistent hotspot for fly tipping and litter and stated that she felt that a lot of the rubbish was actually dumped there by local shops in the vicinity.

Councillor Robert Alden commented that the Town Centre Partnership, Erdington Ward Councillors and the Police go out quarterly with Environmental Health Team to talk with store owners and visit the rear of the stores highlighting where rubbish has been dumped, and ensuring that the shop owners have the correct waste disposal bins and agreements in place. He felt that a lot of the rubbish was dumped by residents living in the flats above the shops.

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RESOLVED:-

That the verbal report on cleanliness of local car parks be noted.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

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RESOLVED:-

In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chairman jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1625 hours.

CHAIRMAN